



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament
First Session**

Thursday, 21 November 2019

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 21 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.

[Notices of motions given.]

Bills

CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN BILL 2019

Consideration in Detail

Consideration of the Legislative Council's amendments.

Schedule of amendments referred to in message of 20 November 2019

No. 1 **GRNS No. 1 [c2019-172J]**

Page 9, proposed section 2, lines 6–10. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead—

- (1) Subject to subsection (2), this Act commences on 1 March 2020.

No. 2 **GRNS No. 2 [c2019-172J]**

Page 10, proposed section 3, lines 10–13. Omit all the words on those lines. Insert instead—

- (i) for Part 4—subject to an event or circumstance, whether occurring in New South Wales or elsewhere, that is committed by a person who is an employee of a relevant entity (within the meaning of Part 4) and that gives rise to a report (within the meaning of Part 4), or

No. 3 **GRNS No. 3 [c2019-172J]**

Page 11, proposed section 8. Insert after line 31—

- (e) in decision-making under this Act and the regulations in relation to an Aboriginal child or a Torres Strait Islander child, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child and Young Person Placement Principles set out in section 13 of the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998*, and

No. 4 **GRNS**

Page 17, proposed section 22, line 11. Omit "and inappropriately intimate".

No. 5 **GRNS No. 7 [c2019-172J]**

Page 17, proposed section 25, line 40. Insert "or recklessly" after "intentionally".

No. 6 **GRNS No. 8 [c2019-172J]**

Page 19, proposed section 29. Insert after line 25—

- (6) The Children's Guardian may publish guidelines in relation to the matters that are appropriate for the head of a relevant entity to have regard to in deciding whether to provide the employee with written notice under subsection (5).

No. 7 **GRNS No. 9 [c2019-172J]**

Page 20, proposed section 33, line 37. Omit "must". Insert instead "may".

No. 8 **GRNS No. 10 [c2019-172J]**

Page 21, proposed section 33. Insert after line 1—

- (3) Before making a decision about whether or not to suspend an investigation or determination, the Children's Guardian, or head of the relevant entity, must consult with the Commissioner of Police, or the Director of Public Prosecutions, who provided the advice under subsection (1).

- (4) If the Children's Guardian or head of the relevant entity decides not to suspend the investigation or determination, the Children's Guardian must ensure the investigation is conducted in a way that does not prejudice the police investigation or the court proceeding.

- No. 9 **OPP No. 1 [c2019-228I]**
Page 21, proposed section 34. Insert after line 27—
- (3) The investigation or determination must be completed within a reasonable time.
Note. Section 134 requires information to be reported in particular circumstances.
- No. 10 **GRNS No. 11 [c2019-172J]**
Page 21, proposed section 36. Insert at the end of line 35—
- , or
- (c) the Children's Guardian consents to an extension of time for the head of the relevant entity to prepare the report.
- No. 11 **GRNS No. 12 [c2019-172J]**
Page 22, proposed section 36. Insert after line 2—
- (3) Despite subsection (2), if the Children's Guardian consents to an extension of time under subsection (1)(c), the report is due by the date granted under the extension.
- No. 12 **GRNS No. 13 [c2019-172J]**
Page 23, proposed section 40, lines 31–45. Omit all words on those lines.
- No. 13 **OPP No. 2 [c2019-228I]**
Page 26, proposed section 46. Insert after line 2—
- (3) The investigation or determination must be completed within a reasonable time.
Note. Section 134 requires information to be reported in particular circumstances.
- No. 14 **GRNS No. 14 [c2019-172J]**
Page 30, proposed section 57, lines 11–18. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead—
- (2) A person must not disclose relevant information unless subsection (3) or (4) applies.
Maximum penalty—10 penalty units or imprisonment for a period not exceeding 12 months, or both.
- (3) A person to whom this section applies must disclose relevant information to the following persons unless the person is satisfied the disclosure is not in the public interest—
- (a) a child to whom the information relates,
- (b) a parent of the child,
- (c) if the child is in out-of-home care—an authorised carer that provides out-of-home care to the child.
- No. 15 **GRNS No. 15 [c2019-172J]**
Page 30, proposed section 57, line 19. Omit "Information". Insert instead "Relevant information".
- No. 16 **GRNS No. 16 [c2019-172J]**
Page 30, proposed section 57, lines 31–34. Omit all words on those lines.
- No. 17 **GRNS No. 17 [c2019-172J]**
Page 30, proposed section 57, lines 35 and 36. Omit "the child referred to in subparagraph (iv)". Insert instead "a relevant child".
- No. 18 **GRNS No. 18 [c2019-172J]**
Page 30, proposed section 57, lines 40 and 41. Omit "the child referred to in subparagraph (iv)". Insert instead "a relevant child".
- No. 19 **GRNS No. 19 [c2019-172J]**
Page 31, proposed section 57. Insert after line 1—
- (4) The Children's Guardian may publish guidelines for the matters a person specified in subsection (1) must have regard to in deciding whether or not to disclose relevant information under this section.
- (5) Nothing in this section prevents the Children's Guardian from entering into an arrangement or procedure with another entity in relation to the exchange of information relating to the safety, welfare and wellbeing of a child or class of children.
- (6) In this section—
relevant child means a child or a member of a class of children—

- (a) against whom an employee of an entity is alleged to have committed reportable conduct, and
- (b) to whom the relevant information relates.

relevant information means the following information relating to a reportable allegation or conviction considered to be a reportable conviction—

- (a) information about the progress of the investigation,
- (b) information about the findings of the investigation,
- (c) information about action taken in response to the findings.

No. 20 **OPP No. 3 [c2019-228I as amended]**

Page 39, insert after line 37—

85A General access to registers

- (1) The Children's Guardian must ensure that information on the register is not disclosed except—
 - (a) as provided by this Division, or
 - (b) as required or permitted to be disclosed under another Act or law.
- (2) A residential care provider must have access to the information on the register in relation to—
 - (a) a person who has applied for a role with the residential care provider, and
 - (b) a residential care worker employed by the residential care provider.
- (3) The Children's Guardian must provide access to information held on the register to any of the following persons if asked by the person—
 - (a) the Secretary,
 - (b) the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services,
 - (c) the Ombudsman.

85B Permission to access register

- (1) This section applies—
 - (a) to a person whose details are included on the register, and
 - (b) in addition to any requirement under section 14 of the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*.
- (2) The person may ask any of the following entities to give the person all the information that is included on the register in relation to the person—
 - (a) the Children's Guardian,
 - (b) an employing residential care provider.
- (3) The Children's Guardian or employing residential care provider must comply with the request as soon as practicable after the request is made.
- (4) Despite subsection (3), information included on the register in relation to the person must not be provided if—
 - (a) the information is about a reportable allegation or reportable conviction, or
 - (b) a reportable conduct flag is on the register in relation to the person, applies to the information.
- (5) It is an offence for a person to access or amend the register except as provided by this Act or the Regulations.

Maximum penalty—100 penalty units.

- (6) In this clause—

employing residential care provider means a residential care provider that employs, or has previously employed, a residential care worker making a request.

85C Requirement to amend register in particular circumstances

A residential care provider with access to the register must remove a reportable conduct flag for a person if the finding of the investigation or determination to which the flag applies is that the person does not pose a real and appreciable risk to a child or children.

No. 21 **GRNS No. 21 [c2019-172J]**

Page 54. Insert after line 17—

132A Report required before commencement of Part 4

- (1) Before the commencement of Part 4 of this Act, the Children's Guardian must give to the Committee on Children and Young People a report, and copies of policies and procedures to be adopted by the Children's Guardian, in relation to the exercise of the Children's Guardian's functions under this Act or another Act.
- (2) The report must include information about how perceived or actual conflicts of interest associated with the exercise of the Children's Guardian's functions under this Act or another Act are to be minimised or removed.
- (3) In this section—

Committee on Children and Young People means the Parliamentary Joint Committee constituted under section 36(1) of the *Advocate for Children and Young People Act 2014*.

No. 22 **GRNS No. 22 [c2019-172J]**

Page 54, proposed section 134. Insert after line 34—

- (b) details of each exemption given under section 30,

No. 23 **OPP No. 4 [c2019-228I]**

Page 55, proposed section 134. Insert after line 4—

- (f) the number of investigations or determinations, in relation to reportable allegations or reportable convictions, that have not been completed by a relevant entity or the Children's Guardian within 6 months after the commencement of the investigation or determination,
- (g) the number of persons on the residential care workers register kept under section 85(1)(b) who have a reportable conduct flag noted, if the investigation or determination has not been completed by a relevant entity or the Children's Guardian within 6 months after the commencement of the investigation or determination.

No. 24 **GRNS No. 23 [c2019-172J]**

Page 55, proposed section 134. Insert before line 5—

- (f) copies of policies and procedures to be adopted by the Children's Guardian, in relation to the exercise of the Children's Guardian's functions under this Act or another Act, and information about how perceived or actual conflicts of interest associated with the exercise of the functions are to be minimised or removed.

No. 25 **GRNS No. 25 [c2019-172J]**

Page 55, proposed section 135, line 18. Insert "within 6 months after giving the report to the Minister" after "Parliament".

No. 26 **GRNS No. 26 [c2019-172J]**

Page 55, proposed section 136, line 27. Omit "other". Insert instead "a shorter".

No. 27 **GRNS No. 27 [c2019-172J]**

Page 55, proposed section 137, line 42. Omit "a Presiding Officer of a House of Parliament may". Insert instead "the Presiding Officer of a House of Parliament given the report under this Division must, within 14 days after receiving the report,".

No. 28 **OPP No. 5 [c2019-228I]**

Page 71, proposed section 170. Insert after line 20—

- (c) processes to follow to ensure procedural fairness and natural justice for employees the subject of an investigation or determination under the reportable conduct scheme,

No. 29 **OPP No. 6 [c2019-228I]**

Page 110, Dictionary. Insert after line 11—

reportable conduct flag, in relation to a person, means a notation on a register that the person is the subject of an investigation or determination under the reportable conduct scheme.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services)
(09:47:16): I move:

That the Legislative Council amendments be agreed to.

Before I get underway, I acknowledge in the gallery Riley Richardson from my electorate of Kiama. Riley was a member of the Youth Parliament in this place and he is about to head off to the United States to get married, and can I just say how proud I am of him and everything that he continues to achieve. It is wonderful to have him here today.

This has been an incredible process and I would like to thank a number of people who have been involved in putting together this bill. I thank all of my parliamentary colleagues for their attention in this debate, and there are a few people I would like to single out in relation to my parliamentary colleagues but I will come back to them. I thank the Children's Guardian, Janet Schorer. I also thank from the department Sharminie Niles, Anna Read, Francesca Di Benedetto and Stephen Bray. I also thank Michael Barnes, the New South Wales Ombudsman, and the Association of Child Welfare Agencies, particularly Steve Kidman, for their input into this important debate. I also take this opportunity to thank my staff, Anne King, Mitch Klaus, Lachy Ball, James Maylan and Jordan Matthews, for their input into this debate.

I also want to single out a couple of members of the upper House. I thank my shadow Minister, Penny Sharpe. Penny is somebody for whom I have a deep level of respect. I always appreciate the opportunity to engage with her on issues that are important, and there can be no more important issue than protecting children. It is heartening to know that when these issues of significance and great substance come before the House, the divide that exists in this Chamber melts away and we actually focus on the most important things.

When I look at some of the parliamentary staff around the Chamber I know they have seen lots of partisan debates. It is heartening and humbling to be part of debates that mean something, that make a difference and that you know will impact on some of our most vulnerable people, particularly long after I am no longer the Minister or in this place. I am grateful to the shadow Minister for the way in which she engaged with the sector and the way she engaged on this bill. I thank Mr David Shoebridge, who is someone I have known for a very long time. He is certainly a formidable opponent. When it comes to child protection matters his care, candour and impact are noticeable. I thank him for the way he engaged in this debate. He is a genuine contributor on child protection matters and I always enjoy listening to his point of view, even though we may not always agree. He always tries to work pro-actively and productively and I thank him for his work.

I thank my parliamentary colleagues for their support on the bill. This legislation is about making our system of child protection better and stronger. It is about making New South Wales a safer place to raise children. This bill deals directly with the reportable conduct scheme that followed the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. There was commentary about how to make the system better, hence the way the bill has evolved. As my colleagues will recall, this bill is about bringing together a number of pieces of legislation under one roof. It was about identifying faults or failings that existed in the system and how we could make improvements, close those loopholes and make things better and stronger. That is what this bill seeks to do. The amendment process in the upper House is complex, but is necessary to make appropriate changes. I welcome the overwhelming majority of the changes.

As evidenced by the bipartisanship shown by members in the other place, there was not a single division on any of the amendments. We worked pro-actively with the crossbench in order to bring about those results. I thank all my colleagues in this place and in the other place for the way in which they pro-actively and productively worked to bring about these reforms and this change. It is important to me as the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services. I know it is important to all of the staff of my agency as well as the statutory body charged with the care and welfare of children and young people. Every reform I instigate in my portfolio is about providing an important safety net, protections and changes that make a real difference in people's lives. When it comes to issues, often it is not a Liberal thing to do or a Labor thing to do; there is just a right thing to do. I thank all members of Parliament for doing the right thing.

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

Motion agreed to.

DIGITAL RESTART FUND BILL 2019

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 20 November 2019.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (09:53:05): I acknowledge the excellent contributions to the debate on the Digital Restart Fund Bill 2019 by the member for Vaucluse, the member for Manly and the member for Wollondilly. I have had great pleasure speaking about the digital innovation that this Government has delivered in this place over the 4½ years I have had the privilege to be the member for Terrigal. There is no greater evidence of that than Service NSW.

Mr Geoff Provest: Brilliant.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: I note the member for Tweed and the member for Upper Hunter are present in the Chamber. I acknowledge the interjection by the member for Tweed. I am sure he has a Service NSW centre in his electorate. I am sure the member for Castle Hill has a Service NSW centre in his electorate.

Mr Ray Williams: I opened the first one at Norths Rocks with Barry O'Farrell.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: These are some of the great initiatives delivered by this Government. I am lucky that there is a Service NSW office at Erina, ably managed by Robyn and her team.

Mr Michael Johnsen: I have got eight.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: The member for Upper Hunter informs me that he has eight Service NSW offices in his electorate. He would have some very happy constituents indeed. Service NSW has revolutionised the way in which the Government works with the good people of New South Wales. It is a game changer for the way the community interacts and is supported by government. The Opposition's vision for the future was the old RTA, where you would line up for four hours to renew your licence at lunchtime—if you were lucky. It is now possible to download your licence to your phone. I note that the member for Balmain is in the Chamber and I am sure he has his digital licence.

Mr Jamie Parker: I do.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: That is the digital innovation. The member for Balmain has his digital licence, as do I. I am not sure if the member for Charlestown has downloaded her digital licence, but she may have opted in. The member for Balmain is showing members his digital licence. It is a great initiative by this Government. This is the digital transformation that we are seeing across New South Wales under the Liberal-Nationals Government. Minister Dominello and his team have provided this digital innovation. It gives me the opportunity to talk about some of the benefits associated with Service NSW, including the cost-of-living savings. Yesterday I mentioned Tiffany and her team at Erina. Tiffany has saved the good people of my electorate more than \$400,000 in cost-of-living savings.

Mr Geoff Provest: Wow!

Mr ADAM CROUCH: Absolutely. I took the opportunity to write to all of my constituents over the age of 60 about the fantastic benefits of Service NSW. I have been stopped in the street by people saying, "Thank you". They have gone to Service NSW. One lady saved \$4,000 by spending half an hour at Service NSW.

Mr Geoff Provest: Is she growing marijuana?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Tweed will cease interjecting.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: I thank the member for Tweed for his interjections. He shows the same level of excitement that the people in my electorate have when they go to Service NSW. On average people are saving more than \$400, which is placing downward pressure on the cost of living. Digital innovation has made doing business with the Government so much easier for everybody, whether an individual or a business. Minister Dominello and the Premier have visited Service NSW. On that occasion we met one chap who has retired and who valiantly served this nation as a serviceman. He is now recouping \$1,200 a year after spending half an hour at Service NSW. We are hearing these stories every day. Those savings are in addition to the Active Kids and Creative Kids rebate programs. I vividly recall doorknocking at Killcare. I met a mother who was backing her car out of her driveway. She stopped.

Mr Geoff Provest: She bumped into you?

Mr ADAM CROUCH: No, she avoided me, she did not run me over. She stopped and put her window down and said, "You are my State member." I said, "Yes." She said, "This Active Kids rebate, I have four daughters." I said, "That is wonderful. You are just heading off to Pretty Beach Public School to pick them up." I explained to her that she was entitled to the Active Kids rebate twice a year under this Government, which was opposed by those opposite, unfortunately. She will be able to get \$200 a year for each of her girls. She then started to cry. I said, "It's okay." I could not understand why she was so emotional about it. She said, "I can now start playing netball again." She had forgone her sport to make sure her girls could play netball. She made that sacrifice, as all good parents would. She realised that with the money she received through the Active Kids rebate twice a year she could participate in her sport again.

I explained about the Creative Kids rebate. All of her four daughters played a musical instrument. We are talking about \$1,600 a year that this mother is getting back because of the Active Kids rebate. I said to her, "Make sure you go to Service NSW." She did that and completed a cost-of-living assessment. She then wrote to

me and thanked me for the thousands of dollars that she is now saving as a result of the work of this Government. She said, "Going to Service NSW was a wonderful experience." That is not something you usually hear when someone is dealing with a government department. I am so proud of the work being done at the Erina Service NSW through the digital transformation of this Government. Minister Dominello recently visited Woy Woy where we had opened the first digital Service NSW centre.

Again, those opposite complained about that centre, which was very unfortunate. The day the centre opened it was flat out. The centre is ably managed by a chap called Adam—ironically enough—who does a fantastic job. The great news about the centre is that in the few months it has been open 55 local families have saved more than \$22,000 through the 70 government rebates that are available. That is another incredible story about a fully digital Service NSW centre. It is the first of its kind in this State, and I was so proud to open it on behalf of Minister Dominello. This Government is ensuring digital transformation, which makes a huge difference.

The Woy Woy Service Centre has a 97 per cent approval rating and the Erina Service Centre has a 96 per cent approval rating. That story is being emulated across the State through the Government's digital transformation program, including the digital driver licence. I am very proud to have a digital driver licence, which I used recently as identification when I picked up some packages from the post office. It was the first time the lady at the post office had seen a digital driver licence and she said, "That is brilliant." That digital transformation is taking place as a result of the work of Minister Dominello. [*Extension of time*]

The Digital Restart Fund Bill 2019 reinforces the Government's digital transformation plan. The Government is committed to further improving customer service by better integrating the way in which existing and new government services are designed, delivered, implemented and assured, with particular focus on ICT services. Service NSW exemplifies how that digital service is delivered. In line with that commitment, the Government has established the Digital Restart Fund—which is classed as "the fund"—to support optimal customer service outcomes and contemporary approaches towards digital investment. This bill will operationalise that fund. I note that the Minister is present in the Chamber. I have been waxing lyrical about the great work of the Woy Woy Service Centre. As the Minister said, it is a game changer.

Mr Victor Dominello: It is outstanding.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: It is like nothing I have ever seen before. I think the team at the Erina Service Centre are a little bit jealous because they thought their centre was the best. But Woy Woy is pretty special.

Mr Victor Dominello: It is excellent.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: It is indeed.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: Thanks to Liesl Tesch.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: Unfortunately, she complained about it, which is very sad.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Canterbury will cease interjecting.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: Unfortunately, the member for Canterbury was not aware of the situation. We have delivered a great service centre. The staff morale at the service centres in Erina and Woy Woy is sky high. A number of employees at those centres have worked for the Government in one form or another for years and their morale is at an all-time high. They love what they do. They love being able to provide good product and good service in a timely fashion to the people of New South Wales. That was very evident when the Minister visited the Erina Service Centre.

Gail Coombes is a great example of that. Gail had worked at a number of different government departments over the years. She is over 60—I know she will not mind me saying that—and lives in North Avoca, which is in my electorate. When she applied for a job at Service NSW she fully expected not to be employed because of her age. That was unthinkable because she is such a great asset. Gail interacts with older people in our community so well. The Minister got a chance to meet Gail when he visited. When she got the job she burst into tears: She could not believe she was going to be part of this brand-new digital innovation. Gail has embraced the role. She absolutely typifies all that is good about Service NSW and the digital transformation of this State through the work of the Minister for Customer Service and this Government.

I am so proud to have people such as Gail on the payroll of Service NSW. She is a star. Recently she was recognised for 30 years of service to the New South Wales Government. That recognition was fully deserved. I have spoken about Gail in the House before. She, Robin and the rest of their team are absolutely amazing. The Digital Restart Fund is so important to back up what we are doing with the digital transformation. I commend the Minister for all his hard work. He is never afraid to take on a challenge and something new. This Government has

been driving that innovation the whole time I have been lucky enough to be the member for Terrigal. Innovation is taking place right across the board. Opposition members complained about Roads and Traffic Authority centres across New South Wales being shut down. They opposed that. But when they got a Service NSW centre it was all happy days.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: "We want more."

Mr ADAM CROUCH: "We want more." I joke with the member for Wyong because he now has two Service NSW centres in his electorate.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: Some don't have any.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: If some electorates do not have any centres I suggest they get better members. It is a matter of fighting for your community to get them what they need. I was very happy to stand up and represent the good people on the peninsula. People who live in Empire Bay use the Woy Woy Service Centre and they love it. We are very proud of that. The Digital Restart Fund Bill is so important. I commend the Minister and I acknowledge the great work of Jordan Hatch, Jane Standish, Greg Wells, Kate Harrington, Tess Bellamy and Aaron Baril, who worked so hard with the Minister on this legislation. The bill reinforces the Government's commitment and provides the funding necessary to keep driving digital innovation across New South Wales. This Government has become the measure by which all others are judged in this space. I congratulate the Minister and his staff on this excellent legislation. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (10:05:51): I thank the Minister for Customer Service for introducing the Digital Restart Fund Bill 2019, which is part of the initiative that began with this Government's introduction of the first-ever Customer Service cluster, led by Minister Dominello. The establishment of a Digital Restart Fund to secure the delivery of major digital infrastructure projects will propel New South Wales into the future. The Government knows that digital technologies are critical to modernising and transforming our public service. In the modern world, investment in digital infrastructure is essential for prosperity. Just like roads, power and water infrastructure, digital equipment and systems have become central to our everyday lives. Citizens expect governments to deliver policies, programs and services that will make them happier, healthier, more secure and better equipped to tackle the challenges of the future. Modernisation is vital if the Government is to achieve its ambition of facing the challenges of the times and embracing the opportunities they offer.

In 2018 the United Nations E-Government Development Index ranked Australia as the second-most digitally developed nation after Denmark. Australia is also ranked second globally for open data initiatives. In 2019, for the fifth consecutive time, New South Wales was awarded first place as the jurisdiction most "digital government ready", with a score of 9.4 out of a possible 10 on the Intermedium Digital Government Readiness Indicator. Given the Minister for Customer Service's great dedication to all things digital, no-one is surprised. However, to keep up with ongoing technological change, and people's and businesses' expectations, New South Wales must continue to strive towards ongoing modernisation.

Modernising government means identifying and then solving the problems of the current day. It means freeing up the public service so it can build on its strengths to innovate and rise to new challenges. It means embracing digital innovation and transforming government so that it is organised around what the public wants and needs, rather than the needs or convenience of institutions. The Digital Restart Fund will frame a coordinated approach to prioritising digital investments. It will aid digital transformation and maintain New South Wales' top ranking. This central investment approach will also encourage transparent and effective governance, and foster genuine co-creation between clusters. The Digital Restart Fund is a fund for the people of New South Wales, present and future. It re-imagines government services in the context of broader demographic and socio-economic societal change, and supports services based on customer needs, agnostic of technology and flexible to individuals, while maintaining a consistent, seamless experience.

The Digital Restart Fund is designed to accelerate digital transformation across the New South Wales Government by connecting customers' needs with smart, modern digital solutions and by designing simple services that deliver seamless experiences to customers. Without digital investment, urgent whole-of-government programs that deliver consistent customer experiences, such as proving identity or the concept of "telling government once" will not become ubiquitous in New South Wales. All clusters have contributed to the fund, ensuring that it is truly a whole-of-government initiative. The new model for funding whole-of-government digital service products will allow for agile delivery methods, and ensure that New South Wales digital infrastructure is up to date with current technologies, and that customers are delivered the best services reflecting the best possible value for money. The fund will enable the Government to deliver value for money in the information and communications technology and digital space.

Becoming more digital will contribute to a competitive New South Wales economy that will enhance private, public and not-for-profit sector collaborations, make it easier to do business in New South Wales, and make New South Wales a place where citizens want to work, live and play. It will result in better digital services for Australia's most modern and prosperous State. It is truly a fund for the people of New South Wales, present and future. The effect of the fund will be profound. This builds on the work done already by this Government. I acknowledge some of the initiatives already put in place by this Government and under Minister for Customer Service Dominello. All members would be aware of the new digital driver licences. I got mine a couple of months ago. I would be very happy to show more people, though as I age I question the merit of showing people the details.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: You still look the same.

Ms FELICITY WILSON: That is very kind of the member for Canterbury. I note that the Minister for Customer Service has been using his digital licence for a very long time. When he attended events hosted by Rotary or the North Sydney Innovation Network in my electorate, the Minister always whipped out his digital driver licence. He is happy to put it on an overhead display for people to see—never ashamed of his age or visage, although he definitely had a lot more hair when that photo was taken! In essence, the Minister for Customer Service is driving the greatest digital revolution in New South Wales and across Australia.

Minister Dominello is leading the program in our State, which is, in fact, a global leader in the digital space. He has exemplified that behaviour and attitude in his role as the Minister for Customer Service and upholds the notion that government should be a service provider that is held to the expectations of its customers and strives to deliver better services that will meet the needs of people today and tomorrow. That is an ethos that those on this side of the Chamber have embedded within our Government and within government service provision, including in the way that government agencies engage with customers or citizens.

Another example of that is Service NSW. Historically it has been difficult to engage with government agencies and there is still a way to go. I know the Minister is tackling some of the paperwork parents have to go through when they have a baby. I am familiar with this as I was fortunate to have that experience almost a year ago. The changes that the Government can make over time are profound. The introduction of Service NSW and the changes it made in the way we engage with government services were incredibly successful and popular. I am talking about the speed, accessibility and range of services provided and also their delivery.

Service NSW staff are some of the happiest, warmest people—it must be in the position description—who embody the sense of customer service that our Government is seeking to deliver to the community. I am really excited that the Government and the Minister have committed to bringing Service NSW to North Sydney, which is one of our largest CBDs and is obviously the largest centre within my electorate. People go there from all across Sydney. Currently we can go to Chatswood or come into the city to attend a Service NSW office, but having the service provided locally will be another element of anchoring North Sydney CBD as one of the most vibrant, important CBDs in New South Wales. The Service NSW centre will make it easier for those working and living in the North Sydney CBD to access all of kinds of services.

The delivery of Sydney Metro to the North Sydney CBD will be a game changer. It will bring thousands and thousands more people into North Sydney, which is already an educational hub, with the Australian Catholic University and a number of local schools, as well as a technology hub. We have seen a number of new developments and a number of new tenancies anchoring buildings in North Sydney CBD because in coming years it will be the most vibrant CBD across Sydney. This is just an element of what we expect within our business districts and city centres. It ensures that people have access to the services that they rely on. People spend a lot of time at work and not so much time at home, so we are bringing the services to them. I thank the Minister and the Government for their commitment to deliver the Service NSW centre to North Sydney.

I take this opportunity while speaking about the digital space to thank the North Sydney Innovation Network, which is an organisation that the Minister knows. He has met with the network and attended some of its events. I sit on the committee of the North Sydney Innovation Network, as does my Federal counterpart and member for North Sydney, Trent Zimmerman. The organisation was formed to bring together a network and help catalyse the relationships of individuals working in this space. We have a number of entities in North Sydney, including Work inc, which is expanding on Middlemiss Street on Lavender Bay. The Minister has visited there, but the space is getting even bigger. Recently WeWork has opened, and there are a number of very innovative start-ups within the northern Sydney region—businesses that are inventive in soft technology and in maker craft. They are involved with some of the big changes that will impact individuals' lives around New South Wales, Australia and the globe. [*Extension of time*]

Carolyn Mee leads Sound Scouts, which is all about children's hearing, which is tested through a game. Carolyn's work with Sound Scouts has been recognised across the country as an important innovation that provides

opportunity for early intervention to make a difference to children's wellbeing. The North Sydney Innovation Network is headed by Jono Hermann. Anyone who has met Jono would know that he is a dynamo. He puts a phenomenal amount of work into the North Sydney Innovation Network, but he also involves interns from different universities who participate in its work, which ensures that we are investing in the skills of the next generation and looking at how we commercialise those skills. With his vast network and connections within commercial entities and organisations Jono is able to bring together from the education space individuals who are learning and building their skills in a commercial environment. Once again, I congratulate the Minister, his agency and his team on introducing the Digital Restart Fund. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service) (10:17:42): In reply: As members have heard, this Government is committed to placing customers at the heart of everything we do, making New South Wales the best place to live, work and raise a family, which is why this Government is establishing the Digital Restart Fund. Just like the Infrastructure Restart Fund, the digital fund will allow us to take a whole-of-government view on delivering digital platforms and services for the future that meet customer needs and excellent customer service. The establishment of the Digital Restart Fund builds on this Government's world-leading customer service agenda. Over past eight years this Government has delivered.

We established Service NSW, transforming the dingy old shopfronts to modern service centres, making it far easier and quicker to access services, empowering staff to help people get things done and making it just as easy to get things done online wherever people are at a time that suits them. This Government delivered FuelCheck, saving New South Wales drivers money every time they fill up at the servo. Only a few weeks ago this Government launched the digital driver licence—more than 800,000 people now have their digital licence. The Digital Restart Fund will build on our track record of delivery. The fund will enable us to turbocharge, and go faster and smarter in the delivery of digital services. The fund is necessary to support digital transformation as we experience ever-increasing rates of technological change. I thank all the members for their support for this bill. It is truly transformational. I commend this bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION AMENDMENT (PROTECTIONS FOR DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION) BILL 2019

First Reading

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

Second Reading Speech

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (10:20:35): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I appreciate the opportunity to address the Independent Commission Against Corruption Amendment (Disclosure of Information) Bill 2019. This amendment to the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988 is a commonsense, straightforward amendment that will protect individuals who voluntarily disclose information to the commission from criminal or civil liability in connection with that disclosure. The bill will make it easier for the ICAC to obtain evidence. It will give confidence to persons who provide information to the ICAC and it will bring the arrangements for the Independent Commission Against Corruption in line with other jurisdictions.

The bill is an amended version of a similar bill that I presented in this place in 2016. This version incorporates the 10 recommendations proposed by the Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption in 2017 that relate to the treatment of whistleblowers. As all members know, many people make appointments with MPs to discuss their concerns. Public servants have come to my office to discuss their concerns around corruption issues. As all members do, I recommend that they provide that information to the ICAC. I was surprised, as I am sure many others would be, that there is not full disclosure protection for people who provide information to the Independent Commission Against Corruption: Only partial protection is given to people providing information to the ICAC. I speak to those issues and why the bill is important.

Over the past few days there has been some discussion in this place about the funding of ICAC and the need to make the commission's funding more independent. Similarly, the intention of the bill is to strengthen the ICAC. I take the Government at its word when it says that it is interested in investing in the work of the Independent Commission Against Corruption to expose and deal with corruption. The bill is a way the Government can pursue this. The motivation for the bill initially arose from discussion around the provision of information to the ICAC by the Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption discussion paper entitled *Prosecutions Arising from Independent Commission Against Corruption Investigations: Discussion Paper*, dated November 2014.

Included in the 21 submissions made to the discussion paper was the ICAC's submission No. 8, dated August 2014, in which it recommended that the ICAC Act be amended to include a provision that protects persons from criminal, civil or disciplinary liability for the voluntary disclosure of information to the commission where the disclosure was made for the purpose of the commission's functions. Many members would find it quite remarkable that those provisions to protect disclosures were not already in place. The short version is that if the ICAC is not undertaking an investigation, you do not have the protections the ICAC affords people when there is an investigation. The bill simply acts on the ICAC's own recommendations. The ICAC submission states:

A large number of complaints and information accepted by the commission each year are received directly from public officials who are not required or authorised by law to report or provide that information and in circumstances where the voluntary disclosure of that information is prohibited by a secrecy or confidentiality law. Similarly, private individuals who voluntarily provide information to the commission may be at risk of incurring civil liability because of contractual or employment undertakings into which they have entered.

Section 109 of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act gives limited protection to persons providing information to the commission and then only in circumstances where the commission has exercised its power to require or obtain that information. This protection is not useful where persons have voluntarily disclosed information to the commission about corrupt conduct of which the commission is unaware and not at the time investigating.

Currently, those who provide information to ICAC on an existing inquiry are protected by provisions in the Act. If an inquiry is not taking place, the Act does not apply and those who provide information are not protected. The amendment bill will include protection for those people. The ICAC further states in its submission:

Other Australian corruption commissions, to varying degrees, have legislative protection for voluntary provision of information for the purpose of a complaint, report or investigation. For example, s 343 of the *Crime and Corruption Commission Act 2001* (Qld) relevantly provides:

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- (1) No obligation to maintain secrecy or other restriction on the disclosure of information obtained by or furnished to a person, whether imposed by any Act or by a rule of law, applies to the disclosure of information to the commission for the performance of the commission's functions.
- (2) A person who discloses information under subsection (1) does not, only because of the disclosure—
 - (a) contravene a provision of an Act requiring the person to maintain confidentiality in relation to the disclosure of information; or
 - (b) incur any civil liability, including liability for defamation; or
 - (c) become liable to disciplinary action.

The submission from the ICAC makes it clear that there are limited protections in this State and that other jurisdictions such as Queensland have broader protections. Following the introduction of the previous version of the bill, in 2017 the Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption instigated the Inquiry into Protections for People who make Voluntary Disclosures to the Independent Commission Against Corruption. I thank the committee for following up on the bill that I introduced and undertaking an inquiry. That inquiry was led by the former member for Epping, who is now in the other place. I thank him for his time chairing that inquiry. It was set up to investigate whether the law should be amended to protect people from criminal, civil or disciplinary action if they voluntarily disclose information to the ICAC for the purposes of the ICAC's functions. Its answer was a resounding yes. The committee report delivered 10 recommendations. The first was:

That the ICAC Act be amended to protect people who make voluntary disclosures to the ICAC against criminal, civil and disciplinary liability, and reprisal action for doing so.

The updated bill before the House intends to do precisely that, in addition to enacting a number of other recommendations from that report. The objectives of the bill are clearly set out. It is remarkable that in the two years since that report was delivered the Government has not acted on it. Its response to the report dated 18 April 2018 states:

The Government supports providing protections to people who make voluntary disclosures to the ICAC in appropriate circumstances.

But in the time since that response was delivered, no new bill has materialised and the people who provide information to ICAC remain unprotected. In August this year *The Guardian* broke the news story about two parking inspectors working for Auburn council who were sacked for revealing alleged attempts to stop them issuing fines at a councillor's private property developments. The rangers claim that in 2014 they were given repeated directions to give "preferential treatment" to elected members of the now defunct Auburn council. The rangers allege they were directed to stop issuing fines to construction workers at property developments owned by Auburn councillor Ronney Oueik and to give preferential treatment to the nearby Al-Faisal College, also at the direction of Oueik.

The rangers disclosed this information to an Independent councillor who also helped them approach the ICAC. Not long after the inquiry finished in 2016 the two rangers were suspended for speaking to that independent councillor, an action said to have breached the council's code of conduct. Their employment was terminated four months later. People who blow the whistle on corruption do so in the public interest, but also take great personal risks. Being sacked from your job for reporting alleged corruption by someone working for an organisation is a terrible price to pay. This is a commonsense amendment that will protect people such as these rangers from criminal and civil liability, including liability for defamation or breach of confidentiality and disciplinary action by an employer.

No-one should be concerned about the provisions in the bill. In fact, those who support the disclosure of information to the Independent Commission Against Corruption should encourage the passing of the bill. The bill will give confidence to those who wish to disclose information and will bring the legislation into line with that in other jurisdictions. The proposed amendments to Section 109 contained in the bill will provide full protection from liability to people making disclosures to the ICAC—that is in new subsections (1) (a), (b) and (c) and subsections (2), (3), (4) and (5). The bill goes on to omit the now irrelevant circumstances. This is a relatively simple amendment that allows the ICAC the capacity to respond and to protect people who are making disclosures. The bill also updates Section 109 such that:

- (5) Subject to this Act, a person is not subject to any criminal or civil liability for compliance, or purported compliance, with a requirement of this Act and no action, claim, demand or disciplinary action may be taken against or made of the person in relation to that compliance or purported compliance.

Further changes are in new subsections (6) and (7). The bill also adds new section 109B, which directs the commission to publish on its website guidelines relating to the making of voluntary disclosures. This includes protections that may be available to persons who make a voluntary disclosure. It also adds new section 111AA,; Without limiting section 111, a person or body to whom that section applies may disclose information to any other person or body that might identify or tend to identify a person who has made a voluntary disclosure ... That is outlined in detail in subsections (a), (b) and (c):

- (a) the person who made the voluntary disclosure consents in writing to the disclosure of that information, or the identity of the person who made the voluntary disclosure is generally known as a result of the person having chosen to identify themselves (otherwise than by making the voluntary disclosure) as the person who made the voluntary disclosure, or
- (b) it is essential, having regard to the principles of natural justice, that the identifying information be disclosed to a person or body whom the information provided by the voluntary disclosure may concern, or
- (c) the Commission certifies that disclosure of the identifying information is necessary to investigate the matters raised by the voluntary disclosure effectively or it is otherwise in the public interest to do so.

This is intended to ensure that the identity of people who make voluntary disclosures can be protected where appropriate but that this not fetter the ICAC's ability to investigate properly in the public interest or to provide natural justice to accused persons. The Government must provide the maximum protection for people to be able to provide such information without civil or criminal risk or risk to their employment. The amendment to this Act is important to ensure full protection for the voluntary disclosure of information to the ICAC for the purpose of the commission's function.

I thank the Parliamentary Counsel in particular for its assistance in drafting the bill and meeting the recommendations of the inquiry. I appreciate the positive feedback from the Premier, both in the House and personally. The Premier has said that the Government supports providing protections to people who make voluntary disclosures to the ICAC in appropriate circumstances. She has reiterated this at length every time I have raised the matter in question time and with her personally. I encourage the Government to support the bill and the Opposition to do the same, or introduce its own bill to meet the aim that the Government has set for itself. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

**WATER (COMMONWEALTH POWERS) AMENDMENT (TERMINATION OF REFERENCES)
BILL 2019****First Reading****Bill introduced on motion by Mr Roy Butler, read a first time and printed.****Second Reading Speech****Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (10:31:51):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I speak on the Water (Commonwealth Powers) Amendment (Termination of References) Bill 2109. The New South Wales Water (Commonwealth Powers) Act 2008 is a little-known piece of legislation that is arguably having the biggest impact on regional communities in this State. It is the most significant legislation relating to the basin plan in New South Wales law. The Act has the effect of self-referring certain constitutional powers held by New South Wales to the Commonwealth. Each basin State has a similar self-referral Act carried through in the same period in 2008. This self-referral is not a permanent change in the balance of power between New South Wales and the Commonwealth of Australia—it is voluntary and can be withdrawn.

There is a popular assumption, which is shopped around by governments, particularly the Commonwealth, that there is some strong constitutional power that the Commonwealth holds over the allocation and usage of water in the Murray-Darling Basin. Nothing could be further from the truth. This Act made by the New South Wales Parliament willingly gives up New South Wales' right to determine what happens with water in this State. The Act is the sole source of power that the Commonwealth has in negotiating and enforcing its view on New South Wales. It is time that we in this place as representatives of the people of New South Wales act to take our power back. I am not saying we do not want cooperation across the basin—there are good reasons for all States to work together. However, today no-one would be of the view that the basin plan is working well.

The basin plan has devastated communities, ruined industries, forced some intergenerational farmers to leave the land and it has put up a barrier to new people entering farming. It has consumed communities, turned agriculture on its head and damaged environments it was supposed to support and protect. In New South Wales, we have a representative system of government—we are all here to represent the interests of our constituents. We would not sit idly by while all these things have happened to our communities. Yet we in this place—the representatives of the people—have no say in what happens.

This Act removes our power to apply scrutiny and, where necessary, intervene on behalf of the people of New South Wales. People talk about the strength of intergovernmental agreements relating to the basin plan and the subsidiary funding agreements called national partnership agreements. These agreements are enforced ultimately only by goodwill—they have no constitutional basis and no legislative power in themselves. It is the goodwill of the contracting governments, State and Commonwealth, that allows these agreements to function. In short, the New South Wales Government has willingly allowed the impacts of the basin plan to happen to the people of this State.

The 2008 Act is the cornerstone of the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement with the Commonwealth. Unusually, this Act of Parliament hands the power principally to the Premier and, to a lesser extent, the water Minister. There is no disallowable component of the 2008 Act. I put forward to the Parliament today that this aspect of the New South Wales Act—the binding and self-referral of its constitutional responsibilities—is the principal cause of the increasingly obvious failings of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan. There is no capacity for scrutiny by the Parliament that passed the law; there is no pathway of scrutiny on behalf of the people we are here to represent. I put it to members present that if any other law we passed had no disallowable component, the regulations made by government—no longer under the scrutiny of this place—would bear little resemblance to the intentions of the Parliament that voted for the law.

This is the problem with this Act of Parliament as far as New South Wales is concerned. It is not a problem shared by the Commonwealth Parliament. The basin plan is a disallowable instrument subject to ongoing review. All regulations made for the Commonwealth Water Act 2007 that drive much of the basin plan are again disallowable instruments. I put it to the Parliament that we have moved a long way from what seemed a fairly benign referral of some constitutional powers to the Commonwealth, to the situation today that those same powers can be disallowed and discussed in the Commonwealth Parliament but cannot be disallowed or discussed in the New South Wales Parliament.

The Parliament holds constitutional responsibilities on behalf of the people of New South Wales, yet this law defies that proposition. We have given up our power to scrutinise on behalf of our communities. The intent of the amendment is not to start a termination process on the Murray-Darling Basin Plan today, or even when this

amendment is voted through the Parliament. If we are acting in the best interests of our constituents, the people of New South Wales, the amendment should be passed. It will allow the New South Wales Parliament the right, once again, to scrutinise whether a limited referral of powers to the Commonwealth is being managed in the way that the Parliament envisaged when it first voted on this law in 2008, importantly, in a way that is in the best interests of the people of New South Wales.

At the moment New South Wales officials negotiate behind closed doors with Commonwealth officials in a way that I put to the Parliament is increasingly outside the intent of the Parliament and completely without scrutiny. The paltry dollars meted out by the Commonwealth through intergovernmental agreement are now more important to New South Wales officials than caring for the obligations of the Parliament. The New South Wales officials have put the promise of money in front of the people of the State. The New South Wales Parliament should be placing obligations on the New South Wales officials that require that negotiations and subsequent agreements must be fair and sensible for the people of New South Wales. New South Wales officials and Commonwealth officials act as if they have formed a bureaucrats' government and are free from scrutiny, particularly by the New South Wales Parliament.

I reiterate that this amendment does not start any termination proceedings on the Murray-Darling Basin Plan. If the amendment is accepted into law, any attempt to terminate the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement would require a motion of either the Legislative Assembly or the other place. That motion would commence a debate that has to focus on a nominated issue. There needs to be a very clear reason for a termination notice for the Murray-Darling Basin Plan to be issued to the Commonwealth. The termination notice would place the Commonwealth on six months' notice from the day of that determination being made by either House.

This is a significant improvement over the current arrangement whereby the Premier, without consultation with the Parliament, can terminate the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement without showing any cause and in the short time it takes the New South Wales Governor to proclaim that termination. The Premier could act without consulting with the people of New South Wales. To me that is an unacceptable arrangement. The amendment is intended to create an environment where issues can be resolved within the six months' notice period. The amendment also allows for the revocation of the termination agreement by vote of the same House of Parliament up until the day when six months has expired, where the Parliament is satisfied the dispute is resolved. By introducing a condition that requires nominated reasons for termination, we introduce rigour.

It allows any nominated reason to be resolved through negotiations with the Commonwealth over a six-month period. This is a significant improvement in the following ways: It will re-involve the Parliament in the operation of this voluntary ceding of constitutional powers; it will force greater transparency on the officials who currently negotiate New South Wales constitutional rights behind closed doors; it will allow the New South Wales Parliament to nominate to the Commonwealth matters that need to be resolved; it will stop the ever-growing drift away from the intent of the Parliament, significantly expressed in 2008 and again in the acceptance of the 2012 Commonwealth basin plan; and it will put a stop to political posturing by making it clear that the Premier cannot, without cause, terminate the agreement on short notice.

The Act being amended—the Water (Commonwealth Powers) Act 2008—contains provisions that the termination of the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement does not abandon the achievements of the agreement up until the date of termination. This, again, is an important safeguard that I do not seek to dismantle. Agreements in place at the time of termination are maintained; this is not an attempt at destruction of the efforts to date. The intent of this amendment is to restore the balance of power and send a clear message to the Commonwealth that the New South Wales self-referred constitutional rights will no longer be subject to a Commonwealth that clearly assumes those rights are now a permanent head of power for the Commonwealth. I seek leave to suspend standing and sessional orders to conclude my contribution to the second reading debate.

Leave not granted.

Debate interrupted.

Committees

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE OFFICE OF THE VALUER GENERAL

Membership

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council appointing the Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane as a member of the committee in place of the Hon. Mick Veitch, discharged.

*Bills***PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS REGISTRATION BILL 2019****Second Reading Debate****Debate resumed from 24 October 2019.**

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (10:42:35): I speak on behalf of the Government in response to the Professional Engineers Registration Bill 2019. From the outset I make it abundantly clear that the Government sees the merit in systems and processes that give consumers the ability to easily verify whether someone they are intending to engage for a particular job has the appropriate qualifications. Improving the customer experience is a top priority for this Government, which is evident through initiatives such as its simple online licence check initiative through Fair Trading NSW, as well as its online disciplinary registers. The Government is already making its databases more customer-facing and will continue to find ways to do that as time progresses.

The Parliament has been provided with some light entertainment as Opposition members made contributions to the second reading debate on the Design and Building Practitioners Bill 2019. One by one, members opposite sought the call; and as debate went on, it became abundantly clear that NSW Labor is bereft of ideas on what is needed to lead building reforms in this State. Today we come to the Opposition's bill, and the hypocrisy from the member for Swansea is almost astonishing. It is no surprise, because the bill has no sensible relationship to the vital building reforms this State needs. The member for Swansea did not have her heart in her second reading speech; it was a grab bag of ideas. I was not surprised by that, because some time ago the Government publicly released an exposure draft of the Design and Building Practitioners Bill 2019 and called for submissions. The Government was seeking feedback and working with industry on what is the right way forward.

The exposure draft bill received good feedback from stakeholders and the community, which was worked into the bill. There were 80 submissions, and I thank all of those organisations and individuals who took the time to show a real interest in and commitment to the industry. They included the Property Council of Australia, the Housing Industry Association, the Master Builders Association and the Australian Institute of Building Surveyors. It was a long list. However, I went through those 80 submissions to the exposure draft bill and I could not find any submission from Labor. I checked and double-checked and triple-checked. I also—just on spec—looked for a crayon submission, but still nothing.

Mr Clayton Barr: I drew a picture.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: The member for Cessnock said he drew a picture, but we could not find that picture either. That says to me that Labor had no interest whatsoever in trying to work on a sensible solution and put forward constructive ideas. Quite simply, Labor did not even care to make a submission on the exposure draft bill that was put out for consultation. Labor does not care, did not care, never has and never will. I spent some time going over the second reading speech of the member for Swansea because I always believe you can learn from others. I thought there must be something in there, but it was difficult to decipher—again, a grab bag, a little bit of a catchall—alas, still nothing.

I know there has been a lot of talk about the Government's reforms and the significant regulation that will be involved, but there is an overarching theme to all of this which speaks to the fact that these industries are ever changing and ever evolving. As parliamentarians we need to start looking at the way we make laws in this State. We need to aim to be flexible and adaptable while still ensuring there is a high level of scrutiny over policies to hold governments to account. The bill before the House today is not future focused. It lacks flexibility and proper planning and does not recognise the high level of interaction engineering roles have with other professionals in the building and construction process.

After all of that carry-on from the member for Swansea and other members opposite about the amount of detail the Government will be including in regulations, I point out to members that Labor's bill is titled the Professional Engineers Registration Bill 2019; so it would be reasonable to assume from the title that the bill would probably say a bit on how to register if I am a professional engineer. I did find the section that is designed to house the answer; however, in place of an answer is the following:

- (1) The registration of a professional engineer is subject to the following conditions—
 - (a) the conditions prescribed by the regulations
 - (b) the conditions imposed by the board ... Interesting—again a lack of detail; again a grab bag; again bereft of ideas. Key building and construction industry stakeholders have endorsed the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government's Design and Building Practitioners Bill 2019. That is evidenced by the 80 submissions to the draft exposure bill and by the constructive feedback and input that the Government received, as a result of which it made amendments to the bill. Again, I looked for but did not find one submission from Labor—not one submission from Labor. If those opposite

cared so deeply about the building and construction industry in New South Wales, I would have thought they would have at least taken the time to put in a submission to offer some sort of advice, some terms or some conditions that we could have put in the bill to make it work for looking at New South Wales as a whole. But no, Labor members do not care about the people of New South Wales. They do not care about protecting consumers; it is all about their political games.

Authors of a report tabled by the Public Accountability Committee, which is chaired by The Greens MLC Mr David Shoebridge, have attempted to delay the bill, which if passed by the Parliament—and it will be—will deliver increased protections for existing property owners while establishing new registration and regulation requirements on a range of design and building practitioners for the first time in the history of New South Wales. In talking about the inquiry report that was released last week, Mr David Shoebridge deliberately and specifically referred to the inquiry recommendations. Not once did he say that he chaired the inquiry. Not once did he say, "I wrote the report and I put those recommendations forward—they're my ideas, my agenda, how I feel." Not once did he say that he wrote the report.

The move to prevent the passage of building reform legislation before the end of the year is a betrayal of the public's trust and completely unforgivable. Industry and the public have made it clear to governments across the country that we must take immediate action to better protect homeowners and lift the standards in the building and construction industry. We must act now to restore confidence in the residential high-rise market by passing this bill now, as a first step in the Government's commitment to fully implement the Shergold Weir recommendations. Despite this, Labor and The Greens have made it clear they made a deal that will see them delay this bill and deny current and future homeowners new protections against defects. In the bill there is a duty of care.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order: The Minister is not talking about the bill at hand, which is the Professional Engineers Registration Bill 2019. He is talking about the Design and Building Practitioners Bill 2019.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): Do you need guidance on which standing order you are referring to, member for Swansea?

Ms Yasmin Catley: The Minister is not being relevant to the bill.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): I think it is Standing Order 76.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: What is your point of order?

Ms Yasmin Catley: It is not relevant. I will make my comments through the Temporary Speaker, thank you. We are actually debating the Professional Engineers Registration Bill 2019, not to the Design and Building Practitioners Bill 2019.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): I thank the member for Swansea and I understand the point she is raising. However, the Minister is making a broad contribution and I rule that it is largely in relation to the leave of the bill.

Ms Yasmin Catley: The Minister has the opportunity to continue to debate the bill and he has bagged the debate.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): I am ruling that there is no point of order. I ask the member for Swansea to allow the Minister to continue with his contribution.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Please bring him back to the leave of the bill.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): We will see how he goes, but right now I think he is at least within a bull's roar.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: I am not sure whether the member for Swansea is listening, but I will repeat what I was saying. The move to prevent the passage of building reform legislation—I am talking about building reform legislation and responding to what is before the House—before the end of the year is a betrayal of the public's trust and completely unforgivable. Industry and the public have made it clear to governments across the country that we must take immediate action to better protect homeowners and lift the standards in the building and construction industry. We must act now to restore confidence in the residential high-rise market by passing this bill now, as a first step in the Government's commitment to fully implement the Shergold Weir recommendations. Despite this, Labor and The Greens have made a deal that will attempt to delay this bill and deny current and future homeowners new protections against defects.

The report provides a list of recommendations for the New South Wales Government; however, it fails to recognise a number of those have already been implemented, while in other instances the recommendation to government from the Shergold Weir report is a repeat of the advice given to the Government and the committee

about current and future elements to reform. Ironically, the recommendations put forward in the committee's report that the upper House refers to are built on shaky grounds. Key industry stakeholders, including representatives of property owners, have made it clear that they will not allow their testimony to be misunderstood and used as an excuse not to vote in favour of the Government's bill this year.

I can certainly see what drew the member for Swansea to this issue—no doubt, registering aeronautical engineers is an appealing idea when you live with your head in the clouds. To Engineers Australia, which I know is passionate about this proposal, I say that I have always appreciated our dealings and I encourage Engineers Australia to continue to be part of the process of implementing the building reforms we are undertaking now. As I have said repeatedly, at this point in time our focus needs to be on residential and other buildings that are regulated under the Building Code of Australia.

This is consistent with the intent of the Shergold Weir report, which identified that commercial and residential high-rise buildings have been the subject of significant failures in building standards in recent years. This is where we need to focus on registration and compliance efforts in the near term and this is precisely where the Design and Practitioners Bill is focused. The member for Swansea is unhappy at the moment, because it is painful to listen to what we are talking about. A silo approach will not work here. By all means we can have a discussion about what an expanded registration model could look like in the future and what would be needed to make it happen. But let us work together now to focus our efforts on the priority areas identified in the Shergold Weir report. Is the member for Swansea familiar with the report?

I will conclude by saying briefly to those opposite and to other members of Parliament who may see or read this, the reforms to the building and construction industry are not a political football. We must remember that outside of the Parliament building are millions of people who need us to fix the building reforms issue so that they can go home at the end of the day to a safe and secure environment. By all means, debate is healthy and welcomed so that we get a contest of ideas. But remember there are often unintended consequences to the things said publicly about particular buildings, people and situations. My office is always available to assist, should it be required, and we are happy to engage with any member from any party.

In the other place on Tuesday night, Labor moved an amendment proposing to insert this bill—the one we are debating right now in the lower House—into the Design and Building Practitioners Bill 2019. They sought to inject a bill into an existing bill. Really? There was no consultation, no discussion and there were no submissions when our exposure draft bill was put out for two weeks. We received 80 submissions from organisations, individuals, consumers, mums and dads. They put in submissions because they wanted to have a say.

Ms Yasmin Catley: It was such a secret. It was in the Parliament.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Such a secret? It was out there for two weeks. Is that such a secret? That is unbelievably outrageous. It was in the public arena for the two weeks, and yet the member for Swansea claimed that is a secret. That is unbelievable. Labor members attempted to hijack the Design and Building Practitioners Bill 2019 to get their bill over the line—inserting their bill into another bill, very sneaky. These amendments were provided to the Government at 2.30 p.m. on the same day. For four weeks we had been asking the Opposition to show us its amendments because we wanted to work with the Opposition.

We asked for amendments so that we could work with the Opposition to get the building and construction industry back on its feet. I walked into the Chamber for question time on Tuesday in the lower House and I handed the amendments, on the same day the bill was being introduced into the upper House. I think it was a conspiracy. This is political. There has been no consultation on this bill. The majority of stakeholders who were heavily involved in the development of the Design and Building Practitioners Bill 2019 were not even advised that this bill was being proposed to be inserted into the Design and Building Practitioners Bill 2019 as an amendment.

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

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: They people that this bill, the Professional Engineers Registration Bill 2019, affects were not advised that the bill was being presented to change what they do in their everyday lives. They were not advised that there was a bill to change their business, their model of work and the way that they operate. Instead, it was proposed to be inserted into the Design and Building Practitioners Bill 2019 as an amendment. In fact, it appears that apart from Engineers Australia there has been next to no consultation on Labor's bill. A large number of stakeholders have raised concerns about the lack of transparency in Labor's approach.

Ms Yasmin Catley: They are actually here in the Chamber.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: I am very happy for the member for Swansea to table a list of those people.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): I understand that the member for Swansea is trying to assist the Minister and they are both somewhat enjoying themselves, but this is not assisting in maintaining decorum in the Chamber. The member for Swansea will cease interjecting.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: That takes me back to page 1, where it says that we have been provided with light entertainment by Opposition members who are trying to cover their tracks. It appears that apart from Engineers Australia there has been next to no consultation on the bill at all. A large number of stakeholders have raised concerns about the lack of transparency in Labor's approach. Stakeholders other than Engineers Australia have to be consulted on the bill. The member should put the bill out there for an exposure draft, but she cannot and will not because it will get absolutely smashed. This is a single-purpose bill that provides for the registration of engineers only. I do not know how aeronautical, biomedical or chemistry engineers work in the building industry. Maybe some mechanical engineers do. I am not so sure. This is a catch-all, grab-bag bill that puts them all in there.

Ms Yasmin Catley: If you don't want to register engineers, just say so.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Go and talk to the maritime engineers.

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

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Maritime engineers are another example to show that this is a grab-bag, catch-all bill. Just because someone is an engineer it does not mean they work in construction. Therefore, the bill needs to be examined and a clear explanation must be provided as to how it will interact with the more holistic Design and Building Practitioners Bill 2019, which will register a range of design and building practitioners across the building and construction industry. Industry is calling for that register to put confidence back in the market and to protect consumers and mums and dads who want the great Australian dream. Labor members are denying them that by delaying our bill. Shame on them. Mums and dads will not be able to realise their great Australian dream thanks to members opposite and the political games that they play.

Ms Yasmin Catley: I tried to help you. It was constructive help but you wouldn't take it.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Constructive help? At 2.30 p.m. on the Tuesday that the bill was to be debated we were handed the amendments in the Chamber of the Legislative Assembly.

Mr David Mehan: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 76. The Minister needs to speak to this bill, although I know he is obsessed with the other bill that he cannot pass through Parliament. Even with all the machinery of government behind him, he is not able to prosecute his case on that bill. I appreciate he is frustrated by that, but he needs to speak to the bill before the House rather than refer to the other bill. It is causing an unnecessary argument across the Chamber.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): I thank the member for The Entrance. I note his concern about argumentative behaviour in the Chamber. The Minister will be more mindful of the specific bill that we are debating. I note that a number of interjections from the member for Swansea may have perhaps misdirected his attention.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: The bill before the House, the Professional Engineers Registration Bill 2019 brought forward by Labor, needs to be examined and a clear explanation needs to be provided as to how it will interact with the more holistic Design and Building Practitioners Bill 2019, which will register a range of design and building practitioners across the building and construction industry. For this reason, the Government will be seeking to refer the bill to the Legislative Assembly Committee on Environment and Planning. I move:

That the motion be amended to delete all words after "That" and inserting instead:

"the bill be referred to the Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Environment and Planning."

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (11:05:30): The objects of the Professional Engineers Registration Bill 2019 are clear. They are:

- (a) to establish a scheme for the registration and regulation of professional engineers, and
- (b) to ensure that engineering services are provided by professional engineers.

The bill defines a professional engineer as:

... an individual registered under this Act as a practising professional engineer or non-practising professional engineer.

A professional engineering service is defined as:

... an engineering service that requires, or is based on, the application of engineering principles and data to a design ...

The bill further defines the following areas of engineering that are subject to it: structural engineering, civil engineering, mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, fire safety engineering and any other type of engineering prescribed by the regulations. As a qualified professional engineer, I support the introduction of the bill to provide the public with confidence that engineers practising in New South Wales are appropriately qualified because we have a registration system to ensure that unqualified engineers do not practice in our State. The bill will provide parameters for a registration scheme and the establishment of a professional engineering board to oversee the registration scheme to ensure that accountability is at the centre of all engineering services provided in New South Wales.

The bill has the support of Professionals Australia, the association representing engineers in the workplace. Professionals Australia has repeatedly called on the Government to provide the sector with a robust registration scheme to ensure that the designs of our buildings, bridges and public infrastructure—such as tunnels, roads and government buildings like schools and hospitals—are all carried out by qualified engineers who are accountable to a body such as the proposed engineers board. The issue of engineer registration was discussed at the recent upper House inquiry into the regulation of building standards, building quality and building disputes. I refer to comments made by Mr Russell, the national manager for public affairs at Engineers Australia, which is the professional association representing about 100,000 engineers.

Mr Russell stated that the Design and Building Practitioners Bill 2019 introduced by the Government complements the Professional Engineers Registration Bill 2019. He does not see them as an either/or proposition but said that the two definitely need to work together. The Government will not support the bill based on the excuse that it will introduce its own Design and Building Practitioners Bill. The Government should listen to the experts in the field and support both bills, which complement each other. Currently in New South Wales virtually anyone can call themselves an engineer, even if they do not have the relevant education or experience. As New South Wales lags behind all the other States that have introduced, or are in the process of introducing, a registration scheme for their engineers, we will attract more unqualified engineers to New South Wales. Mr Roydhouse, Chief Executive Officer of the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia (NSW Division), made the following observation:

It will become apparent and certainly within my membership it has already become apparent that people who do not have the qualification are seeking to move into New South Wales because they can no longer work in other States.

It is a no-brainer that a registration scheme must be established in New South Wales. Imagine if we had a system where other professionals like architects, doctors and lawyers were not required to have a registration system and anyone could legally call themselves a doctor or a lawyer. I suggest that this would have a catastrophic outcome, yet any person can call themselves an engineer and there are no legal implications. Why do we have such a double standard in our State?

A registration scheme for engineers will also provide an opportunity for professional development to be maintained as part of the registration process. There are thousands of qualified engineers in New South Wales and they all deserve to be recognised through a registration scheme. I believe that registration will also bring much-needed transparency for consumers and businesses, who deserve to know that their engineers are qualified and that their homes and businesses are safe. The current situation is simply not acceptable and creates many risks. In New South Wales there are too many non-engineers working on complex projects that should be performed by qualified, skilled engineers. Professionals Australia has stated:

The overreliance on non-engineers has led to poor project conception, development and delivery, which is devaluing the profession.

It is time to bring this profession in line with other professions to ensure that only qualified and competent engineers can oversee engineering work. It is time that the work of engineers is recognised by a professional registration system and overseen by an engineers board. We cannot afford to play politics with this legislation, and I call on the Government to support this bill. It is the only way we can build a stronger engineering profession in New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (11:12:24): I support the Minister, the member for Tamworth, in the referral of the Professional Engineers Registration Bill 2019 to the Committee on Environment and Planning. It is fairly obvious—and I have had occasion to say this before in relation to other legislation—that poor processes can lead to poor outcomes. If you do not consult widely, if you do not ask the people who might be affected by a proposed bill, you can often do things which later turn out to be pretty silly. If you have not asked people in the industry for their opinion on how this will impact them, you have almost certainly missed something.

We just heard from the member for Mount Druitt. I am sure he is quite genuine in saying that some things should only be done by engineers. That sounds like a reasonable proposition. I am open to hearing more detail of what that might mean, but so too would people in the industries affected want to have a say about what that might mean, and they should be afforded that opportunity. There is absolutely no way we should run over the top of a

number of very key industries in New South Wales and impose a new level of regulation on them without giving them the opportunity to have a say about how it might affect them—in detail. I am certainly not qualified to indicate which tasks are for engineers only and which are not; that is not my expertise, and I suspect it is not the expertise of most members in this Chamber.

We should ask the industries affected how this proposal will impact them and if this is the best way to go about it. I suspect that it is not because it is a piecemeal, single-focus bill which does not address the broader issues that we know are in the building industry at the moment. It is probably not the best way to go about it. Nevertheless, I take it on trust. Let us give it to the committee and have everybody air their views. All of those who may be affected and all of those who have relevant expertise can have their say in a submission to that committee. The committee members can then recommend to this House what we might do about the matter and what is the best way to proceed to pick up the learnings that come from that. I suspect it will not be this bill that is found to be the best way to proceed.

Legislation should not be a knee-jerk reaction targeted to a political objective. That is too often what we see in this place with bills from the other side. Their bills are drafted to score the media headline, to score the point or to curry favour with a particular interest group rather than to take a holistic view of addressing a problem faced by the people of New South Wales. That is exactly what the Government's bill is intended to do—that is, address the problems faced by people in an holistic manner. If we can learn something from other inputs, we are listening. We are trying very hard. The Minister has gone through a very extensive process of consultation in developing his bill to address the issues that we know are out there. They have not emerged suddenly or overnight but have a long history.

This particular bill does not do any of that. The single-purpose engineers bill that we have in front of us is not required because more appropriate and robust reforms are contained in the Government's Design and Building Practitioners Bill. That bill delivers on a number of the key reforms that the Government committed to in its response to the Shergold Weir *Building Confidence* report that this bill does not address. In comparison with the Design and Building Practitioners Bill, the narrow focus of the Professional Engineers Registration Bill of registering only engineers severely limits the effectiveness of the reform and imposes regulatory costs around a single function without clarifying, for the benefit of the whole industry, whether each of those costs is necessarily required.

The Government's approach provides for a broader and more holistic response to the issues affecting the quality of design work. It regulates any person who prepares or coordinates or supervises the preparation of a regulated design. Through this bill, the Government is seeking to ensure that standards of performance are improved across a broad range of practitioners that have the necessary skills and experience to provide those services, not just the narrow focus of the Professional Engineers Registration Bill.

In modern construction, an engineer typically works for an engineering firm rather than as a sole practitioner. Not enabling the registration of a body corporate, or suitable alternative, means that an engineering corporation cannot be held liable under the engineers bill and is not required to comply with any of the obligations set by it. That is a sloppy approach to doing this task, which would have become apparent had more extensive consultation with the industry been undertaken. Failing to establish a process for the registration of bodies corporate, or a suitable alternative, also means that it will be more difficult to hold directors liable for breaches, and they will be able to more easily phoenix and start new companies without being held to account, monitored or restricted by the New South Wales regulator. It also means that the regulator cannot take any compliance or enforcement action against directors or corporations under the engineers bill specifically, which may reduce public confidence and result in poor outcomes for the community.

This is simply a product of not thinking through, not consulting widely enough and not taking into account all of the factors that impact on the industry, and it would have become apparent—and it could have been remedied—had a better process been followed leading to the introduction of legislation. That is why we take the time and trouble to consult with the community, to put exposure drafts out there, to ensure that all stakeholders—not just a narrow few, but all potential stakeholders—are made aware of the proposed legislation and can have input to it. Unfortunately, the Opposition has not followed that kind of process and has not adopted that kind of holistic approach. Not surprisingly, the bill it has produced as a result is deficient in many respects.

Not providing a mechanism under which directors are held to account is a significant failure of the engineers bill and may make it more difficult to target and penalise directors and firms that offer poor engineering services. This approach is also contrary to the comments made in submissions to the Public Accountability Committee building inquiry which were critical of corporations not taking responsibility for the actions of their employees. By contrast, the Government's Design and Building Practitioners Bill 2019 requires the registration of individuals and body corporates if they intend to perform functions or carry out associated work under the scheme.

The Government's bill also imposes a number of obligations on each and every director of a registered body corporate, including that they must report conduct relating to a body corporate or registered individual if they believe there are grounds for taking disciplinary action. That ensures compliance with the obligations under the Design and Building Practitioners Bill. The comprehensive registration scheme under the Government's bill will ensure that only suitably qualified and insured practitioners are able to perform work in New South Wales and that confidence, accountability and integrity are restored within the industry.

These are key words—confidence, accountability and integrity—and they will go together only if we have a comprehensive scheme that takes account of all of the impacts, addresses all the permutations that corporate entities engage in and provides the mechanism for government to regulate. The bill in front of us today does not do that. It is a deficient, narrow bill. It serves a political purpose I am sure, but it does not serve the purpose of properly addressing the range of issues that we know are in the community. The compliance and enforcement powers of the Professional Engineers Registration Bill do not afford the regulator a broad scope of power sufficient to adequately enforce the legislation. The powers under the Professional Engineers Registration Bill are limited to carrying out professional engineering services only.

The bill, for example, has no powers of entry for authorised officers to conduct in-depth investigations. Comparatively, the Government's Design and Building Practitioners Bill does provide the regulator with a broader suite of modern powers with markedly increased penalties that are tailored to the building and construction industry. We are responding to the needs of the industry and the community, which must have confidence that builders are accountable and that there are measures in place for government to follow up breaches where necessary. The Government's global, widespread, all-encompassing approach has been designed to give confidence, accountability, certainty and integrity to the process. Through the Design and Building Practitioners Bill the Government is making a genuine effort to restore community confidence in the building industry. Unfortunately, the bill before the House will not do that.

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (11:21:54): I am delighted to put a few facts back into this debate on the Professional Engineers Registration Bill 2019. I begin by commending my shadow ministerial colleague, the member for Swansea, for bringing this important matter to the House. I am impressed by the member for Riverstone; he must have been reading the dictionary again. In his contribution he used big words such as "deficient", "confidence", "accountability" and "integrity". I suggest that the only things that are deficient are the accountability and integrity of members opposite and, most importantly, the confidence that the people of New South Wales have in them. They have flawed convictions and take narrow, shallow intellectual approaches, which have never been better on display than during this debate. Most people have to try to embarrass themselves but members opposite, very impressively, do it naturally. When I saw the member for Upper Hunter embarrass himself with ease and so naturally I thought he was the only one. Clearly, he is not alone.

The Professional Engineers Registration Bill has been thought through. The consultation undertaken by the shadow Minister has been extensive and progressive and it is continued across the board. The bill is not only well thought out but also is consistent with national expectations as well as the expectations and aspirations of the industry. We know that it is because the member for Swansea has consulted to ensure that the bill is viable, that it will work and that it will provide the safety net that the people of New South Wales need. The Professional Engineers Registration Bill is similar to what a good government has done in Queensland and a good government is looking to do in Victoria. The people who have escaped the tyranny of conservatism in New South Wales and have drifted to the south and the north would be familiar with that, because that is what good governments do. It is what a Labor government would do in New South Wales. Frankly, I am disappointed that the narrow views of the conservatives opposite are restricting a more sensible position on this.

We know that in New South Wales anyone can ultimately call themselves an engineer and legally carry out work as an engineer without any guarantee of qualifications, competency or maintenance of skills through ongoing professional development. I take nothing away from the workers in the industry who may not be engineers and who do things with good intention and will. This is on the Government's lap. The Government needs to legislate and put appropriate regulations in place to provide those protections. It is the Government that this falls on. I commend each and every engineer.

Engineers makes up a unique professional body that can never be replaced. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade estimates that over 5,000 migrants who enter New South Wales each year and say that they are engineers—including 1,600 who are on temporary 457 visas—have no assessment made of their qualifications. Because engineers do not need to be registered in New South Wales, all can be employed as engineers in this State. Ultimately, that is what this bill seeks to amend. By underpinning confidence, registration helps ensure that those who are designing and scoping engineering projects are suitably qualified. In addition to the obvious risk to public safety, poor scoping and designing of engineering projects poses enormous financial impacts, including through cost overruns and delays. There is overwhelming support from all engineering bodies for this scheme.

Mr Michael Johnsen: You're just embarrassing yourself.

Mr GREG WARREN: I note my old friend the member for Upper Hunter has entered the Chamber. I will start on him later. In my electorate of Campbelltown a rapid influx of high-rise development is expected. The residents who will live in those buildings need certainty that appropriate measures are in place for their safety and for the integrity of the financial decisions that they make. It is their home. The Opal Tower highlighted the need for greater checks and balances regarding the construction of buildings. People in this State demand, expect and are entitled to those safety measures. This is not a luxury that they aspire to. It is a right. I believe the Government must put the framework in place to ensure those protections. Currently, the principal certifying authority who signs off on construction of buildings does not generally need to be accredited. That raises all sorts of issues when we are talking about the framework of engineering. I am not an engineer but—

Mr Tim Crakanthorp: You can call yourself one. You can do anything you like.

Mr GREG WARREN: True.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: I bestow upon you engineer status.

[*Government members interjected.*]

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): Members will cease interjecting. The member for Campbelltown is prone to being baited but so far he has been excellent. The member for Oatley, in particular, will cease interjecting.

Mr GREG WARREN: I appreciate the interjections of those opposite. Some of their finest contributions are interjections. As flawed as they are, I do welcome them. In contrast to what the good shadow Minister and member for Swansea has introduced, the Government's Building and Development Certifiers Bill 2018 was assented to on 31 October. But the Government has given no indication of when that bill will be proclaimed. The Labor Opposition and the shadow Minister are taking an active role to ensure that issues that arise, such as those that became evident with the Opal Tower, are dealt with. The Government has an opportunity to embrace the bill and provide protections for residents and the certainty that the industry demands and deserves.

There has been a lot of talk about playing politics. A Government member—I think the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation or the member for Riverstone—dared to suggest that politicians were politicking. Go figure! It is groundbreaking to suggest that a politician would be politicking on this issue. It is a matter of politics and this is what we do. We are professionals as well and we must stand by the courage of our conviction. We must change and make laws for the protection, certainty, safety and security of the people we are privileged to represent. We need to forget about all the rubbish and the jargon. We come in here to make laws to change and protect people's lives. Clearly that is lost on those opposite. But they have an opportunity to support this bill.

Politics should not stand in the way of a pragmatic and better outcome for the engineering industry which will provide security and certainty for many residents across the State. At the end of the day, this is an anomaly that needs to be addressed. I urge the Minister to reconsider his position. I note his contribution and urge him to do what any Minister would do to provide the leadership and direction for the safety and certainty of the people of New South Wales. By every indication the Minister is not willing to do that, which is disappointing. I urge him to reconsider his position and do the right and sensible thing to provide a safety net and support for the industry. I thank the House.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (11:31:54): I speak in the debate on the Professional Engineers Registration Bill 2019. Let me begin by saying that I will never get back the 10 minutes I spent listening to the contribution of the member for Campbelltown. I agree with the Minister's amendment to refer the bill to the Legislative Assembly Committee on Environment and Planning, which I chaired a few years ago. This situation is a bit like an episode of *The Road Runner Show*. There are only six hours left until the end of the 2019 parliamentary session and we are dealing with a bill that the shadow Minister introduced only a couple of weeks ago, with a couple of amendments—

Ms Yasmin Catley: Six weeks ago.

Mr MARK COURE: I will get to you in a second. A couple of amendments were brought to our attention in question time on Tuesday. Why the rush? Before I dissect this bill—and it does need to be properly dissected—I will address the stakeholder management that the shadow Minister and those opposite have undertaken over the past couple of weeks. I expected that there would be an extensive list of member organisations that the shadow Minister consulted with but there is not. In fact, only one organisation is listed, Engineers Australia. According to the Opposition, Engineers Australia has publicly supported the bill before the House. I would like to know what kind of consultation with Engineers Australia the shadow Minister engaged in.

I presume it was a five-second phone call or a very quick email. That was the impression I got from her about consultation.

There seems to be a real rush to get this bill through the House, with only a few hours left of the parliamentary year. There are some serious shortcomings in the bill as a result of the lack of consultation. The Master Builders Association, the Housing Industry Association, the Australian Institute of Architects, the Owners Corporation Network, Local Government NSW and a number of other associations and building professional organisations were not consulted, and I think they should have been. With six hours to go, those opposite want to rush this bill through the House. They are behaving like Wile E. Coyote and the Road Runner.

The Government is opposing this bill for a couple of reasons. First, it fails to impose any new obligations and mandatory restrictions on a large, unregulated sector of the design and construction industry. Second, the Opposition's single-purpose Professional Engineers Registration Bill is not required because more appropriate and robust reforms are contained in the Government's Design and Building Practitioners Bill 2019, which delivers on a number of key reforms committed to in the Government's response to the Shergold Weir Building Confidence report that this bill does not address. I thank the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation for his actions and leadership since taking over the role. Over the years the Government has provided some leadership, while the Opposition has provided none.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson): Order! The member for Oatley will be heard in silence.

Mr MARK COURE: In contrast to the Government's Design and Building Practitioners Bill 2019, the narrow focus in the Professional Engineers Registration Bill to register only engineers severely limits the effectiveness of the reform and imposes costs around a single function. The Government's Design and Building Practitioners Bill provides a broader, more holistic approach to the issues affecting the quality of design work and regulates any person who prepares, coordinates or supervises the preparation of a regulated design. The Government seeks to ensure that the standards of performance are improved across a broad range of practitioners who have the necessary skills and experience to provide those services. The Government's Design and Building Practitioners Bill will ensure that the development of designs, including any variations, are compliant with the Building Code of Australia. That is extremely important. Having spent two terms on council, I certainly consider that to be a good step forward.

The Government's Design and Building Practitioners Bill further provides additional obligations on the building site, imposing a chain of responsibility on persons involved across the design and construction of a building to capture the breadth of work, rather than the design side only. That is a smart step forward, particularly considering some of the issues that have come up in recent months and years. The Opposition's Professional Engineers Registration Bill will not achieve those outcomes. I am sure that at some stage the shadow Minister will move further amendments to the amendments to the amendments that she has already foreshadowed. We might get them five minutes into question time in a couple of hours. As I said before, the shadow Minister, who is practising to be a Minister, should do the right thing and consult—

Ms Sophie Cotsis: You should be a Minister.

Mr MARK COURE: Take it up with Gladys. The shadow Minister should consult with the community and speak to the Master Builders Association, the Housing Industry Association and Local Government NSW, which is an extremely important body to consult with. But the shadow Minister has not undertaken that consultation. Those on this side of the Chamber have done and will continue to do the appropriate consultation, as we do on every bill. Those opposite have not. That is why the Government is opposing this bill. This is very important; the shadow Minister should listen. Why is she rushing this bill through the Parliament without proper consultation? Members on this side of the House have dissected this bill; that is why we oppose it.

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (11:39:48): I want to pay tribute to Ms Yasmin Catley, who is a very hardworking shadow Minister, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and a tireless advocate for engineers and others in the industry. She makes herself very well known. A lot of constituents who come into my office are well aware of the hard work that she is doing in the face of such a terrible crisis in the building industry and the terrible lack of safeguards in so many different areas. It is a situation that is creating many problems and is affecting some of the apartments that have been built in the beautiful city of Newcastle.

It gives me great pleasure to be able to speak to the Professional Engineers Registration Bill 2019. This bill aligns with the co-regulatory model in other Australian jurisdictions to ensure national consistency. The member for Campbelltown noted in his contribution to this debate that he is not an engineer. The fact is that he could call himself an engineer. In fact, I could; anyone could. That is a huge problem and it highlights the idiocy

of the situation. There are 5,500 migrants who have come to New South Wales stating that they are engineers. As engineers do not need to be registered in our State they can all be employed as engineers.

That is in direct contrast to the situation for medical practitioners. Many thousands who come to Australia have qualified as doctors in other countries. There is an incredibly rigorous scheme for them to become medical practitioners in Australia. Doctors from other countries cannot simply start practising. They have to undergo many difficult exams to requalify. The situation for engineers is ludicrous and the Government has been very slow to get this requirement into the public sphere and enact it. By putting this bill forward the shadow Minister hopes to underpin competence and introduce a registration scheme so that those who are designing and scoping engineering projects are qualified.

In addition to the very obvious risk to public safety, poor scoping and poor design of engineering projects, the lack of regulation also poses enormous financial impacts, including through cost overruns and delays. The cost-benefit ratio of such a registration scheme that would prevent such financial impacts is 3.14—a massive cost-benefit ratio. So all the logical reasons are here for such a scheme. It just beggars belief that this Government has not implemented it. All key engineering bodies, both employer and employee, support the adoption of a registration scheme.

A scheme already exists in Queensland and in Victoria the Parliament has considered the Professional Engineering Registration Bill 2019. The Australian Capital Territory is also committed to legislating such a scheme. That means that New South Wales is the only jurisdiction on the east coast that does not require registration. Without such a scheme this State could become an even more attractive location for those without qualifications purporting to be engineers and seeking employment. That is simply not good enough. The gravity of the situation has been highlighted by Engineers Australia. In a statement about Mascot Towers, Engineers Australia indicated:

The NSW Coalition committed to public consultation on implementing the COAG report recommendations—including an engineers' registration scheme—within six months of the March election. As the national professional body for engineering, Engineers Australia has offered to help the Government with this work.

It goes on to say that New South Wales has been slow to move. That is a great understatement. Organisations in my electorate do a magnificent job of putting forward their views to me and to others. I particularly pay tribute to Helen Link, the General Manager of the Newcastle Division of Engineers Australia, along with President Joe Townsend and the Deputy President Pierre Gouhier. They have been doing a terrific job drawing this issue to the attention of me and other members of this Parliament. This legislation is so badly needed because it is a matter that this Government has badly failed on. The benefits of the scheme are very well known and very obvious.

Firstly, it would reduce risks to public health, safety and welfare. Secondly, it would provide legislative efficiency and cutting of red tape. Thirdly, it would provide industry and consumer information. Fourthly, it would provide for professional recognition. Fifthly, it would facilitate international mobility and trade in engineering services. These are just some of the many benefits from registering engineers. Introducing a comprehensive registration scheme has been recommended by countless reviews, countless reports and countless inquiries. Yet this Liberal-Nationals Government has stalled, dithered and ignored these voices of reason.

This bill outlines a comprehensive scheme to provide for the registration of all engineers in New South Wales, including a variety of codes such as structural engineers, civil engineers, mechanical engineers, electrical engineers, fire safety engineers and other types of engineers as prescribed by the regulations. This will ensure that quality work is carried out by engineers on residential and commercial buildings and on infrastructure projects like roads and tunnels. The scheme will be governed by the Board of Professional Engineers, who will oversee the operation of the scheme, investigate complaints and improve assessment schemes under the Act.

If the Liberal-Nationals Government wants to get serious about building things well for the very first time it should support the Professional Engineers Registration Scheme and this legislation. Many people in my electorate have approached me about deficiencies in relation to building and construction and problems with the unqualified engineers who are making decisions. I believe that it is an absolute no-brainer to support this legislation. I urge all members to support it.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (11:46:55): The Professional Engineers Registration Bill 2019 is very important legislation. I acknowledge the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Ms Yasmin Catley, who is the shadow Minister responsible for this very important area. I commend her for her extensive and considered work on the bill. I would like to counter some of the misleading information that has come from those opposite about consultation. No member who was serious about a bill, particularly one that deals with our wonderful professional engineers, would introduce it in this House willy-nilly. Extensive consultation has been conducted on this bill with a number of engineering groups. The shadow Minister has spoken with various engineering groups.

Just recently the shadow Minister spoke to the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia. The shadow Minister has also consulted with Engineers Australia, which represents engineers from all disciplines, and with representatives of Professionals Australia, who visited her here just today. I want to put that on the record because those opposite have misinformed the Parliament about stakeholder engagement. I know that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has done extensive work in this area. I also want to send my huge thanks to engineers in New South Wales and across Australia.

Before I came to this place I spent a couple of years working for a company of engineers where I saw firsthand that engineers are intelligent, considerate, imaginative professionals who do a phenomenal job. In speaking to the bill, I would like to put on the record my praise for all engineers. They not only study very hard at university but also work on the tools. As has been indicated by the shadow Minister for Building Reform and Property, the various engineering codes include structural, civil, mechanical, electrical, fire safety and information technology and a whole list of others. I put on the record my praise and acknowledgement of our engineers in New South Wales.

Mr Kevin Anderson: Thanks, Sophie.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS: This is serious. I am glad the Minister is in the Chamber. As I said, before I came into this place I had the privilege and honour of working with a company of engineers. I know that engineers are very intelligent professionals who do amazing work in design. Unfortunately, once government gets in the way, whether it is Labor or Liberal, their designs may be altered, whether it is a matter of cost or other factors. Having been present at the meetings of the engineers, observing them and listening to their ideas, one of the big issues they used to talk about was coordination. We could do so much to increase our productivity and opportunities in this city if there was better coordination. That is why this bill is so important.

The Minister should reconsider supporting the bill, which is a registration bill and acknowledges that our engineers in New South Wales are highly qualified. Many of our engineers speak at international conferences and are headhunted by international companies. Many of them work across Asia and the subcontinent, and in developing countries as well, designing projects. This bill is also about respect for this profession. What would the late Dr John Jacob "Job" Crew Bradfield, CMG, say about this bill? Dr Bradfield was a prominent Australian engineer best known for his work overseeing the design and building of the Sydney Harbour Bridge and the Bradfield scheme. He joined the New South Wales Public Works Department in 1891. What would he say about this registration bill? He would agree with it.

I have not heard anything from the Government members who have contributed to this debate as to why they do not support the bill, other than for the political reason that the Opposition has introduced it. I have not heard any evidence-based or factual argument or any important statistics or information. I have not heard anything to convince us that this is not the right thing to do. We would not bring this bill to this place if the situation was not so serious. As our Deputy Leader indicated, a registration scheme already exists in Queensland and Victoria. Yet we are still considering a scheme in the bill before the House. I urge the Government to support the bill. It is a very simple, very important bill that respects the engineers in our State by doing the right thing. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (11:54:41): In reply: I recap what it is this legislation will do. The purpose of the bill before the House today is to introduce a registration scheme for all engineers in New South Wales. The current situation is that anybody can call themselves an engineer. That is clearly very concerning and is creating more instability in the housing market. The housing market is critical at the moment because of the crisis we find ourselves in. The concerns relate also to building tunnels and bridges, all of our construction right around this State.

The Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia, most of the members of which are from local government, has been driving this for some years now. The institute representatives came to speak to me in about 2016 on this very important matter. The Hon. Peter Primrose in the other place gave me that introduction. As the member for Canterbury said earlier, this profession sets itself the highest standard. The institute has been an extraordinary advocate for the profession of engineers and has been calling for registration. This is not a thought bubble. This is something that the sector is crying out for. It does not want its profession to be diminished by people who do not have the skills and correct qualifications calling themselves engineers. That puts the reputation of engineers into disrepute. The Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia has been calling for a registration scheme. I publicly thank the institute for its advocacy and for its assistance in the formulation of this very important piece of legislation.

I also thank Engineers Australia. I have met with it on at least half a dozen occasions and have had many conversations with its representatives. They too have been excellent in guiding the party and me in the formulation of this legislation. I thank Engineers Australia for its advocacy on behalf of all of the engineering disciplines

across the country. It does extraordinary work. In a survey of its thousands of members across the country, it found that more than 90 per cent of its members in New South Wales want this registration scheme. It is something the sector is calling for because it knows how important it is that its profession remains of such a high standard. Again, I publicly thank Engineers Australia and all of those hardworking people from the organisation who have assisted and guided me. I cannot thank them enough for their help. I also thank Professionals Australia. Its representatives were in the Parliament this week for the introduction of the Minister's bill in the upper House. I sat down with them and had quite a long discussion. They too have been extremely helpful in preparing this piece of legislation. In fact, they were in the gallery today and heard the Minister say that no consultation had taken place. They were quite insulted by that comment.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: Kevin Anderson, engineer.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: I do not know. He may call himself an engineer, I am not too sure. It is disappointing that the Government will not accept the bill as it is. It has been divulged by a couple of Government members that they will not be supporting the bill. It is disappointing because it is the right thing to do. It is a shame that we cannot put politics aside and do the right thing here. Just yesterday Minister Anderson called on me to bring a separate bill to the House so we could debate it. How timely, because it is here and we are debating it. This is the bill that he asked me, just yesterday—

Mr Kevin Anderson: I don't think so.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: I will table it. He says in his media release:

Mr Anderson has called for Labor and The Greens to remove their onerous and inappropriate amendments—

that is this bill—

and move them as a separate bill once they have conducted consultation with stakeholders.

I have gone through the consultation process. It has been extensive and thorough and the industry is calling for it. Tick that box. I have the bill. It is in the House today. It is here, Minister. I have done as you have asked, and you are such a hypocrite that now you are voting it down. You are not serious about helping this industry at all. What you are serious about doing is playing politics while people are having to move out of their homes. You are a disgrace and I find it despicable that you would—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson): I ask the member for Swansea to direct her comments through the Chair.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: I am, looking right at you.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson): Are you calling me a disgrace? You just said, "You are a disgrace."

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: The Minister is a disgrace and should not be playing politics with this issue. Engineers should be registered in the State. By not supporting the bill, the Minister is saying that we do not need to register engineers in this State. If that is what he means, then he should say it. That is what I am saying. I am here with the bill, as you asked yesterday, Minister, for me to bring a bill in this place. I am here with it, and you are still saying no. You are not genuine at all. You are the one who has hijacked the bill. You have gagged the debate in the upper House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson): The member for Swansea will direct her comments through the Chair.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: Do you know, Madam Temporary Speaker, that the Minister has gagged the bill in the upper House? That is absolutely shocking. All because the Government is unsure if it will get through. I am prepared to debate it. Labor says bring it on here in this place. Let us come back next week if we have to. It is a critically important matter.

Mr Kevin Anderson: We are referring it to a committee. We are doing your consultation for you.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson): The Minister will allow the member to be heard in silence.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: The disingenuousness of the Minister regarding the registration of engineers is very disappointing. I urge the Government to support the bill.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson): The question is that the bill be now read a second time, to which the member for Tamworth has moved an amendment. The question is that the motion as amended be agreed to.

Motion as amended agreed to.**INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION AMENDMENT (MINISTERIAL CODE OF CONDUCT—PROPERTY DEVELOPERS) BILL 2019****Second Reading Debate****Debate resumed from 14 November 2019.**

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (12:04:31): I make a contribution to debate on the Independent Commission Against Corruption Amendment (Ministerial Code of Conduct-Property Developers) Bill 2019. The aim of the bill is simple: to ensure property developers cannot hold a seat at the Cabinet table. All members in this place are aware of the importance of the integrity of the social democratic process which we enjoy in this State and nation. It must be bound by certainty and confidence to be delivered to our communities. There are challenges around this matter, in particular the community's perception. Everything must be in place to ensure that the community has confidence and certainty. I will not go over the matters that have occurred this week and in previous weeks. The conduct and opportunism displayed by those opposite is nothing short of a disgrace. We have heard all sorts of revelations about the integrity and credibility of individuals, both in this place and outside, by some of those opposite, not all. I will be very frank about this; I believe it does not impress those who we are privileged to serve. They would rather we talked about the matters and issues that confront local families throughout our communities.

The persistent conduct of those opposite in seeking fortune, from what are ultimately very unfortunate circumstances, has been disappointing at best. The community deserves to know the decisions made at the Cabinet table are made in the best interests of the State, not of the Minister. When one looks at the holdings of the Minister around the Metro stations, which have been revealed this week, it is deeply disturbing. I note they are before the ICAC for consideration with the determination pending. I will leave the investigation to the ICAC but it does not remove the importance of ensuring that the community still has certainty. This is another important step in Labor's commitment to ensure integrity and credibility of government and the democratic process in the State. The reluctance of those opposite is simply absurd and less than impressive. It is mind boggling why they will not take these extra steps.

When one considers some of these matters—whether it be the 12 members opposite who ended up before the ICAC, or the recent revelations about property holdings around Metro stations—it sheds some light as to the reluctance of the conservatives opposite to ensure the democratic free passage and transparency of our system. We should do everything in our power to ensure the transparency, credibility and integrity of the democratic system in our great State. It is not a luxury that the community aspires to. They deserve it and they are entitled to do it. Those opposite have the opportunity to correct this matter of integrity and credibility by supporting this bill. They can display to the people of New South Wales that they are fair dinkum when it comes to the credibility and integrity of the democratic process, the Parliament and, indeed, government in this State. Anything short of those opposite supporting the bill will display a very serious element of neglect by the Government towards ensuring its credibility and integrity.

Debate interrupted.*Motions***ARAKWAL NATIVE TITLE CLAIM**

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (12:10:34): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Recognises the native title claim of the Arakwal people of Cape Byron and the Bundjalung nation has been approved, providing legal recognition of pre-existing rights of the traditional owners.
- (2) Notes it is only the second time in New South Wales that native title sea rights have been recognised.
- (3) Congratulates the elders and all involved in this long process.
- (4) Recognises and acknowledges that Byron Bay always was and always will be Aboriginal land.

I take the opportunity to acknowledge the Bundjalung people, who are the traditional owners of the land on which my electorate is located, and pay my respects to elders past and present. I also acknowledge all traditional owners and the people who represent them in this place. The Bundjalung of Byron Bay, the Arakwal people, have lived in the coastal landscape around Byron Bay for over 60,000 years. In late 1994 three Aboriginal elders—three sisters, Aunty Lorna Kelly, Aunty Linda Vidler and Aunty Yvonne Graham—commenced a process for native title rights on behalf of the Arakwal people. Aunty Dulcie Nicholls joined the claim at a later stage. In September 1995 a formal native title claim was registered with the National Native Title Tribunal, followed by a further claim

regarding additional land in 1997. The three sisters lived at Ironbark with their parents, Jimmy and Linda Kay. The Kay family lived off the land and the ocean between Cape Byron and Seven Mile Beach. The sisters' grandfather, Harry Bray, was very famous; Brays Beach at Broken Head is named after Uncle Harry.

In the 15 years following that application, three Indigenous land use agreements were negotiated with the State of New South Wales. Those Indigenous land use agreements are famous; they are talked about across the country and internationally. The first Indigenous land use agreement [ILUA], in 2001, was a landmark agreement and the first of its kind in Australia. It won an international award acknowledging the agreement and the conservation and protection of country. In 2003 the New South Wales Government and the Arakwal people were awarded the prestigious Fred M. Packard Award for distinguished achievements in wildlife preservation by the International Union for Conservation of Nature at the fifth World Parks Congress, held in South Africa.

Arakwal ILUA 1 was the result of seven years of consultation between the Bundjalung people of Byron Bay, a range of community groups, the Byron Shire Council and the New South Wales Government, including the National Parks and Wildlife Service. A consultative committee was established—including Arakwal elders and community, the council, regional interest groups and environmental and resident bodies—to make recommendations about the proposed national park and other Crown lands within the Byron shire. I recognise former New South Wales Premier Bob Carr, who was instrumental in setting up the Arakwal National Park. I also mention former MLC Jan Barham, who for the past 20-plus years has been an incredible supporter at the heart of this process.

The ILUA recognised the Arakwal people as the traditional owners of the area of the Arakwal National Park. An outcome was that in the year of creation of the Arakwal National Park, funding was jointly managed by the Bundjalung people of Byron Bay and the National Parks and Wildlife Service. Governments and native title claimants throughout Australia have used the Arakwal negotiations as a best practice model in their own respective negotiations. If I have time I will highlight some of the changes that are needed, because this was a 20-year process. Sadly, all of the sisters except one passed away before the outcome was reached. It is the story of Eddie Mabo and it is simply unacceptable that the process takes decades and decades.

In 2001 a third native title claim was lodged when it became apparent that evidence provided during the negotiations over ILUA 1 was applicable to additional areas outside the existing claims. This included lands up to Brunswick Heads to the north, Broken Head to the south, Mullumbimby and Bangalow to the west and approximately three nautical miles east of the mean high-water mark. Negotiations over the third claim and outstanding portions of the first claim led to the development of ILUA 2 and 3. They were signed on the birthday of the late Auntie Lorna Kelly, one of our Arakwal elders who did so much to help the Arakwal people get back to and maintain their connection to country.

With the announcement of the successful native title claim, more than 300 people gathered at Brunswick Heads on Tuesday 30 April 2019 to hear His Honour Justice Robertson hand down the determination that the Bundjalung people of Byron Bay were formally recognised as the native title holders of the beautiful lands and waters of the Byron Bay area. The Byron Bay claim is only the second in New South Wales to recognise native title sea rights and is the first positive determination in an intensively settled part of the State. I know that the Arakwal corporation and the elders are all working very carefully on a governance model, because the pressure on them is huge. In an area where overdevelopment is de rigueur, they already are being asked to give advice and comment on and weigh in on so many matters. I am very impressed with what they are doing. They are developing their governance model so that they can make those decisions in a formal way, but in a way that works for them and that puts them at the heart of the process.

On hearing of the Federal Court's determination, Arakwal elder Yvonne Stewart said that receiving the recognition that they always knew they had will give them "the freedom to walk taller" and "freedom to access and use our resources of country to look after our wellbeing". The Bundjalung tribal lands encompass approximately 6,000 square kilometres from the northern side of the Clarence River to the Richmond River. The recognised Arakwal country extends from Seven Mile Beach south of Broken Head to the Brunswick River in the north, from the escarpment west of Byron Bay and into the Tasman Sea to the west. The determination has sent an important message that the land was, is and always will be Aboriginal land. I am very hopeful today that members on all sides of the Chamber will support this motion. It is a moment of celebration and a landmark achievement, and I look forward to hearing other members speak on it.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (12:17:42): I thank the member for Ballina for her terrific motion recognising a significant milestone for the Arakwal people and for the wider community. On 30 April this year the Arakwal people celebrated a significant native title determination formally recognising their ongoing connection to the lands and waters in and around Byron Bay. This determination covers 241 square kilometres of land and water around Byron Bay, including 100 metres out to sea. Arakwal elder Yvonne Stewart said to the ABC that this recognition ... will

give us the freedom to walk taller, it will give us freedom to access and use our resources of country and look after our wellbeing. I congratulate all the Arakwal people who were involved in this process and thank everyone who helped make this historic result possible. In particular I acknowledge the elders past and present of the Arakwal people. The New South Wales Government and the Arakwal people have a strong and longstanding relationship, including the successful joint management of the Arakwal National Park, which in 2014 became one of the first sites on the planet to be included on the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Green List of protected areas. The Minister at the time, Rob Stokes, is here with us now. As the motion states, this determination provides legal recognition of the existing non-exclusive and non-commercial native title rights of the Arakwal people, as the traditional owners of the area.

The New South Wales Government is committed to efficiently processing native title claim applications in the best interests of Indigenous communities and the wider population. By reforming internal processes and increasing coordination, the Government has recently finalised a number of historical native title claims. These include the native title claim of the Arakwal people of Cape Byron and the Bundjalung nation. A key component of this resolution was the Government's commitment to engaging in a collaborative approach to native title, through the use of Indigenous land use agreements between the Government and the Arakwal people. These voluntary agreements between native title groups and other parties allow native title claims to be dealt with through cooperation and agreement, rather than through lengthy litigation.

With a focus on greater internal collaboration, a number of New South Wales Government agencies have successfully partnered to secure agreements with native title holders to ensure effective ongoing land and resource management following the recognition of native title and to deliver benefits to native title holders. In particular, this is a significant achievement by those New South Wales agencies involved in driving this reform including the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, the Department of Communities and Justice, the Department of Premier and Cabinet and Aboriginal Affairs NSW. Since the Arakwal people first filed their native title claim in the National Native Title Tribunal, a series of Indigenous land use agreements have been negotiated across an area of land of more than 800 hectares, from Broken Head to Brunswick Heads and including Australia's most easterly point at Cape Byron.

In February 2017 the Government and the Arakwal people entered into negotiations for a consent determination of native title and an Indigenous land use agreement, which ultimately led to the Federal Court's determination in April this year. Through the stories of the Arakwal people and through anthropological and genealogical reports, we learned about the Arakwal people's ongoing connection to country. We learned that when non-Indigenous people arrived in the Byron Bay area, there was a local landholding group of Aboriginal people, known as the Arakwal, whose members held rights in and had responsibilities for the land and waters in the area. We learned that members of this local landholding group were, and continue to be, a part of the broader Bundjalung society. And we learned that the Arakwal people today are the descendants of the people who exercised and held rights under a system of traditional law and custom.

This determination resolved the oldest native title claim in New South Wales, a significant milestone in the Government's commitment to resolving native title claims. Native title claims are complex, involving numerous issues and parties. Delays in resolving native title claims have been seen across the country. However, the Government is committed to reducing delays and efficiently processing native title claims. Delays create uncertainty for claimants, government and the wider community. Among other improvements, the New South Wales Government has been working with the Federal Court and the native title representative body for New South Wales, NTSCorp, to streamline processes to determine where native title is extinguished, having regard to legal precedents and the Commonwealth's Native Title Act 1993.

Of all Australian States and Territories with native title claims, the average age of New South Wales' native title claims is now the lowest in the country. In fact, in the 26 years since the Native Title Act commenced, nine of the 14 determinations recognising native title in New South Wales have been in the last five years. Current projections suggest that there will be as many determinations recognising native title between 2017-18 and 2019-20 as there were in the preceding 23 years. The New South Wales Government is looking forward to continuing to work together with the Arakwal people in a positive and constructive manner. And we are committed to processing efficiently native title claim applications in the best interests of Indigenous communities and the wider population. I congratulate the member for Ballina on bringing this motion to the House and I congratulate everyone who has been involved in achieving this significant agreement.

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (12:24:00): On behalf of the New South Wales Opposition and in my role as the shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty I congratulate the member for Ballina on bringing this motion to the Parliament. This motion refers to a great decision, which is significant not just for the people of that area but also for people across New South Wales. I pay my respect to the Arakwal and Bundjalung people and I recognise their elders, both past and current. As previous speakers have said, this determination comes on

the very broad shoulders of activists who have worked for a long time to see it happen. We have heard that the agreement was a long-held dream of late elders Lorna Kelly and Linda Vidler, who were instrumental in negotiating an Indigenous land-use agreement in the area and the gazetting of the Arakwal National Park in 2001. This has been a long process and, as the Attorney General said, we as the Government of New South Wales need to work more efficiently to make sure that claims are processed more quickly.

As the people of the Byron Bay area have said, this decision is significant for them. Yvonne Stewart was quoted on the ABC news saying that the determination would allow for jobs and fresh opportunities for the Bundjalung people and give the community and younger generations the wellbeing to survive and thrive. I was lucky enough to visit the electorate of the member for Ballina earlier this year, where I met with some of the elders who are working on a cultural centre at Tallow Beach, which anyone who knows the Byron Bay area will know is a lovely beach just the other side of the lighthouse. These elders have great plans not just to promote their culture but also to create employment opportunities for both elders and young people. I know that you get a good feeling when you sit and talk with elders to learn about the culture of the area. You also learn how much they care for the area and the fact that they have great responsibility to work to improve outcomes for the young people in the community, particularly. Yvonne Stewart said:

That recognition that we always knew that we had, it will give us the freedom to walk taller, it will give us the freedom to access and use our resources of country and look after our wellbeing.

In this statement she is saying that they now have the feeling that it is their land again and they will have some say in what happens on their land.

This was a significant decision because it recognised the fact that all existing uses will remain. People sometimes get scared about Aboriginal land claims, but these claims are not about taking things away from anyone. They are actually about how we better share the land and create better opportunities for everyone. Aboriginal people understand this, but unfortunately many in the white community do not understand this. In the new Aboriginal Land Act process many local councils cannot get over the fact that working through agreements with Aboriginal people will actually create opportunities for their communities. Instead, they think that things will be taken away from them. We still have a long way to go, but decisions like this give us hope that one day this will be the norm and not unusual and that the economic and social outcomes for the whole community, particularly Aboriginal people, will improve.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill) (12:28:10): I acknowledge and thank the member for Ballina for her notice of motion and her acknowledgement of this historic achievement on behalf of the Arakwal people and for the wider community. As the former Minister for Multiculturalism in New South Wales, I was always pleased to explain that our country is a nation made up of people from all around the world. We boast of being home to over 300 different nationalities with our people speaking over 200 languages and practising over 140 different religions. We are also very proudly home to one of the oldest cultures on earth, our Indigenous Aboriginal people. I wish to commemorate this significant milestone for the Arakwal people, in particular the elders past and present who helped to make this recognition of native title possible.

As the member's motion states, we recognise and we acknowledge that the Bundjalung nation was and always will be Aboriginal land. The Federal Court's determination on 30 April was a formal recognition of the Arakwal people's ongoing connection to the land and water around Byron Bay. As well as the incredible work of the Arakwal people, this milestone has been made possible by the strategic improvements to the native title processes in New South Wales, resulting in a significant increase in the number of determinations recognising native title in New South Wales since 2017. This has led to greater certainty for government, communities and native title claimants. The main factors driving this improvement have been a strategic focus on this area of New South Wales over the past three years, and an increased sophistication and experience in negotiating these agreements.

The Government is continuing to partner with Aboriginal leaders in the development and implementation of policies and programs targeted to deliver better outcomes and opportunities for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We are focusing on a number of practical elements to address systemic matters, but we are also considering how we can provide better opportunities to participate in economic development. We have one of the most successful State-based land rights regimes in this country, with a significant volume of land returned for cultural preservation and economic development. The Government is also working with land councils to build economic, cultural heritage and social benefits from the land for the benefit of Aboriginal communities. Since coming to Government in 2011, we have assisted Aboriginal land councils to build their wealth and economic independence. Each land council differs from every other, but each is playing an important role for its community in generating economic, cultural heritage and social benefits for land council members.

Further, the Government is working closely with communities to deliver a number of achievements across the Aboriginal Affairs portfolio. In the 2019-2020 budget we delivered the Roads to Home program, providing \$55 million in infrastructure to 10 Aboriginal communities. The Government has also supported nine regional Aboriginal alliances, encompassing over 80 Aboriginal communities across New South Wales. These alliances provide an on-the-ground voice to Government on community priorities and how they believe their services should be delivered. Just recently, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, the Hon. Don Harwin, announced the opening of the new Aboriginal Languages Community Investments grant program to fund Aboriginal language revitalisation activities. Under this program, Aboriginal language projects across the State will receive a financial boost. In New South Wales we are working to achieve real outcomes for Aboriginal people that have been designed by Aboriginal people. This significant milestone for the Arakwal people is a tribute to what can be achieved when Government and native title claimants work hand in hand for the benefit of the First Nations people and the wider community.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (12:32:11): I endorse and strongly support the motion moved by the member for Ballina. I too acknowledge the traditional owners of the land, the Arakwal and Bundjalung people, their Elders past, present and emerging, and recognise this land and their land was, is and always will be Aboriginal land. We know that native title is important because it was not until 1992 that Australian law even sought to recognise that Indigenous people had any rights to land and waters arising from their original ownership under traditional law and custom. It was, of course, the High Court Mabo case that changed all of this, when it decided in favour of a claim to Murray Island by the Meriam people.

For the first time, Australian courts accepted that traditional law and custom could be a basis for claiming land ownership by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We heard all of the talk about people's homes being taken, the conservative Government at the time saying that we will have to introduce bucketloads of extinguishment—all of this incredibly incendiary language—but the Native Title Act was established in 1993. The Act established the procedure for making native title claims. It was extensively amended in 1998, with further amendments in 2007 and 2009. Of course, we all know the tragedy that was former Prime Minister Howard's 10-point plan and the erosion of the common law right of native title for Aboriginal people.

Decisions made by the court have impacted native title law in particular, how native title is required to be proven, how native title is extinguished—which means lost forever, of course—and the type of native title rights that can exist in specific locations. While we are here to celebrate and congratulate all of those, in particular those who initiated this native title claim, we know that there are incredible challenges in proving native title, particularly when we have had stolen generations and people were forcibly taken from their home, which makes proving connection to land incredibly difficult. What was taken from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community by white colonisers is something that has been a tragedy ever since. We need treaties to remediate and seek to come to terms with the great injustice that has been suffered and that continues to echo through the generations.

Native title negotiations, in our view, should be undertaken in a way that encourages Indigenous people, and recognises and respects their traditional structures, instead of an assessment model that focuses on negotiation around the settlement of a legal claim. We think there needs to be a sense of negotiation, but not this very litigious legal process. The assessment model really needs to meet the negotiation threshold and should not be based entirely on applying very stringent legal tests for native title. The criteria should be clear and unambiguous. One of the great challenges that many people have is trying to understand exactly what the test is that they need to overcome. Claimant groups have often complained that it has been very difficult to receive, in a timely manner, the reasons for why they may not have satisfied a particular criteria, and that criteria really should not be burdensome and oppressive on claimant groups.

We need a collaborative approach where native title claimants and communities can work together with the State, whether it be state governments or other government agencies, in a proactive way. The time frame is obviously ridiculous—decade after decade of a lot of Aboriginal people lodging claims then passing away, especially as we understand that life expectancy is incredibly low for Indigenous Australians, which is a disgrace and something we need to address as a country, not only as parliaments. I conclude by strongly endorsing the comments made by the Attorney General, the member for Hawkesbury, and others, and congratulate everyone on making a positive contribution and saying that we need to do more. In fact we must do more if we want to recognise the great injustices that have happened and live in a country that truly acknowledges, respects and takes on board the lessons of history.

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (12:36:20): I thank the member for her motion and for providing the Government with an opportunity to update the House on this significant milestone for the Arakwal people and for the wider community. On 30 April this year the Arakwal people celebrated a significant native title determination, formally recognising their ongoing connection to the land and waters in and around Byron Bay,

covering 241 square kilometres of land and water around Byron Bay, including 100 metres out to sea. I congratulate all of the Arakwal people and I acknowledge the Elders of the Arakwal people past, present, and emerging. The Government and the Arakwal people have a strong and longstanding relationship, including the successful joint management of the Arakwal National Park, which, in 2014, became one of the first sites on the planet to be included on the International Union for Conservation of Nature Green List of protected areas. As the motion states, this determination provides legal recognition of the existing non-exclusive and non-commercial native title rights of the Arakwal people as the traditional owners of the area.

The Government is committed to efficiently processing native title claim applications in the best interests of indigenous communities and the wider population. By reforming internal processes and increasing coordination, the Government has recently finalised a number of historic native title claims. This includes the native title claim of the Arakwal people of Cape Byron and the Bundjalung nation. With a focus on greater internal collaboration, a number of Government agencies have successfully partnered to secure agreements with native title holders to ensure effective ongoing land and resource management following the recognition of native title, and to deliver benefits to native title holders. In particular, this is a significant achievement by those New South Wales agencies involved in driving this reform, including the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, the Department of Communities and Justice, the Department of Premier and Cabinet, and Aboriginal Affairs NSW.

Native title claims are complex, involving numerous issues and parties. Delays in resolving native title claims have been seen across the country. However, the Government is committed to reducing delays and efficiently processing native title claims. Delays create uncertainty for claimants, government and the wider community. Among other improvements, the New South Wales Government has been working with the Federal Court and the native title representative body for New South Wales to streamline processes to determine where native title is extinguished having regard to legal precedents and the Commonwealth Native Title Act 1993. Of all Australian States and Territories with native title claims, the average age of New South Wales native title claims is now the lowest in the country.

In fact, in the 26 years since the Native Title Act commenced, nine of the 14 determinations recognising native title in New South Wales have been in the past five years. Current projections suggest that there will be as many determinations recognising native title between 2017 and 2020 as there were in the preceding 23 years. Since the Arakwal people first filed their native title claim in the National Native Title Tribunal, a series of Indigenous land use agreements have been negotiated across an area of land of more than 800 hectares, from Broken Head to Brunswick Heads, including Australia's most easterly point at Cape Byron. The Government is looking forward to continuing to work together with the Arakwal people in a positive and constructive manner. We are committed to efficiently processing native title claim applications in the best interests of Indigenous communities and the wider population. Again, I congratulate everyone who has been involved in achieving this significant agreement.

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (12:39:43): In reply: I thank the Attorney General, the member for Wyong, the member for Balmain, the member for Castle Hill and the member for Coffs Harbour for their contributions to the debate. I am grateful to the Attorney General for his support and congratulations. He spoke of the landmark significance of this successful claim and the collaborative approach through the Indigenous Land Use Agreements process. I agree that agreement is best practice, because the litigation model is fraught, as we have seen around the country. Of the 14 native title claims in New South Wales over the past few years nine have been settled, which is a welcome outcome. The member for Wyong spoke about jobs. I am delighted to hear he has met with many of the Arakwal people to talk about the proposed cultural centre. I am happy to support the Arakwal Corporation in that process.

Recently Delta Kay and I spoke about the Bishop Museum in Hawaii that is named after an Hawaiian princess. I would like her to visit that extraordinary museum as it is about a living culture. Often museums are about the past, but this is a living culture. Native title should be spoken about as existing before us. It is not a right on the land. It existed before us, before colonisation and unfortunately it is about how that is extinguished. We need to look at it in reverse, that it has been and always will be there in the land and with the people. The member for Castle Hill spoke about the longest-living culture in the world and land councils. The intersection of land rights and traditional owners in New South Wales is problematic. That is an historical debate for another time.

The member for Balmain spoke of the landmark Mabo case, the history and the difficulty of proving unbroken connection. We think the way forward is a presumption of native title. I was blessed to meet Aunty Dulcie Nichols, Aunty Linda Vidler and Aunty Lorna Kelly over the years with my friend Rose and, of course, the wonderful Kay family and my favourite, Ms Delta Kay. I do not think they would mind me placing their aunt's words in *Hansard* today after the many decades that the three sisters and their people waited to be recognised as native title owners of their traditional lands:

Our People, the Byron Bay Arakwal, have lived around Byron Bay area for thousands of years. Before the many changes brought by European settlers, we used to live off the land and the water. It provided us with many foods from plants, bushes and trees. We want our children, grandchildren and their grandchildren to know how we once lived and also to be able to use the food from these lands. We want them to know our special places.

Linda Vidler, Lorna Kelly, Dulcie Nichols, Byron Bay Arakwal Elders.

I thank the members who contributed to the debate and acknowledge the support of the House in this incredible landmark determination that recognises the Arakwal People of Cape Byron and the Bundjalung nation as having pre-existing rights as traditional owners. It is only the second time in New South Wales that native title sea rights have been recognised. I congratulate the Elders and all those involved in my community who love and respect them. I say congratulations and I look forward to seeing how many amazing things will flow from recognition of their native title rights.

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

Motion agreed to.

BALMORAL BURN FUN RUN

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (12:44:50): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that the nineteenth Balmoral Burn Fun Run was held on the weekend of 25 and 26 May 2019 to raise funds to support sick kids through the Humpty Dumpty Foundation.
- (2) Recognises this annual event, founded by Phil Kearns, AM, which brings together many thousands of locals from the North Shore community to tackle one of the steepest streets in Sydney, either by walking, running, with a pet, with a hospital crib, in the Paralympic category, or supporting the participants from the sidelines.
- (3) Congratulates Paul Francis, Ray Martin, and the entire Humpty Dumpty Foundation on such a successful event to raise money to purchase essential and life-saving children's medical equipment for hospitals and health services across Australia.

The Balmoral Burn is an annual event in my electorate to raise money for the Humpty Dumpty Foundation. This outstanding organisation provides support for hospitals throughout New South Wales and across Australia. The Humpty Dumpty Foundation provides medical equipment to more than 400 hospitals across the country. Anyone who has had the courage to walk up Mosman's Awaba Street, will know how the Balmoral Burn got its name. Not only is this 42 metre-stretch the steepest hill in my electorate, it is also the steepest hill run in Sydney. Started in 2001 by former Wallabies champion and Mosman local Phil Kearns, AM, the Balmoral Burn has now completed its nineteenth year. After Phil's son, Finn, received emergency care for suspected meningococcal at the Royal North Shore Hospital, Phil came up with the idea of doing a run up Awaba Street as a thank you. That first year the Balmoral Burn raised \$70,000 for the Royal North Shore Hospital, and has continued since with approximately 10,000 people participating every year. It is not just an event for elite athletes. The Balmoral Burn gets the whole community involved in fundraising for sick and injured kids in paediatric wards, neonatal units, and maternity and emergency departments with categories for families, pets and relay teams.

I have had the privilege to run a number of times, if "run" is defined as slogging up as far as I could and dragging myself the rest of the way. This year I did not run; instead I had a great time presenting awards to the winners of the 2019 Balmoral Burn. In the future I will be back on the hill of hurt to try again. I do not generally have the fitness, but I give it my best. While it is an opportunity to push your physical fitness, the real achievement comes from the money raised for those who need it. I especially thank and recognise the people in our community who got out there and raised money for this great cause. I thank Kate and Peter Valenti who ran for the fifth year in the parent and child category with their young kids Hugo, Eliza and Claudia. My daughter, at less than a year old, would still get up the hill faster than I would. The Valentis have raised over \$8,000 since 2014, and this year exceeded their goal to raise \$1000 for the Humpty Dumpty Foundation.

I acknowledge some of my local schools who got involved. The St Aloysius team placed third in the Head of the Hill category. Loreto Kirribilli and Queenwood schools also entered teams. The Balmoral Burn is really just a regular day of training for the crew of HMAS *Penguin*, but it was great see them out there taking on Awaba Street again this year. They had a stall, and were meeting and greeting locals, and talking about the work that *Penguin* does. Likewise, I acknowledge the SES Mosman unit, including Vanden Helby, Philip Cleary and their many volunteers who have been helping out at the Balmoral Burn for many years. They were there again this year. I thank them for continuing to lend their support for the event. Last year I was very early in my pregnancy when I was trying to get up the hill, so seeing them half way up with water and moral support was not just a great help, it was life saving.

I thank the many local organisations, schools and families for the spirit of our community. The Balmoral Burn has raised over \$30 million since it began. In the first year it was run, \$70,000 was raised for Royal North

Shore Hospital. Cumulatively over the 19 years it has raised \$30 million. That \$30 million pays for life-saving equipment for kids in hospitals across New South Wales and Australia. This year the foundation has been able to purchase 300 items of equipment valued at over \$2.24 million for hospitals in New South Wales. The equipment includes neonatal transport incubators, ventilators, infant resuscitation cots, training manikins, phototherapy lights and blankets.

This is a result of fantastic fundraising efforts throughout the year, including the Balmoral Burn. For the past 30 years the foundation has raised funds to purchase essential and lifesaving medical equipment for sick and injured children in neonatal, paediatric, maternity and emergency wards across Australia. But the Balmoral Burn is not the only event the Humpty Dumpty Foundation runs to fundraise for life-saving medical equipment for kids across the country. The Great Humpty Ball is also organised by the children's charity. I have had the pleasure of attending the Great Humpty Ball on a number of occasions. It is always a wonderful night, hosted by Humpty Dumpty Foundation patron Ray Martin, AM. At the 2018 Great Humpty Ball 57 pieces of essential medical equipment were donated to hospitals across the country.

I was also thrilled to present the Michelle Beets Memorial Award on behalf of the Minister for Health and Medical Research. The award celebrates the medical professionals who give above and beyond to improve health outcomes for children. The award, which is funded by the Government, provides \$20,000 to each winner and \$10,000 to the runners-up for medical equipment. On 29 August the Minister for Health and Medical Research, the Hon. Brad Hazzard, wrote to the foundation to provide \$60,000 in support for the 2019 Michelle Beets Memorial Award, which recognises the achievements of hospital staff in New South Wales. The winners will use those funds to purchase equipment for Department of Health hospitals. The Minister for Health and Medical Research recognises the importance of the foundation's ongoing work to support children's health care.

The theme of this year's Great Humpty Ball was "Kids in the Bush" and it was anticipated that most equipment wishes would be promoted for rural and regional areas of New South Wales, which are a focus of the foundation. A specially designed resuscitation equipment package—the Humpty's "Breath of Life"—was available especially for rural and regional hospitals. Over the past three years the foundation has supplied more than 100 of these resuscitation packages to various hospitals, at a cost of almost \$800,000 each. Humpty's Breath of Life is a life-saving equipment package that includes a Neopuff Infant Resuscitator, Low Flow Bird Blender and an MR850 Humidifier on a mobile stand. It provides humidified air during respiratory support to a sick baby or child and maintains them on a safe type of ventilation until a transfer arrives. I also acknowledge the services provided by Royal North Shore Hospital to not only children and youth, but also patients across all age levels. I thank all the staff and volunteers who work across Royal North Shore Hospital. Once again, I thank the Balmoral Burn organisers, volunteers and fundraisers and all of our life-saving medical staff.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (12:51:51): I commend the member for North Shore for moving this motion on the Balmoral Burn, which supports the Humpty Dumpty Foundation. The Balmoral Burn is a foot race on one of Sydney's steepest streets. The event covers 420 metres, which is 1,378 feet up Awaba Street in Mosman. The race is called the Balmoral Burn because at its steepest the street's gradient is about 30 per cent. Over the length of the 420-metre race the road rises about 70 metres, which is 230 feet. Participants are running up an incredibly steep hill for nearly 500 metres. That really does create the burn that gives the event its name and it is all for a very good cause. The Humpty Dumpty Foundation has raised more than \$30 million since its inception to purchase medical equipment for neonatal and maternity units, and paediatric wards for almost 400 hospitals across Australia.

As a children's charity, the Humpty Dumpty Foundation works for the sole purpose of making a tangible difference to the lives of children and their families. Alongside the Humpty Dumpty Foundation, the Rotary Club of Manly is celebrating the tenth year of the Manly Fun Run. As we progress work on Australia's first hospice for young adults on the old Manly Hospital site, I hope that the Humpty Dumpty Foundation will find a new hospice to contribute to as part of the fundraising that goes into the Balmoral Burn. I have enjoyed running the Balmoral Burn for a number of years. The winners of the race have set some really terrific records. Disappointingly, in 2017 the gentleman who won the Balmoral Burn in one minute and 18 seconds, which was a record, was named James Gurr not James Griffin. It was his third consecutive win. He did a fantastic job to run that steep hill in one minute and 18 seconds.

The Balmoral Burn and the community of North Shore have a distinct similarity to the people of Manly and the Rotary Club of Manly's community fun run. These events demonstrate the effort, passion and compassion of the people of North Shore and electorates across New South Wales. It is outstanding that the Humpty Dumpty Foundation has raised \$30 million in its time. As I said earlier, hopefully one day in the not-too-distant future some of those funds will make their way into Australia's first hospice for young people on the old Manly Hospital site. I thank the wonderful team at Property NSW, working under the Minister for Water, Property and Housing,

for their tremendous efforts working alongside my community to activate and work towards the master planning for the old Manly Hospital site. A key element of that site will house the hospice for young adults.

At the moment Bear Cottage is just across the road. Bear Cottage looks after young people up to the age of 18 with a terminal illness. Once they turn 18 they graduate from Bear Cottage, but at the moment the options for them to receive care and respite are fairly limited. They are normally cared for in emergency departments or, in some circumstances, aged care homes. We are seeking to build a new facility that welcomes young people not only from Manly but also around New South Wales. Young people with terminal illness and their parents and carers will be welcomed to Manly at the new hospice to stay for free. They will be able to recuperate, and receive the acute and specialist care and support that they need in a sanctuary environment.

The Humpty Dumpty Foundation does some great work in Manly. Community groups across New South Wales do so much to encourage people to come together to support local fun runs. Some people run while others attend to enjoy a morning or afternoon walk with family and friends through their community. I thank and congratulate the member for North Shore on moving this motion. It is an important event to recognise and appreciate. Hopefully next year when I run the Balmoral Burn again James Gurr will miss out on the win and James Griffin will take out the new record. I commend the motion to the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): I agree; Bear Cottage is terrific.

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (12:57:57): I am pleased to support my colleague moving this very important motion to recognise the community groups that step up to support charities locally, across the State, nationally and internationally. The organising committee for the Balmoral Burn is one such community group. Incredibly, the event has run for 19 years, which speaks volumes to the success of the event and the way that the community has embraced it. It is incredible how the community steps up to do what it can when it comes to raising important funds. In this case the community raises funds for better paediatric services and equipment for our hospitals. People do so much and really step outside of their comfort zones to support these events. I commend the member for North Shore and member for Manly for their past participation in the fun run—well done! Next year I will be watching to see where the member for Manly places in the run. He has committed to it now on the floor of this House. So that means that it absolutely has to happen.

I want to recognise the Humpty Dumpty Foundation for the incredible work that it does. It is a charity that has been around for some 28 years, making a mark on paediatric, neonatal, maternity and emergency units in the Sydney area and in regional communities. When I looked at the foundation's website I was amazed at how broadly it has touched communities, making sure that all of our hospitals have great equipment. Members on this side of the House know that New South Wales has world-class hospitals, thanks to health Ministers, past and present, who have worked hard to make sure that that is the case. In my previous role as Parliamentary Secretary for Regional and Rural Health, I worked on the front line of health facilities and got to understand how quickly technology changes, particularly when it comes to paediatric health care. It is important that we do what we can to support the people who work in those units by making sure that they have great equipment to care for these wonderful little people.

In terms of regional hospitals, I noticed, for example, that the Walgett Multipurpose Service received some funding from the Humpty Dumpty Foundation as did the Canterbury Hospital, Cootamundra Hospital and Goondiwindi Hospital, to name just a few. The Coffs Harbour Health Campus received some funding for their neonatal resuscitation section. It is important that we support these great initiatives. I note that the Humpty Dumpty Foundation makes the point, on its website, that even the smallest donation can make a big difference. How true that is. All members of Parliament who have communicated with charitable organisations and community groups that support charities would know how true that is. I congratulate the member for North Shore for bringing this motion to the attention of the House. I look forward to hearing about her participation and that of the member for Manly as we move forward.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (13:01:58): In reply: It seems that the gauntlet has been laid down—the member for Manly and I will have to improve on our participation next year. I would welcome the member for Port Macquarie joining us as well. She is much more athletic than I am. I thank her for her contribution because she did not mention the amount of involvement that she has in a range of voluntary organisations that link some of the health and fitness aspects of our community with fundraising for important organisations like the Can Too Foundation. I think she did the half marathon. If she can do a half marathon she can at least do half of the Balmoral Burn. People who have not participated in the Balmoral Burn do not know how hard it is to get up that hill. It is a real challenge, which is what makes it such a fun day.

I thank the member for Manly for his contribution. I was a bit concerned when he said that he enjoyed running in the Balmoral Burn and that he will enjoy running it in the future. I think that maybe he is not trying hard enough to take on James Gurr's record. I know that he has been a long-time participant in the Balmoral Burn

and likes to support it so I thank him for his contribution. I thank him, as well, for what he is doing at the old Manly Hospital site. With respect to the impact of health issues on children and young people we know that there is a need for a continuum of provision of care and services. The cottage is within the Manly community. I have friends who have had family members cared for quite compassionately and diligently at Bear Cottage before they have passed away. Bear Cottage is an integral part of that care system for children and families so I thank the member for Manly for the work that he has been doing leading the commitment to deliver the young adults hospice on the old Manly Hospital site. I also thank the volunteers in his electorate who support similar events to fundraise for these organisations.

As the member for Port Macquarie mentioned, a key part of the work that the Humpty Dumpty Foundation does is fundraising and investing in our rural and regional hospitals. As I mentioned earlier, that was a key theme of the Great Humpty Ball this year. I would like to thank for the work that she did when she was the Parliamentary Secretary for Rural and Regional Health in working alongside all the facilities and their staff—the nurses, doctors and volunteers—to make sure that patients get the best care. More than 53,000 nurses and midwives work full-time and part-time across New South Wales Health hospitals and health services. The member for Port Macquarie was once amongst their ranks, as were a number of other members in this House and the other place. The Government is investing more than ever in health and is recruiting many thousands of new doctors, nurses and healthcare professionals.

At the end of the day it is the community spirit that is behind this level of investment that results in the provision of equipment that can supplement the existing care provisions within our hospitals. Some of the very expensive pieces of equipment that might take many years of fundraising by one individual hospital but they can be financed because of the incredibly good work of the Humpty Dumpty Foundation. I thank the foundation again, and in doing so recognise the founding executive chairman Paul Francis, OAM. As I mentioned, the last time I ran in this event was in 2018. I was joined by Glen Giffen, Chris Rath, Matt Cross, James O'Neill, Lisette Walsh and my husband Sam. So I am putting out the challenge to them to join me and the member for Manly—and the member for Port Macquarie—next year.

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

Motion agreed to.

Business of the House

POSTPONEMENT OF BUSINESS

Ms ANNA WATSON: On behalf of Ms Tania Mihailuk: In accordance with Standing Order 101, I postpone general business notice of motion (general notice) No. 48 [child protection system].

Motions

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill) (13:06:47): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Government's record of \$89.7 billion investment in infrastructure.
- (2) Notes that the Government's record investment in infrastructure has helped contribute to low unemployment in New South Wales, which is currently at 4.5 per cent.
- (3) Condemns the Opposition's policy of cancelling projects, which will only result in fewer jobs in New South Wales.

It gives me absolute pleasure to stand in the Chamber today, as it does every day, to speak about the Government's infrastructure investment, because there is not a prouder person in the New South Wales Parliament than me. Every day I catch the Sydney Metro Northwest to work so I see the benefits of our infrastructure network. Some 70,000 people take trips on that Northwest metro each day. I see the huge impact that it has had on our community. I have also seen less traffic on roads such as the M2, which was the only practical route to the city. In my electorate there has also been a reduction—not a huge reduction—in the traffic and traffic gridlock since the introduction of that important piece of infrastructure.

I also want to speak about the important investment of \$92 billion by the New South Wales Government, as was divulged in the 2019-20 budget, which includes \$10 billion of service delivery through new and upgraded hospitals and health facilities; \$55.6 billion for 3,500 road and rail projects; \$10.4 billion supporting water, energy and housing needs; and a further \$7.3 billion delivering 190 new and upgraded schools. That \$93 billion of investment by the Government rolls off the tongue easily but it is important to put that into context. At this point in time there are great challenges for all countries around the world with respect to global impacts. We only need to look at the trade wars between the United States of America and China. That sends ripples through agencies

across the world and creates challenges in relation to the movement of trade. That is just one particular impediment we face.

We look also at the strength of the New South Wales economy, which we are also very proud of. We are not in debt. We owe nobody money. We are a debt-free Government; as a matter of fact, we are actually cash positive. Our sound budget position has impacted on the return from the Commonwealth Government in terms of GST revenue, which is then distributed to other, irresponsible State governments that have not worked hard like we have here in New South Wales and that continue to have debt. While thinking about the \$93 billion investment the New South Wales Government will be making over the next 3½ years, the Queensland Government is carrying an \$85 billion debt. This State is receiving less GST revenue because tax revenues that would have come back to New South Wales go to Queensland because it cannot reinvest with important infrastructure, balance its budgets nor be responsible with its economy. That is also difficult.

On top of that, New South Wales is facing one of the worst droughts in the history of this country, at least since European settlement. On the back of that drought, New South Wales is being ravaged by significant bushfires that we have seen for the past three months, as is our neighbouring State of Queensland. This Government has made an investment of over \$3 billion in the drought effort, which would never have been possible unless it had strong financial management. Nobody knew or thought for a moment that we would go into a time of drought like this, but we are "a land of droughts and flooding rains", as the poet Dorothea Mackellar quite correctly pointed out. The fact is that we will, from time to time, see tragedies. The great aspect of that is that we have been able to rise to the challenge and invest so much money into those rural and regional economies and those particular communities. In the last year alone this investment has resulted in no fewer than 40,000 full-time jobs being available to people in those rural communities.

It is with great and immense pride that Government members talk about our infrastructure investment. I have only just brushed upon the topic in my electorate. Whilst housing is very necessary, I think of my electorate of Castle Hill and my neighbouring electorates of Baulkham Hills and Riverstone absorbing the majority of the housing growth across the north-west area, just as areas such as Camden in the south-west are doing. Housing also stimulates the economy, but at the same time it must be met with important infrastructure such as roads, rail, hospitals and schools. Our predecessors failed to invest in infrastructure but did not fail to reap the rewards of the housing growth that happened in those rapidly growing northern and southern metropolitan areas of Sydney. They were more than happy to receive billions of dollars in stamp duty revenue but could not invest in the important infrastructure on behalf of their communities. We have done that since 2011.

I make absolutely no apologies for voicing my concerns about the lack of investment in infrastructure while in opposition, both within my party and publicly, especially on behalf of the need for a very important rail line to my area. I am very proud that we cut the ribbon on that rail line at the beginning of this year, together with our Premier and our transport Minister. That has been an absolute asset, as it will be on behalf of other areas of Sydney—look at the great roads such as WestConnex and NorthConnex; look at the future of infrastructure investment. Sadly, all of our asset recycling—which I will go into in a few moments' time—has been opposed by the Labor Opposition. Not only did it fail to invest in infrastructure but it also failed to support the economic measures that have stimulated the New South Wales economy so well.

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (13:14:03): I move:

That the motion be amended by:

- (1) Omitting the word "congratulates" from paragraph (1) and replacing it with the word "notes".
- (2) Omitting paragraphs (2) and (3) with a view to inserting instead:
 - (2) Notes the importance of delivering infrastructure matching population growth.
 - (3) Calls on the Government to immediately coordinate a dedicated team to identify the road and rail needs for the booming north-west Sydney growth corridor, and provide a funded plan with timeline.

It is really important to note how great it is to have infrastructure and the importance of it being built. The order of the infrastructure is the most important aspect. In the city of Blacktown the metro that has been built finishes at Tallawong. That is probably only a quarter of the job. It needs to go all the way through to Marsden Park and then on to St Marys, then on to Badgerys Creek airport.

Debate interrupted.

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

*Visitors***VISITORS**

The SPEAKER: We have a packed public gallery today, and a lot of people to welcome. Before I do that, I wish the member for Port Stephens and the member for Ku-ring-gai all the best for the upcoming birthdays over the summer break. I hope they have a wonderful celebration planned. I extend a warm welcome to students, parents and teachers from St Therese's Catholic Primary School, the Italian Bilingual School and St Michael's Catholic Primary School, guests of the Minister for Customer Service and member for Ryde. I welcome Daniel Bhe from Redeemer Baptist School and Eoin Woods from Redfield College, as well as staff from the Executive Services Unit of Corrective Services NSW, guests of the Minister for Counter Terrorism and Corrections and member for Lane Cove. I welcome to the Chamber a delegation from the Rotary Club of Gerringong, guests of the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services and member for Kiama. I acknowledge Tony Park, who was a journalist and staffer under the Greiner Government and went on to become an author, guest of the member for North Shore.

I acknowledge members of the Integra Macedonian Conservative Party from North Macedonia, including party president Ljupcho Ristovski, party vice president Suzana Cesmadziska, senior advisor Goce Risteski, chief of staff Bill Makalovski, as well as Peter and Slavko Ristevski, guests of the member for Wollondilly. I also acknowledge the Mayor of Gunnedah, Jamie Chaffey, guest of the member for Tamworth. Welcome to Aimee Jacobs Rody, Teamsters Union Business Manager, Michigan, United States of America; and Deputy Mayor of Blacktown City Council, Julie Griffiths, guests of the member for Blacktown. I welcome Nick Haughain, law student and guest of the member for Gosford. I also extend a warm welcome to Retired Commander Wayne Cox and his wife Alison, guests of the member for Parramatta. Finally, I acknowledge Christopher Jones, Julie Sugden, Robyn Washburn, Robert Southcombe, Kevin Dunn, Phil and Linda Ruffle, and Julie Stenton from Southlakes U3A, guests of the member for Lake Macquarie.

*Announcements***AUSTRALASIAN STUDY OF PARLIAMENT GROUP**

The SPEAKER: As members are aware, the Australasian Study of Parliament Group [ASPG] is a nonpartisan body that seeks to encourage and stimulate research, writing, teaching and discussion about parliamentary institutions. The ASPG operates in all States and Territories across Australia and New Zealand. Membership has a number of parliamentarians, parliamentary officers, academics, teachers, journalists, students and other interested individuals. There are two upcoming events I have been asked to draw to the attention of members which are run by the New South Wales chapter of the ASPG. Tomorrow two long-serving and esteemed former members of the Parliament, the Hon. Ron Dyer and the Hon. Kevin Rozzoli, will deliver a session on civility in politics.

[Members interjected.]

I am sure the irony is not lost on those in the gallery. This session will focus on the current state of political discourse, what is meant by civility in politics, and how the rules and frameworks of Parliament can be used to ensure civil discourse. On Tuesday 3 December there will be a screening of the film *Peterloo*, an account of the Peterloo massacre, which saw a number of pro-democracy activists killed at a protest in Manchester in 1819. There will also be a talk beforehand. Members wishing to attend these excellent events should contact the Legislative Council Procedure Office for further information.

IAN THACKERAY RETIREMENT

The SPEAKER: Today marks the final day in the Legislative Assembly for a member of staff, Ian Thackeray. Ian has completed two tours of duty with the Legislative Assembly. He began his career as a surveyor, travelling to all parts of New South Wales, learning to sleep on the ground and live off camp food—something which he still does on his frequent trips to the wilds of Tasmania. After a stint in the Cabinet office under Gary Sturgess, where he first worked with the current Clerk, Helen Minnican, Ian joined the Legislative Assembly in March 1992 as a research officer on the Public Accounts Committee.

Ian's keen interest in public policy saw him rise to the position of committee director, first for the Public Works Committee, and finally for the natural resources committee. At the end of 2006 Ian took a break from the New South Wales Parliament to pursue other interests but came out of semi-retirement in June 2011. His extensive knowledge of the Parliament and his outstanding people skills made him a great fit for a part-time position in the Legislative Assembly Chamber services, which is where most members know him from. All of Ian's colleagues will attest to his cool head, sound judgement and steadying influence. He will be missed by everyone here at the New South Wales Parliament. I wish Ian all the best and thank him for his years of service.

*Question Time***SYDNEY DESALINATION PLANT**

Ms JODI MCKAY (Strathfield) (14:24:58): My question is directed to the Minister for Water, Property and Housing. In 2008 she described Labor's desalination plant as a white elephant that would "go down in history as one of the poorest and most terrible decisions that this State has made." Given that the Minister is now relying on Labor's desalination plant to save Sydney's water supply, will she admit she was wrong?

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (14:25:44): Wow. I have been water Minister for nearly eight months. Gee, Labor's research department is good. It is the last day of Parliament for the year and they have finally uncovered that cracker from 2008. Yes, it is on the record. It is absolutely on the record that the way Labor managed the drought in 2008 during the millennium period was an absolute disgrace. After eight months of research they finally found it—well done. Like the rest of the community in New South Wales, I was absolutely appalled at the way Labor bungled the management of Sydney's water at the time. Today I stood with the Premier as we announced that by 10 December we will go on to stage 2 water restrictions.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: It is under Standing Order 129. Will the Minister admit she was wrong? Yes or no? Does she think it was the "poorest and most terrible decision this State has made"?

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will resume her seat. I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the first time.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: There is one person I agree with and that is Carl Scully, who at the time said, "The only reason we're doing this desal plant is because a focus group said that it would make Morris Iemma look good." That is how members opposite managed the State.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: Did Carl give you one of his books?

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: Two.

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order, although I am a little bit more tolerant of interjections when a Minister is attacking Opposition members.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: Mr Speaker, they were a rabble then and they are a rabble now. The difference between members opposite and us is we take the community with us on a journey.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much noise in the Chamber.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: Just like the idea that they are going to clean up the left and clean up the Labor Party, it is one big joke.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: They have no credibility when it comes to—

Ms Jodi McKay: Mel, admit you were wrong! Just say, "Yes, I was wrong."

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The Minister has the call.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: You're wrong. You said that you were going to clean up the Labor Party and you haven't done it. You are back to your old tricks. My issue at the time was that Labor did not bring the community with it. Water levels got to 33 per cent in this State—the lowest they had ever been. It was then that Labor finally thought about water restrictions. And then, because in a focus group it became a great idea, that is when Labor decided to build a desalination plant. The point could be made now that Labor should have doubled the capacity at the time, because that is what our Government is considering doing to ensure that we do not run out of water in this city.

I am so impressed that Labor's research unit took eight months to find that *Hansard* quote, but I am more impressed with the way that our Government is handling this very serious natural disaster in New South Wales. We are taking the precautionary principle. We have gone to level 1 restrictions and now level 2 restrictions. As a Government we are considering doubling the capacity of the desalination plant. The other thing that we are doing—because Labor was an absolute disgrace during the 2007 election campaign—is looking at recycling as an option to have more capacity.

Ms Jodi McKay: Mel, there are 20 seconds to go. Were you wrong?

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: Is that a point of order or is that just an interjection?

The SPEAKER: It is not a point of order. The Leader of the Opposition will resume her seat.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: We are looking at a very sensible approach to ensure the longevity of our water supply by including other important options.

GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (14:30:50): My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on how the Liberal-Nationals Government has delivered this year for the people of New South Wales?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:31:02): I cannot speak for members opposite, but we have had a great year. I really cannot speak for members opposite, but I will get to that later. During the election campaign in March we promised the people of this State that if we were re-elected we would get things done. I want to assure the people of New South Wales, when we reflect back on the past 12 months and in particular since the election, that we have kept our word.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I especially acknowledge the member for East Hills, because whether it is East Hills or all of our communities we are ensuring that we are delivering for everybody. Firstly, I am proud that New South Wales has created more jobs than any other State, because we are the party for the workers. When members opposite were in government, unemployment was the highest in the nation. We have the lowest rate.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: They are touchy today, aren't they? Not only do we have the lowest rate of unemployment and the highest jobs growth, we also know that our citizens have the best chance of a good quality of life in this State.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: When it comes to delivering across our communities, whether it is infrastructure or services, we are getting the job done. We are getting the job done in transport, whether it is our regional roads, the Pacific Highway or the Princes Highway, whether it is building those country bridges that for too long have been neglected, or whether it is building the great Sydney Metro Northwest or the WestConnex M4 tunnels—

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Mr Speaker, don't you love it? They opposed all of those projects but they are benefiting from them now.

Ms Yasmin Catley: You keep promising stuff and not delivering.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I will respond to that interjection. While members opposite are stacking branches and committing fraud, we are building for the people of New South Wales. I know the Minister for Transport and Roads and the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads will continue to deliver for their communities.

The SPEAKER: There is too much noise in the Chamber. Members will be quiet, please.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The health Minister is building 30 hospitals in this year alone. Do those opposite have a problem with new hospitals? Do they have a problem with the 10 new ambulance stations that will open this year? Do they have a problem with the three million people that we have serviced through our emergency departments across the State this year? We cannot forget how many new schools we have built. This year alone we have opened or upgraded 30 schools.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We have new schools across the north-west including in North Kellyville. There is Yawarra in Dubbo and the Marie Bashir Public School in Strathfield.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We have upgraded the Hunter School of the Performing Arts in Newcastle. Everywhere we go across the State we are building schools, hospitals, roads and rail. I am also very pleased to note—and this has not happened in decades—that we are due by July next year to have completed the maintenance backlog in schools. That has never happened before. In fact, this year alone we completed 46 per cent

of all items on the list of the maintenance backlog. I confess the member for Granville might come up in conversation later in question time, but she loves going to the new Bankwest Stadium in Parramatta. What a great community facility that is. [*Extension of time*]

We are building new bores, new water infrastructure and new pipelines—all projects that members opposite opposed. This year we have made enormous progress. We have also made announcements regarding the Dungowan and Wyangala dams and we look forward to delivering those major infrastructure projects. I am pleased to say we have reduced the cost of living for the people of this State and given back \$1.6 billion this year to our citizens. They are saving money on their energy bills, they are saving money when they send their children to play sport and they are saving money when they are paying tolls because they are getting free rego. We promised a flat rate on the Opal card.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Does he have a problem with giving back \$1.6 billion to the people of New South Wales? We said that we would deliver for the people of this State and we are delivering for every single community. We are providing more jobs because we are the party of the workers. We are building more things because we care about our citizens. In contrast, we have the same old Labor Party drowning in its own misery. We are getting on with the job of delivering for the people of New South Wales.

ESSENTIAL ENERGY JOB CUTS

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (14:37:45): My question is directed to the Deputy Premier. The Minister in charge of Essential Energy has failed to issue a directive protecting 180 jobs. Why has the Minister not followed the Deputy Premier's instruction to give those workers job security in time for Christmas?

The SPEAKER: I warn the member for Keira that he will be placed on further calls to order if he continues to interject.

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (14:38:20): I welcome the question from the member, who I think is the shadow Minister. It was only yesterday that I spoke about how the Labor Party uses every issue in regional and rural New South Wales as a political football. Labor members do not care about jobs. They do not care about job security. They do not care about communities. They do not care about the impact of drought. They do not care about the impact of the lack of water and they do not care about the impact of fires. We saw that from the Leader of the Opposition, who is yet to visit a community impacted by fires. Instead, she chose to go to Tathra to play politics about fires there a number of years ago. We know she chose to go to Armidale to mislead a community about the University of New England having to close by June next year, because she sort of fibbed and said that the university was going to run out of water. The one thing that is clear and different—

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 129. My question clearly was about Essential Energy jobs that the Deputy Premier has failed to save, even though he has been spruiking that he is going to save them. Now is his opportunity to explain.

The SPEAKER: I understand the point of order. I will hear further from the Deputy Premier.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I am trying to put into context that Labor members love coming into this place and playing politics about the people of regional and rural New South Wales. That is all they do. On the issue of Essential Energy jobs, it was members of my party, The Nationals, and members of the Government who fought each and every day to make sure that Essential Energy protected those jobs. It was members on this side. Again, the Leader of the Opposition chose to travel to Port Macquarie, get in front of a camera and spook the community rather than actually meet with the officials of Essential Energy.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: Point of order: My point of order is relevance under Standing Order 129.

The SPEAKER: The Deputy Premier is being very relevant to the question. The Deputy Premier has the call.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: This Government lost 36,000 jobs last month we want a guarantee about 180 jobs at Essential Energy.

The SPEAKER: I place the member for Canterbury on two calls to order.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: The Leader of the Opposition chose to go to Port Macquarie and, instead of meeting with Essential Energy, she stood out the front and played politics in front of a camera. That is all she did—no outcome, no result. It was members of The Nationals with the support of the shareholder Ministers who stopped those job losses. Those job losses have not occurred.

[*Opposition members interjected.*]

No, they have not occurred. Members opposite want to play politics with stories about the misery that is happening in the regions. They do not care about people. They do not care about the communities that we represent. I am never going to be lectured by those opposite.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129.

The SPEAKER: The Deputy Premier is being relevant to the question.

Ms Yasmin Catley: He is not being relevant. Why has he not got Matt Kean to save these jobs?

The SPEAKER: The member for Swansea will resume her seat. I call the member for Swansea to order for the first time.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Essential Energy was given a draft direction, which it is abiding by. Just like the Broken Hill pipeline, where those opposite got stuck in the weeds about a business case, we actually got on with the job of delivering the pipeline that has given water security to the people of Broken Hill. We have stopped these job losses. Do you know what members opposite hate? They hate it when The Nationals or the Government actually get a win. Members opposite enjoy the misery that they impose on the people of regional and rural New South Wales. I said this yesterday and I will say it again today: Thank goodness for the result of the election this year and that we did not get those opposite—the rabble—governing this State. This year we have already seen ICAC evidence and the Labor Party's fraudulent act of signing up members for preselection. The Labor Party only has self-interest.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The Deputy Premier is absolutely, definitely not being relevant. The question was about 180 regional jobs. He needs to make sure that they are protected.

The SPEAKER: The Deputy Premier will continue his answer. The member for Swansea will resume her seat.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: If they want to mention Essential Energy, I am talking about Voltz. I am talking about preselection and how those opposite probably have a couple of members in this House who should not be here. Today they are doing anything to distract from the truth.

REGIONAL TRANSPORT AND ROADS

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (14:43:35): My question is addressed to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. Will the Minister update the House on how the Liberal-Nationals Government has delivered for regional New South Wales this year?

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order.

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (14:44:11): I thank the member for Upper Hunter for his question. Given that today is the last question time for 2019, I thought I would mark the occasion by listing our achievements in the Roads and Transport portfolio over the past 12 months.

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: Simply reeling off a long shopping list of achievements is easy, especially considering how much we have done this year. We are a government that loves a challenge and, in that spirit, I am setting myself a challenge right now—to summarise our achievements in the next two minutes.

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: Mr Speaker, I need to make a deal with you: If I can get through this list in the next two minutes—and it is a pretty long list—then you have to give me an extension today.

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: Let's go. We have introduced two new weekly train services to Singleton and the Hunter, started work on our new XPT maintenance facility in Dubbo, and added a new coach service connecting Broken Hill with Mildura and Adelaide.

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: We have commenced a new weekly train service to Griffith, started consultation on new bus routes that will connect 44 isolated communities, added a new coach service between Tamworth and Dubbo, and added a new coach service between Tamworth and Port Macquarie. We have started a second Bathurst Bullet, with new connections at Tarana and Rydal.

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: We have added a new seven-days-a-week coach service to connect to Orange. We are rolling out new bus services for big regional centres starting with Tweed in December.

Mr Chris Minns: Point of order—

Mr PAUL TOOLE: Don't interrupt me, mate. I've got two minutes, so sit down.

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr Chris Minns: My point of order is under Standing Order 72. There needs to be some kind of Dorothy Dixier answer that is not just a monotonous drawl. The Minister has to try to put it into a sentence. He has to make it fun for us—it is too long.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: That is not a point of order, and I would expect someone who does not understand achievements happening in regional parts of New South Wales—

The SPEAKER: Order! Tell me the point of order under Standing Order 72, or else I will put you on a call.

Mr Chris Minns: I might have got the number wrong.

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: Do you want me to start the two minutes again?

The SPEAKER: You will get another two minutes, don't worry.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: Let me continue with our achievements. We have introduced 26 new weekly air services to destinations in western New South Wales like Bourke and Cobar, sealed more of the Silver City and Cobb highways, started nine of 30 new overtaking lanes on the Newell—

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: And we will finish three more by the end of the year. We have opened the Newell to higher productivity freight vehicles. We have progressed plans for the Parkes bypass and the Coffs bypass, powered ahead with work on the Albion Park Rail bypass and Scone bypass, and opened the Berrigan bypass. And we have done work on bridges. We have completed the Harwood bridge, the new Grafton bridge and the Merrylees bridge at Carrathool. We have started work on the new Camp Street bridge at Forbes, the new Batemans Bay bridge and the bridge over the Murray at Moama.

Mr David Harris: Point of order—

Mr PAUL TOOLE: We have pushed ahead with the Gunnedah bridge and the new Nowra bridge, and we have invested in the future. We have set up Australia's first ever five-star testing facility at Cudal.

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr David Harris: My point of order is under Standing Order No. 52. I am actually interested in this answer but I cannot understand a word the Minister is saying.

The SPEAKER: I will uphold the point of order, but not necessarily for the same rationale. There is too much general noise in the Chamber. The member for Wyong and I are interested in the answer. I ask the Minister to slow down his delivery.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: I have to fit them in; you will not give me an extension.

The SPEAKER: You will get an extension, just slow it down.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: We have trialled driverless shuttles at Coffs Harbour and Armidale and are about to fit the tech for the world's first driverless ute for a trial at Dubbo. We have invested in roads right across the State. We have made trips on our roads safer, faster and more efficient, from the Pacific Highway duplication, which will be completed next year, to a new patch of road north of Wentworth completed in under a week to keep freight moving on to the Silver City. We have the Newell Highway between Mungle Back Creek and Boggabilla, the Ellerton Drive extension near Queanbeyan, Empire Bay Drive at Kincumber and Cunningar Road near

Boorowa. We have kicked off our Fixing Local Roads program, which is going to benefit communities on the roads they use every day. Last but not least, we have started consultation on improvements to the Great Western Highway. Now I will take a breath.

This is our long list of achievements after just eight months in government since re-election. I could end there, but I know that none of the members wants me to. We have clearly achieved a lot in a very short time, and I thank the hardworking transport teams on the ground for helping to make that happen. That has all happened in 243 days. I ask this question: What have those opposite actually done in the same time? I will tell you what they have done. They have lost a leader; they have had an acting leader; and then they elected a new leader who does not even act like a leader—she has stood in the way of key reforms when it comes to the right to farm and has spent every day fighting scandals instead of fighting for the people of New South Wales.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order: As a regional member of Parliament, I too am interested in listening—

The SPEAKER: What is the point of order?

Ms Yasmin Catley: It is under Standing Order 129. He is not talking about regional roads, yet there are regional members here who would like to know.

The SPEAKER: I am happy for the Minister to be allowed to digress slightly, having given us so much substance.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: I am not surprised that they take points of order, because I know they are offended. They are offended because they do not stand up for the people of New South Wales. Members on this side of the House will stand up for the people of this State each and every day.

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order—

Mr PAUL TOOLE: I know they are offended because they are getting up and taking a point of order.

Ms Kate Washington: My point of order is under Standing Order 129.

The SPEAKER: I have just ruled on that.

Ms Kate Washington: There is no way that this is relevant to regional roads.

The SPEAKER: The Minister will continue. The member for Port Stephens will resume her seat.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: As I was saying, our achievements have included a long list of roads and transport projects over this year that are changing the lives of people living in those communities forever. [*Extension of time*]

Those projects that we have delivered will continue, but what have those opposite done? Branch stacking, visiting ICAC and, of course, running the sham fundraising vehicle that Country Labor stands for. Can we expect anything better from them in 2020? I doubt it.

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 73. If the Minister wants to debate the good and virtuous nature of the Opposition—

The SPEAKER: I have made it clear that criticisms or slurs of a general nature that are not attached to an individual are not in breach of Standing Order 73. The Minister will continue.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: I can give a commitment that all of us on this side of the House will continue to work even harder next year for the people of New South Wales and for the people living in regional New South Wales. We will build more roads, we will build more bridges and we will roll out new services for those who are living in the bush. We will not rest until we deliver world-class roads and more transport services for the people of the State. I will continue to come in here every day with the people on this side of the House and actually point out the good things that are happening in the State. We will point out the incompetence of the Opposition that we have seen since March of this year.

Mr Clayton Barr: Point of order—

Mr PAUL TOOLE: It is not a party that serves the bush; it is just Labor with a different logo—all hat, no cattle. In 75 days we will be back with more success stories and we will tell them all the good things that we are doing.

The SPEAKER: The Minister has finished his answer.

UPPER HUNTER AIR QUALITY

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:53:02): My question is directed to the Premier. The Upper Hunter Air Quality Network has found air quality in the region is at dangerous levels.

Mr David Elliott: There is a bushfire.

The SPEAKER: The Minister will contain himself.

Ms JODI McKAY: I do not think the people of Singleton and Muswellbrook would think that was funny.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will recommence asking her question.

Ms JODI McKAY: My question is directed to the Premier. The Upper Hunter Air Quality Network has found air quality in the region is at dangerous levels. There have been 648 particle pollution alerts this year, more than double last year's number, with some readings nearly 2,000 per cent worse than the national standard. Will the Premier work with industry and the community to develop a strategy to address air pollution in the Hunter Valley?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:54:06): The Government always works with parties to ensure good air quality and safety across the State. The upper Hunter is included in that process. We are a government that prides itself on making sure we have good health standards across the board in all parts of the community and particularly those industries that may be relevant in impacting air quality. It is appropriate to address this issue today given all of us are impacted by air quality, all of us are impacted by events outside our control. There are some things governments can monitor and control and other things it cannot.

Ms Kate Washington: Residents in the Upper Hunter have been suffering for months.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Thank you.

Ms Kate Washington: Where has the member for Upper Hunter been?

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I am pleased to say that since we have been in government not only have we strengthened the authority of the Environment Protection Authority to monitor and respond to air quality, we have for the first time involved the Chief Scientist in these matters. We will continue to take this approach. I note interjections from those opposite. Please raise your concerns with us. Those opposite say it has been going on for a long time but this is the first time they have raised it with the Government.

Ms Kate Washington: The local member has not raised it with you?

The SPEAKER: Order! It is the third day in a row that the member for Port Stephens has been on three calls to order. I direct the member for Port Stephens to remove herself from the Chamber under Standing Order 249A. The member may return to the Chamber in one hour.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Port Stephens left the Chamber at 14:55.]

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: On a serious note, this Government takes seriously all issues affecting health, whether it is air quality or water quality or any other factor that might impact our citizens. If there is anything we can do to better strengthen those provisions we will. We are committed to that. On the topic more broadly of pollution, there is a lot of pollution on the other side of the Chamber. I want to know what the Leader of the Opposition intends to do with the members for the electorates of Auburn and Granville? They have been accused of serious allegations.

Ms Anna Watson: Point of order: My point of order is Standing Order 129, relevance. That response has nothing to do with the question that was asked. I ask that the Premier be brought back to the leave of the question and not cast aspersions on Opposition members.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The Premier has been relevant.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I stand to be corrected but I am advised that drought and bushfire are also affecting the air quality in that area. We have to take that and other impacts into consideration. I stress that our Government takes these issues seriously. Whether it is through our environment agencies or our health agencies, we have more stringent guidelines than ever before. The Chief Scientist is also involved in the monitoring of air quality. Previously that was not the case.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Are you asking a supplementary question?

Ms Jodi McKay: It is Standing Order 129.

The SPEAKER: The Premier has concluded her question.

Ms Jodi McKay: The member for Upper Hunter has not done anything on this issue.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will resume her seat.

POLITICAL DONATIONS

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (14:58:02): I address my question to the Minister for Transport and Roads and Leader of the House. Will the Minister update the House on the progress of the cash donations bill and how will it improve the integrity of the political process in New South Wales?

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order—

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Roads) (14:58:21): Are you seriously going to get up and defend the Fergusons, are you, of all people?

The SPEAKER: The Minister will resume his seat. The member for Liverpool is taking a point of order.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Are you going to defend your shadow Minister for Consumer Protection and your shadow Minister for Police and Counter Terrorism? Of all people—Mr Ferguson. How are you?

The SPEAKER: The Minister will resume his seat.

Mr Paul Lynch: I have two points of order. The first point of order is the abject failure of the Leader of the House to adhere to Standing Order 94 and sit down when a point of order is being taken. The second point of order is that there are two questions.

The SPEAKER: I am satisfied that it is essentially one question. Both parts of the question relate to the cash donations bill. I will ask the question to be read again, but I am satisfied it is one question.

Mr MARK COURE: I address my question to the Minister for Transport and Roads and Leader of the House. Will the Minister update the House on the progress of the cash donations bill and how will it improve the integrity of the political process in New South Wales?

The SPEAKER: Both parts are about the cash donations bill.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Is it not fitting that the last question of the year is in relation to political integrity? I make the observation that it was this side of the House, through the leadership of the Premier, who earlier this year had to bring in legislation in relation to \$100 caps on donations as a result of what was going on at the Independent Commission Against Corruption—

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: —and our dear friends opposite. As to the passage of this bill, I would have hoped that it would have improved the political integrity of this State. But I am disappointed that it has not. Anyone waking up to the news this morning knows that it has not improved the political integrity of this State. It now leads to significant questions for the Leader of the Opposition. The first point is that if you are in receipt of documents that may have been falsified you might go to the police. Quite frankly, if they have been falsified and they involve the shadow police Minister and the shadow Minister for Consumer Protection, the big question for the Leader of the Opposition is why has she not referred the matter to the police. The other question is why has she not relegated these two shadow Ministers to the backbench, so that she is consistent with her calls on a regular basis to stand members down. There seems to be one standard for the Leader of the Opposition and her team and another standard that she expects of everybody else.

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Minister will resume his seat.

Mr Ryan Park: My point of order is under Standing Order 73. After a minute and a half into his answer, the Minister is clearly casting imputations against members of the Opposition. If the Minister wants to do that he can do so by substantive debate and we will bring up that Government member and that Government member. Let's go, mate, any day.

The SPEAKER: The Minister has not transgressed Standing Order 73. The Minister will continue and I will be conscious of the point of order.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: In relation to the point of order, I refer the member to a public interest debate that took place at 5 o'clock yesterday afternoon. The bottom line is that the Leader of the Opposition has already failed on two counts in terms of asking and requiring that these two shadow Ministers—

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Minister will resume his seat.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: —the shadow police Minister and the shadow Minister for Consumer Protection to go the backbench.

The SPEAKER: The Minister will resume his seat.

Mr Greg Warren: My point of order is Standing Order 73. The Minister is making imputations.

The SPEAKER: I have ruled on that point of order and nothing has changed.

Mr Greg Warren: The Minister is continuing to make personal reflections and imputations, which are out of order.

The SPEAKER: The member will resume his seat. The Minister will continue.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: The bottom line is that a very serious situation has arisen. The best that the Leader of the Opposition can do is refer two shadow Ministers on her frontbench for investigation for the falsification of documents. That is called fraud.

Ms Jodie Harrison: Point of order—

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: That is called being a political crook.

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. I ask the member for Charlestown what her point of order is.

Ms Jodie Harrison: My point of order is Standing Order 129. Mr Speaker, your ruling in relation to this question was that both parts of the question related to the cash donations bill. I have yet to hear the Minister mention the cash donations bill more than once in his answer.

The SPEAKER: On my interpretation the Minister is talking about cash donations. He might make it clearer that he is talking about the provisions of the bill, which is why the question is relevant to him.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: In relation to the political integrity component, this bill has not improved political integrity within the Labor Party, which is why we had to introduce it in the first place.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order—

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: What we are seeing from the Leader of the Opposition is a failure of character, a failure of leadership.

The SPEAKER: The Minister will resume his seat.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: You can't clean up your party, you can't clean up your front bench, you can't lead. That is the bottom line. There is a grab for the camera.

The SPEAKER: The Minister will resume his seat. I call the Minister for Transport and Roads to order for the first time. I have asked him repeatedly to resume his seat.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129.

The SPEAKER: The Minister is being relevant.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: The question is about political integrity—

The SPEAKER: I have made my ruling. The member will resume her seat.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: —not about one side or the other or why this Minister is still sitting there.

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

Mr Clayton Barr: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr Clayton Barr: My point of order relates to Standing Order 49. Mr Speaker, every time you ask the Minister for Transport and Roads to cease his contribution and resume his seat when a point of order has been taken he ignores you—every single time.

The SPEAKER: I will point out three matters. First, I placed the Minister on a call to order for not sitting down.

Mr Clayton Barr: This time.

The SPEAKER: I now call the member for Cessnock to order for the first time for being deliberately disruptive.

Mr Clayton Barr: So by taking a point of order I am being disruptive?

The SPEAKER: That point of order was disruptive. The member will resume his seat. I had placed the Minister on a call to order. I did not need the member for Cessnock to bring the matter to my attention. The member will resume his seat.

Mr Clayton Barr: Did I do something wrong?

The SPEAKER: The member will resume his seat or I will call him to order for the second time.

Mr Clayton Barr: I stood up and took a point of order.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Cessnock to order for the second time. The point of order was not valid. The member for Cessnock will resume his seat or I will call him to order for the third time.

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: It had better be good or the member for Campbelltown will be on a call to order too.

Mr Greg Warren: My point of order relates to Standing Order 49.

The SPEAKER: I have just ruled on that.

Mr Greg Warren: Further to your ruling, I do not believe that it is fair or equitable for a member who is following the standing orders and due process to address a clear issue of an abrupt Minister who continues to flout your rulings and requests—

The SPEAKER: I have ruled on that. The member for Campbelltown will resume his seat.

Mr Greg Warren: Mr Speaker, you will recall I was out of this place for three weeks and named because I did not sit down.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Campbelltown to order for the first time. I make two points. First, I had placed the Minister on a call to order. Therefore, it was totally unnecessary for the member to take a point of order on that issue. I regard that as being deliberately disruptive. Secondly, the comments made yesterday in relation to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services were made during a debate on a substantive motion. The Minister for Transport and Roads has not breached Standing Order 73. I expect members to listen to the final minute of the Minister's answer in silence.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: The point I was making is that political integrity has not improved with the passage of this bill. We had to introduce the bill because of the situation involving the shadow Minister for Transport, who busily returned lots of dollars back to the Electoral Commission. When it comes to political integrity, the Leader of the Opposition needs to go to the police or stand down those two shadow Ministers pending the outcome of an inquiry. That is what needs to happen. The bottom line is that they should be stood down pending an inquiry, which I note was sent to head office. Given that it involves fraud—

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order—

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: The bottom line is the Leader of the Opposition needs to take action.

The SPEAKER: The Minister will resume his seat.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: She is very, very quiet today.

The SPEAKER: The Minister will resume his seat.

Mr Greg Warren: My point of order relates to Standing Order 59, irrelevance and tedious repetition.

The SPEAKER: I do not uphold the point of order.

Mr Greg Warren: It is offensive that the Minister flouts your rulings.

The SPEAKER: The member for Oatley asked for further information before time expired. I will grant the Minister an extension of time, but I ask him to come back to the leave of the question.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I remind members that the question was about the cash donations bill. I remind members that New South Wales is the first jurisdiction to cap cash donations made to political parties. I remind members that this has happened because of an ICAC inquiry involving the Labor Party and donations to the member for Kogarah. I remind members that this reform will mean an end to poor accounting practices, untraceable donations and anonymous cash. I remind members that it is about sending a strong signal on electoral laws. I have one minute to finish the year. The Opposition members do not like what has happened. [*Extension of time*]

The SPEAKER: There is too much noise in the Chamber.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: They do not like what is on the front page of today's *The Daily Telegraph*. Those two shadow Ministers should go to the backbench where they belong—

Ms Trish Doyle: Point of order—

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: You are too gutless. You are a hypocrite. You call for everyone to be stood aside—

The SPEAKER: The Minister will resume his seat.

Ms Trish Doyle: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129.

The SPEAKER: The Minister is being relevant.

Ms Trish Doyle: While you are on cash donations, will you be accepting David Elliott's fundraiser tomorrow night?

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Your nose grew a foot with the lies you told this week in relation to the bushfires. I would sit down if I was you.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order—

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: The bottom line is the Leader of the Opposition is gutless. She will not act on these two members because they supported her for leader. That is the bottom line.

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

Ms Yasmin Catley: My point of order is Elliot, Dominello and Sidoti.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I thank the member for Swansea for highlighting the fact that someone has gone to the backbench because of an investigation.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: Point of order—

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

Ms Sophie Cotsis: My point of order relates to relevancy. I have two words: Daryl Maguire.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Canterbury to order for the third time. The Deputy Premier will be quiet. Before the Minister continues his answer, I remind the House that the member for Keira, the member for Kogarah, the member for Canterbury and the member for Swansea are on three calls to order. They will join the member for Port Stephens if they continue to interject. I call the member for The Entrance to order for the second time.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: The Leader of the Opposition should stand those shadow Ministers down and go to the police. She received the letter on 5 November but—surprise, surprise—the media only found out today. The bottom line is that those shadow Ministers should be on the backbench where they belong. They do not have integrity in the Labor Party. That is another failure of leadership on the part of Jodi McKay.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Coogee to order for the first time. I call the member for Riverstone to order for the first time. I call the member for Maroubra to order for the second time.

PARRAMATTA SPEEDWAY

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (15:12:36): My question is directed to the acting sports Minister. A month ago the Government blindsided Parramatta Speedway by forcing it to close after more than 40 wonderful years. The speedway operators have asked to be moved to the Light Horse Interchange site at Western Sydney Parklands by June 2021. Where will Parramatta Speedway be moved to?

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education) (15:13:09): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for her question. Obviously the announcement of the Metro West is very important for the people of western Sydney. It is a fantastic and revolutionary project that will change the T1 Western line, which is the most congested line in New South Wales. The Government is delivering for our communities.

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

Dr GEOFF LEE: We are building the largest public transport infrastructure project in Australia. It is wonderful that the Government has committed to those projects and we have made those announcements. I thank the Premier and the transport Minister for coming out to Parramatta and announcing the stops along the way. For everyone at Parramatta it will be a 20-minute trip. Hopefully it is under 20 minutes.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The question is specific. Where will Parramatta speedway be moved to? He is the acting sports Minister and the member for Parramatta.

The SPEAKER: The Minister will continue.

Ms Jodi McKay: At least try to answer the question.

The SPEAKER: It is highly disorderly for Opposition members to clap. I ask them to desist.

Dr GEOFF LEE: I recognise in the gallery Superintendent Wayne Cox. I want to pay tribute to him for his more than 30 years of service to the NSW Police Force.

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

Dr GEOFF LEE: Sydney Metro Northwest is wonderful, as I was saying. It is a revolution for transport for western Sydney.

The SPEAKER: I remind the member for Kogarah that if he interjects one more time he will be removed from the Chamber.

Dr GEOFF LEE: The Government is determined to give the people of western Sydney first-class, world-class transport services.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: It is Standing Order 129. Where is the Parramatta speedway going to be moved to? It is pretty simple.

The SPEAKER: The member has made her point. The Minister is being generally relevant.

Ms Jodi McKay: Where, Geoff? Wake up, Geoff. Where is it going?

The SPEAKER: The member will resume her seat.

Dr GEOFF LEE: It is very sad that the Leader of the Opposition has to resort to personal insults on such an important matter.

The SPEAKER: I remind the member for Londonderry that she has received her last warning.

Dr GEOFF LEE: The Government is committed to delivering world-class transport.

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

Dr GEOFF LEE: As I said, the people of western Sydney deserve to travel on world-class transport.

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

Dr GEOFF LEE: Part of the delivery of a world-class transport system involves building things.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Coogee to order for the third time. I direct the member for Londonderry to remove herself from the Chamber for one hour under Standing Order 249A.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Londonderry left the Chamber at 15:16.]

Dr GEOFF LEE: As part of building this world-class project there are decisions to be made. Those on this side of the Chamber are committed to making those tough decisions for the people of western Sydney. Our Government makes decisions and builds things. Labor governments refuse to make decisions. The only decisions they make is to cancel projects.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: If this is the same point of order, I indicate that the Minister is being generally relevant.

Ms Jodi McKay: He is not. The question is where will the speedway be located.

The SPEAKER: The member will resume her seat.

Ms Jodi McKay: It is his electorate. Where is it going to?

The SPEAKER: I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the second time. The Minister will continue.

Dr GEOFF LEE: Obviously this Government is keen, we want to deliver stuff. It is Christmas time, so I will not hold you in suspense. The fantastic thing is that the Government is committed to delivering a new speedway.

WATER SECURITY

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (15:18:04): My question is addressed to the Minister for Water, Property and Housing. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is ensuring water security for Sydney and the State?

The SPEAKER: This is a serious question. The Minister will be heard in silence.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (15:18:26): I thank the member for Wollondilly for his question and for his input on behalf of his constituency and the solutions that he is putting on the table, including the use of pipelines. They are very good ideas and the Government is exploring them. With the House's indulgence, I acknowledge two very good friends in the gallery, John McGregor and Tony Park. They have been a part of this place in various incarnations over the years. Tony Park is an award-winning author—Australia's own Wilbur Smith. His latest book is called *Ghosts of the Past*. It is his seventeenth novel and a great read. He is a wonderful person and it is wonderful to have him back from Africa.

The Premier and I today announced that Sydney will be moving to stage 2 water restrictions. This is about security. We need water security and we need security of integrity in this Parliament. We came to the decision to move to stage 2 after looking at the data and the facts around how quickly water levels in the Sydney catchment were falling. The Government has taken the community with it on this journey. The Leader of the Opposition called me to account for a comment that I made 12 years ago, which is on the public record—a comment that my own staff found within one day of my appointment as water Minister.

In 2008, during the millennium drought, Sydney was in a water crisis because the Labor Party did not take the people on the journey and explain what was going on in Sydney. Labor members were too busy branch stacking. That points to Labor's integrity. Labor was too busy branch stacking and being the Labor Party that we know. The Labor Party is more interested in games and numbers than in governing for the people of this State—in stark contrast to this Government. Labor put Sydney on level 2 water restrictions when levels across the catchment had fallen to 33 per cent. The Premier and I announced today that we will be going to stage 2 restrictions on 10 December, when it is estimated the dams and our catchment levels will be at around 45 per cent. That was a tough decision to make but it is the right decision.

It is important today that I reflect on the way that Sydney has responded to the stage 1 water restrictions and what we expect will happen in stage 2. The community and this city have been fantastic. As I said in the media conference today, everybody knows that we are in a very serious natural disaster brought about by lack of rain. We have all been smelling the smoke from the bushfires—people in my electorate have been smelling smoke for about six weeks now—and that is impacting on our health. The fact that we have not had the rain that we should have across New South Wales is having serious impacts on us all. The way that the people of Sydney have responded is heartening. When Labor was in office in 2008, during the millennium drought, people were using around 250 litres per person per day. At the start of this year we were probably using around 200 litres per day. I am pleased to inform the House that in October we got down to around 183 litres per day. That is a very positive response but there is more that we can do.

One of the challenges that we have been able to meet is to bring Sydney water bills down from the highest in Australia to the lowest of all capital cities. The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal is considering a

submission from Sydney Water so that the Government can ensure further water security and integrity. There is a simple way to continue to save money, and that is to use less water. If people cut their water use by about 10 per cent, they will each cut their water bills by about \$50 at the end of the year. So there is capacity for us to work together. On this the last sitting day of the year I remind the House that integrity is important, integrity in the way we make decisions and respond. The Leader of the Opposition promised a new sense of integrity for the Labor Party but in the last 24 hours we have seen—

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. Mr Speaker, I know that you use the term "generally relevant" but the question is about water security.

The SPEAKER: I understand. I will allow slight digressions. I take it that the Minister is making a slight digression but the vast majority of her answer has been relevant. I will grant the member an extension of time but I ask that she does not digress for those two minutes.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: As we leave this place at the end of this parliamentary sitting year, it is important to recognise that if we want a better Opposition, if we want New South Wales to be the best it can be, members in this place have to follow up their words with actions. There must be security and integrity. The Opposition needs to wash all those bad habits away and ensure that if there are allegations of fraud and corruption—

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr Greg Warren: Mr Speaker, I refer to your earlier ruling. The Minister is now flouting that ruling and treating—

The SPEAKER: She is not. The member will resume his seat. I am satisfied with the Minister's answer at the moment.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: For New South Wales to be the best it can be, you need a good opposition and a good government. We are providing the good Government. Those opposite should be a better Opposition. They should stand by what they have said, that they were going to change the culture and get rid of the Aldi bags, get rid of the branch stacking. They were going to have higher standards. They should follow through on that commitment and do the right thing by the people of this State. [*Extension of time*]

Mr Paul Scully: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. Your ruling was that a slight digression was permissible. We are now one minute into the answer and it borders on the stretching of every definition of "slight" that anyone in this place has ever heard.

The SPEAKER: Thank you. Has the Minister completed her answer?

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: Yes.

GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT POLICY

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (15:25:20): My question is directed to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. Since I last raised the issue of government transport procurement contracts in the bush profiting big interstate companies while denying job and financial opportunities that our drought-affected communities desperately need, has the Minister modified procurement practices to benefit local councils, businesses, jobs and economies?

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (15:25:57): I thank the shooter for his question in relation to this important matter.

Mr Philip Donato: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 75 in terms of the use of correct titles. I say to the Minister: Mate, you are the wrong Toole for the job.

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. The Minister will resume his seat. Firstly, the member for Orange is immediately on three calls to order for that. He is lucky he is not going straight out. That was totally inappropriate. The second point I will make is that the Minister referred to the member as "the shooter", which I think was obviously shorthand for Shooters, Fishers and Farmers. However, I ask the Minister to be conscious of referring to members by their proper title. I want to make it clear to the member for Orange that I do not want to see that again in this place.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: I do thank the member for Orange for his question. I am sorry that he is offended to be a member of the Shooters party. The member came into this House a couple of weeks ago and asked this

same question, but he asked it to the wrong Minister. Here we are today with your failings, not even knowing which Minister is responsible for procurement. There is another issue here: The member actually sat in a meeting that I had with the councils from Forbes and Gilgandra. He never opened his mouth when he was at that meeting. He never spoke about this issue. What he wants to do now is to come into this House and play politics on an issue that he knows we are addressing. This member of the Shooters party can come in here and ask a question—

Mr Philip Donato: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 75 and also Standing Order 129. It has been two minutes. This is an important issue in our regional communities—

The SPEAKER: I have ruled on Standing Order 75 already. What is the other one?

Mr Philip Donato: Standing Order 129. I am asking the Minister to be relevant to the question that was asked.

The SPEAKER: The Minister will continue. I am satisfied that he should continue.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: Members of the Liberals are happy if I call them the Libs; members of the Nationals are happy if I call them the Nats. Come on, be proud of your party, the Shooters. The member will be pleased to know that an alliance model has been created as part of this tendering process. The member knows that as a part of this process we are seeing \$500 million invested into the Newell Highway roads project. He also knows that instead of it being done in eight years it is now going to be completed in four years, because of the investment that this Government is making.

At that meeting where the member sat and did not say a word, I said to him and to the councils that we would have an opportunity for them to have workshops where they would have the chance to find out how they could be involved in the tendering process and how they could seek employment—not only the councils, but other businesses and other providers in those local communities.

It is the Liberal-Nationals Government that is delivering for the people of this State. It is the Shooters party that is actually opposing the programs that we put up. Let us remember: Your friend in the upper House could not—

Mr Clayton Barr: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The member for Cessnock rises on a point of order.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: —even be bothered to turn up to the first budget estimates. No Shooter showed up—

The SPEAKER: The Minister will resume his seat.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: —and cared about regional roads and transport in this State.

The SPEAKER: The Minister will resume his seat.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: So when you want to come into this Chamber and play politics—

The SPEAKER: The Minister will resume his seat. Did you genuinely not hear me?

Mr PAUL TOOLE: No, I did not. I am sorry.

The SPEAKER: There is a lot of noise in the Chamber. I am going to give the Minister the benefit of the doubt. The member for Cessnock on a point of order.

Mr Clayton Barr: My point of order relates to Standing Order 74 regarding the title of the party being referred to. The Minister is deliberately—

The SPEAKER: Thank you. I am satisfied that he referred to the Shooters party, which is an acceptable abbreviation.

Mr Philip Donato: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. What does budget estimates or anything else have to do—

The SPEAKER: Thank you. I am satisfied the Minister is being relevant. The Minister will continue.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: We have had targeted industry briefings. Community drop-in sessions have been held in those communities and a part of the program. We will continue to provide further opportunities in road projects like this.

ENVIRONMENT POLICY

The SPEAKER: The member for Heathcote has the final question for the year.

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (15:32:11): My question is addressed to the Minister for Energy and Environment. Will the Minister update the House on the state of the environment and the power systems in New South Wales?

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment) (15:32:40): Mr Speaker, I start by wishing you a very Merry Christmas. I thank you for your leadership of the House. In fact, all members have really enjoyed the way you have managed to extend question time by an hour every day with all those rulings. I also thank the member for Heathcote for a great question. I note that it is great to get a question from the member for Heathcote at this very busy time of year for him; after all, he is the Santa of the south. With late night shopping tonight, I hear he has got to get away early to fill his shift at Westfield Miranda.

I reflect on what has been a very busy and long year for all of us. In fact, it has been a year of milestones. What better way to start the year than the election of the State's first-ever female Premier, the most outstanding Premier that this State has ever had. It is not just firsts for members on this side of the House; there are also some firsts on the opposite side of the House. The Labor Party has elected its first female Leader of the Opposition as well. I congratulate the Leader of the Opposition. She has become the third-longest-serving Labor leader since 2011. She ran past the Hon. Penny Sharpe. Also last week, she just passed the outstanding milestone—

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. I know the Minister does not want me to stop the clock and extend things, but I think he might appreciate it.

Mr Greg Warren: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. There is absolutely no relevance.

The SPEAKER: I am going to give some latitude to the Minister, this being the last question on Thursday in the last question time of the year.

Mr Greg Warren: I think you have given a lot of latitude that has been taken for granted.

The SPEAKER: As long as it is in good humour, I am going to give a lot of latitude.

Mr MATT KEAN: I am acknowledging these milestones. What a significant milestone it was that the Leader of the Opposition this week passed "Memory Loss Maroubra's" long reign as the Leader of the Opposition of 137 days. The only thing standing in her way between that and the goal of passing Luke Foley's leadership record is the member for Kogarah, who would be happy with today's *Daily Telegraph*. Merry Christmas, Mr Minns. We know your turn is not coming too soon.

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

The SPEAKER: I have ruled on that. I have made my position clear on this question.

Mr Jihad Dib: We have not had the humour, Mr Speaker. Bring back Robbo.

Mr MATT KEAN: It has been a big year for our power system, with the Government delivering the Queensland and New South Wales interconnector. That has delivered an additional 190 megawatts into the capacity of New South Wales that will help us keep the lights on and drive prices down in New South Wales. That is what the Coalition Government is all about—lower prices and reliable energy in New South Wales. The Government has also delivered the Emerging Energy program, which is about delivering cleaner and newer generation into New South Wales.

It has also been a big year for the environment. This year we have seen the collection of 2.6 billion containers through the Return and Earn scheme. That is 2.6 billion cans, bottles and containers that are not going into our parks, are not going into our waterways and are not going into our beaches, just in time for summer. It is a great win for our environment; another great program delivered by the Coalition. In addition to that, we have delivered an additional 65,000 hectares into our national park estate. We have delivered almost the biggest new addition to our national park estate in 10 years. That includes the Mutawintji State Conservation Area. This is a huge win not only for our environment but for our cultural heritage in western New South Wales.

Another great item for our environment is our Saving Our Species program. We have saved some of our most threatened and endangered species and returned them to their native environment in areas that have not seen them for over a century. We are delivering for our environment. I am not the only one passionate about our threatened species in New South Wales. You know who else shares my passion for protecting threatened species? It is the Leader of the Opposition. She protected "Cover-up Kayla". What is she doing today? She will not fire Finn.

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. I would think even this time—

The SPEAKER: I caution the Minister in relation to Standing Order 73.

Mr MATT KEAN: The Leader of the Opposition will not fire Finn. How does she give the community confidence that there is nothing to see here—not calling in the ICAC, not calling in the Electoral Commission, not calling in the police, but calling in that incorruptible institution otherwise known as the Labor Party to investigate these claims. [*Extension of time*]

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. It is a personal reflection that is an inappropriate representation.

The SPEAKER: I am listening intently. I ask the Minister to continue, but to be very careful.

Mr MATT KEAN: This could all just be one giant misunderstanding. We have all had imaginary friends when we were kids. The member for Kiama still has imaginary friends and uses them to stack branches and undermine democracy.

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. I cannot hear what is being said, so I cannot rule on the member's point of order.

Mr Greg Warren: Apart from the Minister talking about his imaginary friend John Barilaro, he is being totally irrelevant.

The SPEAKER: The member for Campbelltown will resume his seat. The Minister has just over a minute.

Mr MATT KEAN: There could be a perfectly simple explanation for this. "Old Milky" was just running late to a few meetings—him and everyone he had ever met before. That is exactly what happened. In sympathy with the member for Granville, there is a perfectly reasonable explanation. It would be very hard to get real people to attend a branch meeting when the discourse is from Laurie Ferguson and Lynda Voltz.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr Michael Daley: —on behalf of all members, I ask you to invoke the mercy rule. This is not relevant, skilful or funny. It is what happens when you send a junior in to do a man's work.

The SPEAKER: It is lovely to hear from the member for Maroubra, who is now on three calls to order.

Mr MATT KEAN: A bit like his leadership of the Opposition—was that not a spectacular failure? A spectacular failure insulting our immigrants. The member could not get across the facts, running on his horrible record of his time on Maroubra council where he looked after the interests of Eddie Obeid and Joe Tripodi. What a disgrace. The reality is, nothing has changed in Labor and it is the same old Labor. The Leader of the Opposition would not kick our Kayla and she will not fire Finn. Jodie McKay owes her career to "Cover-up Kayla" and Julia Finn, who is her best friend and that is why she will not move on her. They are a rotten carcass. Nothing has changed in Labor.

Documents

DEPARTMENT OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Reports

The SPEAKER: I table a report for the year ended 30 June 2019 of the Department of Legislative Assembly. I order that the report be printed.

DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY SERVICES

Reports

The SPEAKER: I table a report for the year ended 30 June 2019 of the Department of Parliamentary Services, together with the Financial Performance Report of the Parliament of New South Wales for the year ended 30 June 2019. I order that the reports be printed.

AUDITOR-GENERAL**Reports**

The CLERK: In accordance with section 52B of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, I announce receipt of the Auditor-General's *Financial Audit Report* entitled *Health 2019* dated 21 November 2019, and authorised to be printed.

*Committees***PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE****Inquiry**

Mr GREG PIPER: As Chair: In accordance with Standing Order 299 (1), I inform the House that the Public Accounts Committee has resolved to conduct an inquiry into the examination of the Auditor-General's performance audit reports February 2018 to July 2018, the full details of which are available on the committee's home page.

*Documents***PRINTING OF PAPERS**

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I move:

That the following papers be printed:

Report of the NSW Department of Education entitled *Progress Report: Improving outcomes for students with disability 2019*

Investigation Report established under section 433 of the Local Government Act entitled *Report of the Section 430 Investigation into Warrumbungle Shire Council*

Reports for the year ended 30 June 2019 by—Inspector of Custodial Services, Law Enforcement Conduct Commission

Report under section 242(6) of the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002 by the Office of the Inspector of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission on Criminal Organisation Search Warrants for the period 7 August 2017 to 6 August 2019, dated September 2019

Erratum to the report of the Department of Education entitled *Report of the Department of Education for 2018*

Report by the New South Wales Electoral Commissioner on the conduct of the NSW State Election 2019

Report of the Public Interest Disclosures Steering Committee for the 2018-19 financial year, dated September 2019

Report on the review of the Explosives Act 2003, dated October 2019

Auditor-General's Financial Audit Report entitled *Health 2019*, dated 21 November 2019

Report of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal entitled *Licence compliance under the Water Industry Competition Act 2006 (NSW), Report to the Minister, Water – Annual Compliance Report*, dated October 2019

Report of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal entitled *NSW Energy Savings Scheme - Compliance and Operation in 2018, Annual Report to the Minister, NSW Energy Savings Scheme*, dated July 2019

Report of the Department of Family and Community Services entitled *Child Deaths 2018 Annual Report*

Environment Protection Authority Regulatory Assurance Statement 2017-18

Reports of the National Environment Protection Council for the years ended—30 June 2017, and 30 June 2018.

Reports for the year 2018 of the—Serious Offenders Review Council; and State Parole Authority.

Reports for the year ended 30 June 2019 of—

NSW Department of Finance, Services and Innovation (including reports for: Registrar-General; Board of Surveying and Spatial Information; Geographical Names Board of New South Wales; Surveyor-General; Valuer-General; NSW Procurement Board; and the Annual Reports for Rental; NSW Government Communications (Telco) Authority; Office of the Valuer-General and Long Service Corporation);

Service NSW;

State Insurance Regulatory Authority;

Property NSW;

Teacher Housing Authority of New South Wales;

Place Management NSW (including the report for Luna Park Reserve Trust);

Waste Assets Management Corporation;

Cemeteries and Crematoria NSW;

Greyhound Racing NSW;
Greyhound Welfare and Integrity Commission;
Harness Racing New South Wales;
Racing NSW;
Wentworth Park Sporting Complex Trust;
NSW Architects Registration Board;
Professional Standards Councils;
Destination NSW;
Mental Health Commission of New South Wales;
Mental Health Review Tribunal;
New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council;
Multicultural NSW;
Jobs for NSW;
NSW Skills Board;
Art Gallery of New South Wales Trust;
Australian Museum Trust;
Coal Innovation NSW Fund;
Trustees of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences;
Library Council of New South Wales;
Sydney Opera House Trust;
Department of Planning and Environment;
Central Coast and Hunter Regional Development Corporation;
NSW Education Standards Authority;
Anti-Discrimination Board of New South Wales;
Department of Justice;
Judicial Commission of New South Wales;
Legal Aid New South Wales;
Legal Profession Admission Board;
Legal Services Council (incorporating the report of the Commissioner for Uniform Legal Services Regulation);
New South Wales Bar Association;
NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal;
NSW Crown Solicitor's Office;
New South Wales Law Reform Commission;
NSW Trustee and Guardian (incorporating the report of the Public Guardian);
Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions;
Office of the Legal Services Commissioner;
Cobar Water Board; Dams Safety Committee;
Department of Industry (including the Report of the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority);
Local Land Services;
NSW Food Authority;
New South Wales Rural Assistance Authority;
Rice Marketing Board;
Veterinary Practitioners Board of New South Wales;
Water NSW;
Trustees of the ANZAC Memorial Building;

New South Wales Institute of Sport;
Office of Sport;
State Sporting Venues Authority;
Sydney Olympic Park Authority;
Venues NSW;
Barangaroo Delivery Authority;
Department of Premier and Cabinet;
Greater Sydney Commission;
Infrastructure NSW;
Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal;
Natural Resources Commission;
New South Wales Electoral Commission;
Parliamentary Counsel's Office;
Public Service Commission;
UrbanGrowth NSW Development Corporation;
New South Wales Treasury (incorporating the Restart NSW Fund; Social and Affordable Housing NSW Fund; Electricity Retained Interest Corporation - Ausgrid (ERIC-A) Fund;
Electricity Retained Interest Corporation - Endeavour (ERIC-E) Fund;
State Rail Authority Residual Holding Corporation;
Liability Management Ministerial Corporation;
Ports Assets Ministerial Holding Corporation;
Electricity Assets Ministerial Holding Corporation;
Electricity Transmission Ministerial Holding Corporation;
Alpha Distribution Ministerial Holding Corporation;
Epsilon Distribution Ministerial Holding Corporation;
Electricity Retained Interest Corporation - Ausgrid;
Electricity Retained Interest Corporation - Endeavour Energy) (Volumes One to Three);
Essential Energy;
Forestry Corporation of NSW;
Hunter Water Corporation;
Landcom;
Trustees of the Parliamentary Contributory Superannuation Fund;
Port Authority of New South Wales;
SAS Trustee Corporation for the year ended 30 June 2019;
Sydney Water Corporation (trading as Sydney Water);
New South Wales Treasury Corporation;
NSW Trains (Volumes One and Two);
Rail Corporation New South Wales (Volumes One and Two);
Roads and Maritime Services (Volumes One and Two);
State Transit Authority of New South Wales (Volumes One and Two);
Sydney Trains (Volumes One and Two);
Department of Transport (including the report of Transport for NSW, Transport Service of New South Wales and Sydney Ferries) (Volumes One and Two);
Office of Transport Safety Investigations;
Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator;
Ministry of Health;
New South Wales Health Foundation;

Health Care Complaints Commission;
Combined New South Wales Health Professional Councils (Volumes One to Three);
Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency and the National Boards, reporting on the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme;
National Health Practitioner Ombudsman and Privacy Commissioner; Administrator of the National Health Funding Pool (Volumes One to Three);
NSW Police Force;
New South Wales Crime Commission;
Fire and Rescue NSW;
NSW Rural Fire Service;
New South Wales State Emergency Service;
Biodiversity Conservation Trust;
Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust;
NSW Climate Change Fund;
Office of Environment and Heritage (incorporating the report of the Heritage Council);
NSW Environment Protection Authority;
New South Wales Environmental Trust;
Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust;
Office of Local Government;
Lord Howe Island Board;
Parramatta Park Trust;
Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust;
Zoological Parks Board of New South Wales (trading as Taronga Conservation Society Australia);
Western Sydney Parklands Trust;
Lands Administration Ministerial Corporation;
Western City and Aerotropolis Authority;
Heritage Council;
State Archives and Records Authority NSW
State of the NSW Public Sector;
Sydney Metro;
Office of Valuer-General
Dumaresq-Barwon Border Rivers Commission;
Electricity Transmission Ministerial Holding Corporation;
TAFE NSW;
Returned Services League NSW;
Water NSW;
iCare;
Ministerial Holding Corporation;
NSW Generations (Community Services and Facilities) Fund;
NSW Generations (Debt Retirement) Fund;
Electricity Retained Interest Corporation – Ausgrid (ERIC-A) Fund
Social and Affordable Housing NSW Fund;
Restart NSW Fund;
Roads Retained Interest Fund; and
Department of Family and Community Services (Volumes One to Three).

Motion agreed to.

*Business of the House***SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT**

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I move:

That this House at its rising today do adjourn until Tuesday 4 February 2020 at 12 noon.

Motion agreed to.

*Petitions***PETITIONS RECEIVED**

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

Centennial Park and Moore Park

Petition requesting an end to commercialisation and development around Centennial Park and Moore Park, received from **Mr Ron Hoenig**.

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**.

Pet Shops

Petition opposing the sale of animals in pet shops, 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**.

Canterbury Boys High School

Petition requesting funding for a dedicated school hall for Canterbury Boys High School, received from **Ms Sophie Cotsis**.

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

Bus Services

Petition requesting certain bus routes and timetables be restored, received from **Mr Ron Hoenig**.

*Motions***CHRISTMAS FELICITATIONS**

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (15:46:45): I move:

That this House take note of Christmas felicitations.

This is the time of the parliamentary calendar when we come together and acknowledge all the wonderful men and women who make possible democracy in New South Wales. I start by thanking the Speaker. He is a relatively new Speaker in this place and only Minister Hancock would appreciate what the role entails. On behalf of the people of New South Wales I thank him for the role he undertakes as the Presiding Officer. I often tell people the Speaker has more power than the Premier, and they do not believe me. But when we are in Parliament, technically he is the Presiding Officer in this place and I respectfully acknowledge his role and thank him for it.

I also acknowledge the role of the Deputy Speaker and member for Port Macquarie, Leslie Williams, the Assistant Speaker and member for Oatley, Mark Coure, and all the Temporary Speakers, and we have a number of them. It is always good to see people take that role during various parts of the proceedings. I acknowledge their contribution. Where would any of us be without the Leader of the House and member for Bega, Minister Constance. I thank him and acknowledge his contribution. His level of organisation has ensured a smooth running of the Chamber. I acknowledge his counterpart, the manager of Opposition business and member for Keira, and

say that often the Leader of the House and the shadow leader of business do need to work together. I acknowledge both of them in that regard.

Mr Andrew Constance: It's very hard.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I acknowledge the interjection by the Leader of the House so that it is recorded in *Hansard*. I acknowledge the leaders of the Government and the Opposition in the other place and the work that they do. I especially acknowledge the Whip who carries out his role in an outstanding way. I acknowledge the member for Terrigal for the role that he plays. His role is not only in this place, but also outside as well. I acknowledge the role he plays in leading our team and ensuring we are where we need to be at the right time. He also supports our members with their activities. I acknowledge the Nationals Whip and member for Cootamundra, the Deputy Government Whip and member for Heathcote, and the Opposition Whip and Deputy Opposition Whip.

I often look at the work conducted by our Clerk, Helen Minnican, in admiration. No matter what is going on in the Chamber she always demonstrates absolute professionalism and has a positive attitude to her responsibilities. I thank her personally for that. I also acknowledge the Deputy Clerk, the Serjeant-at-Arms and also the Clerk Assistants. I appreciate the role they undertake patiently and with great professionalism. It is deeply appreciated.

The Hansard team has one of the most difficult jobs in this place. I deeply appreciate the work they do. I have been here nearly 17 years and some members of the team have been here much longer than I have. I hope one day they will be able to share—perhaps in more glowing terms than we deserve—what they have witnessed over the years. I deeply appreciate the role they have in ensuring that the records of history are well documented for successive generations.

I acknowledge the Table Office, the committee secretariats, the parliamentary attendants, the parliamentary librarians, and all the men and women who make a substantial contribution to allowing us to do our jobs. That involves people in Parliamentary Services, IT and support staff, our security and special constables who always greet all of us with a smile, the facilities and catering staff and our cleaners and maintenance workers. These are important people who ensure the Parliament runs smoothly during the year.

I thank all of our ministerial and electorate staff. No matter for whom they work they have a huge responsibility on their shoulders, often being at the coalface representing our constituents. I personally extend a thankyou to my staff and my electorate office. I cannot express in words how they support me during the year. I acknowledge in particular David Bolt on his last day in the parliamentary session. We will miss David and wish him well for the future. I acknowledge the 400,000 members of the New South Wales public service who ensure that the Executive Government functions and that the services and infrastructure our communities need are delivered. I thank each of them. In particular I thank the Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, Tim Reardon, and acknowledge his leadership in supporting the Executive team and all of our public servants.

I thank and acknowledge the Deputy Premier, John Barilaro. New South Wales has the strongest Coalition. I thank the Leader of the Nationals and Deputy Premier for his role in government, his leadership and also for the support he gives many of our colleagues during what have been difficult times with the drought and fires, and the difficult circumstances faced by many in regional New South Wales. I also thank every member of the Government for their support, for their hardworking nature and, of course, all members in this place. We do our best in representing our constituents and this is a time when we come together to acknowledge that. In her absence, I acknowledge the Leader of the Opposition and her team and say that this is an opportunity for all of us to come together and acknowledge that we are here to represent our constituents. We all have different viewpoints as to how that might occur, but at the end of the day we do what we do because we believe that there is no higher calling than serving our communities and the public, and that is something we value.

I thank the Speaker for allowing this time to be allocated to Christmas felicitations. I reiterate my deep gratitude to everybody involved in making the Parliament function but also supporting us in our communities. I wish everybody a safe and happy Christmas and New Year season and look forward to all of us coming back in 2020 and providing the opportunities, infrastructure and services our communities rely on but also supporting good government and good democracy in New South Wales.

The SPEAKER: I would normally call the Leader of the Opposition at this stage. She has kindly agreed to a request from the Leader of the House. We are breaking with protocol, but I acknowledge her and thank her for her generosity in the circumstances.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Roads) (15:53:34): Unfortunately—or fortunately, depending on how one looks at it—I have to go to a COAG meeting in Melbourne. I thank the Leader of the Opposition. Happy Christmas to everybody. As the Premier has just said, naming

everybody who works in this place is very important, but with regard to the Speaker, I wanted to get on the public record this year that I did occasionally think of him as Speaker Bercow. But I then thought better of that and I have decided that I probably should not say it. However, I thank you for your forensic rulings and your independence, and I look forward to more of it next year, without doubt.

To Helen, our wonderful Clerk, thank you for your diligence and the wonderful work that you and your team do. To the Premier and the Deputy Premier—the leaders of the Government—thank you for what you do and thank you to your families. There is no doubt that it is a tough gig; you are away from home more nights than you could possibly imagine—particularly you, John—so thank you for what you do. To the Government Whip, Crouchy, an amazing fellow with some great staff—Ben and Bec, but particularly Bec Cartwright, who keeps this place ticking over—and to my own staff, particularly Angus McKenzie-Wills and Ann Lewis, thank you for what you do. I hope Angus wins the Staffer of the Year award, which is being presented in an hour or so; I look forward to the results.

To the Labor Party, which I love dearly—I do have a soft spot for the Labor Party. We could not do Parliament without them, so I am very grateful to them. To my dear friends on the crossbench—I particularly acknowledge the Independents. The way in which the Indies come to this place with every incredible contribution is fantastic. Happy Christmas. Stay safe on the region's roads if you are out in the bush. Stay safe on the city roads; that is my roads Minister. To my parliamentary colleagues, happy Christmas to you and your staff.

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (15:55:54): As we prepare for the Christmas season, I join the Premier and other members in passing on the best wishes for Christmas. This has been a momentous year. We have been returned to this House, but the election feels like it is in the rear-view mirror. Most importantly, I thank everyone within the party, within the Government and within the Parliament who makes this place work. As the drought is far reaching and is no longer affecting just farmers but also regional communities, unfortunately for some it is going to be a tough Christmas. As we sit down on Christmas Day to open our presents and enjoy our Christmas feast, we should remind ourselves of the people who are doing it a little bit tough this year: those who are impacted by drought and those who are impacted by fires. It is going to be tough for some, but I know as a community, as a State and as fellow humans we always reach out to support those who are in need. To our firefighters, who are already battling significant fires in this State, I wish a safe and merry Christmas. I know that as the conditions heat up, things could be tough this Christmas.

I thank my electorate and my community from Braidwood to Bombala—the residents and the constituents who re-elected me this year. I thank my party, especially my deputy leader Paul Toole, the member for Bathurst, my party officials and all my MPs, who each and every day serve regional and rural communities to make sure they have a strong voice here in Macquarie Street. I thank the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker, and the Government Whip, Crouchy—a great man who keeps this place in order—along with The Nationals Whip Steph Cooke. If you know The Nationals, you know we are not driven by factions: We are driven by egos. It is hard to corral Nationals MPs together and get them to turn up to vote. I thank all of the attendants and all of those who serve the Parliament—not the Government, but the Parliament. At times we have fun; at times the battles are fierce in this place. But I know that each and every member of this place is here for the right reason: to make sure that they serve the community. Sometimes we do that in a fierce way, but often, on a lot of bills and in a lot of debate, we do agree.

It has been a big year for me as the Leader of The Nationals, representing the regions. Sometimes I feel that we, as members serving in this place, are very selfish because it is our families who sacrifice while we spend so many nights away. If I look at my calendar last year, I think I spent about 240 nights away during the campaign and during this year. Our communities deserve representation and that is why we do it, but our families are the ones who sacrifice. It is our partners, kids, and extended family and friends who pay the price. This Christmas is an opportunity for members of the Parliament to spend time at home, reconnect with their families and friends, reconnect with their loved ones and, most importantly, take time to celebrate a fantastic year and celebrate what is so special about our nation.

I acknowledge all members on both sides of the House, the Leader of the Opposition Jodi McKay, all Opposition members and all the crossbench members. We are all here for the right reason, which is to make sure that we serve our community. As I said, with the drought it has been a very tough year for so many across my electorate, but I am confident that 2020 will bring some rain. I am confident that in 2020, as we work with our communities and continue to talk about the resilience that we find in rural and regional New South Wales, we will find a way to get through this crisis. My hopes and prayers are that this summer will not be the summer of horror that some are predicting and that the work done by our RFS and our emergency services has put in place the preparation to make sure that we protect life, assets and homes. It is very important that we do that.

Most of all I encourage people, as they are thinking about buying their Christmas gifts, to think about buying regional. They can go to the Buy Regional website that the Government has created as a conduit between regional businesses online and people who are thinking about buying a gift for Christmas. Why not buy from and support a small business in regional New South Wales that is doing it tough? They would love to see people spend Christmas in the region. As I keep saying, if people are thinking about a Christmas holiday: Bathurst, not Bali. Have a Merry Christmas and stay safe on the region's roads. I look forward to seeing everyone in 2020.

Business interrupted.

Petitions

ABORIGINAL FLAG

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

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

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (16:01:55): I acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which this afternoon's debate takes place, the Gadigal people of the Eora nation. I pay my respects to Elders past and present and to the young generation—the Elders of the future. I acknowledge our responsibility to them to ensure that their health, education and social outcomes are improved. I am honoured to bring to the House this petition, which has been signed by 10,000 citizens of the State and also by almost 150,000 people online on change.org. This campaign has been run over a number of years. It was started by Cheree Toka. I acknowledge her presence in the gallery today. I also acknowledge Amnesty International in Sydney for its support of the campaign—I have attended several of the group's rallies—as well as organisations such as the Inner West Council, Sydney City Council, Reconciliation NSW, the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council and a whole range of groups that believe that flying the Aboriginal flag full time on the Sydney Harbour Bridge is not about symbolism; it is about reconciliation.

I have spoken at each of the rallies and said quite clearly that we, as a Parliament and as a people of this State and this nation, have to understand that flying the flag only 15 days a year is symbolism. Reconciliation is not about sometimes; it is not about special occasions. Reconciliation and understanding the struggle of our First Nations people is every hour of the day, every day of the week. It is something we should recognise both in our heads and our hearts. We should feel it and believe it. I cannot believe that we are debating this and that it has not already happened.

When you think about this issue, it is an issue of respect. We are sitting in Sydney, where the first white people landed to settle Australia, to invade this land. I use the word "invade", because that is what happened. Aboriginal people have never seceded this country and we acknowledge that. They have never given up their right to this land, and that is what the land rights and the related issues are about. When you come into Sydney Harbour through the heads and you head towards the bridge you see the Australian flag, appropriately, and you see the State flag, appropriately. Not a single person would argue that those flags should be removed, but they are saying that there is no recognition in Australia's biggest city of First Nations people as you travel through the harbour. Why should the Aboriginal flag not be flown alongside the Australian flag and the State flag?

Let us understand what the Aboriginal flag is about. The Aboriginal flag was born out of struggle. It was born on the backs of people, many of whom are no longer with us. It was born from the fact that many Aboriginal people were murdered in massacres, were poisoned, died from European diseases, had their land taken away from them and were moved on. We then stole children from their families to assimilate them. Later, through a referendum, we rightly decided that we would count Aboriginal people as people. This referendum happened during my lifetime and I was born not that long ago—although I know I am getting older. Yet today we still have the Uluru Statement from the Heart trying to get proper recognition for Aboriginal people. This is not a political discussion; it is a discussion about what is right versus what is wrong. It is a discussion about whether it is right to accept that you cannot put an extra flagpole on the Harbour Bridge when it is okay to dig tunnels under the harbour and it is okay to build skyscrapers that obscure harbour views.

We are told that putting an additional flagpole on the Sydney Harbour Bridge is impossible. No-one believes that that is the truth. A small group of people are trying to argue, in their conservative ways, that somehow flying the Aboriginal flag alongside the Australian flag and the State flag is divisive. I say that not having it there is divisive. Not having it there tells Aboriginal people every day that they still have to fight and struggle to be recognised as the original owners of this land. That is what it tells us. Every single person who signed this petition and all those in the visitors' gallery today—and they have come here from all sorts of communities right across the spectrum—fervently believe that the Aboriginal flag should fly on the Harbour Bridge. In summary, I ask the Government in the last parliamentary debate of the year to join with the Labor Opposition to get the flag flying on the bridge and to get it done now.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (16:07:50): I thank the member for Wyong for bringing this very important petition to the House. At the beginning of every sitting day we rightly acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora nation and I do so now while I pay my respects to their Elders, past and present. From the outset I put on the record that I completely disagree with the premise of the member for Wyong's comments in his closing remarks, when he said that this is a discussion about division. I am seeking to provide an update on some of the work that Transport for NSW has done in its investigations of the options that are available for the installation of an additional flagpole on the bridge.

The Aboriginal flag acknowledges the significance of Aboriginal culture to New South Wales. It is important to the whole community. The Aboriginal flag is permanently flown on New South Wales Government buildings such as Parliament House and Government House, and it is right that we continue to discuss other opportunities to formally display the flag. In 2010 the New South Wales Parliament amended the Constitution Act 1902 to recognise Aboriginal people as the First People of New South Wales. Since 2013 we have worked tirelessly through Opportunity, Choice, Healing, Responsibility, Empowerment [OCHRE], the New South Wales Government's Aboriginal affairs strategy, which aims to support strong Aboriginal communities in which Aboriginal people can actively influence and participate fully in social, economic and cultural life. The strategy is the Government's community-focused plan for Aboriginal affairs to embed a code-design approach to policy making that works to reset the relationship between the Government and Aboriginal people.

Local Decision Making, a key initiative of OCHRE, formalises this relationship through negotiating, signing and implementing accords, which are binding agreements between the New South Wales Government and Aboriginal governance bodies on behalf of the constituent communities on issues of mutual priority that support Aboriginal people's social, cultural and economic aspiration. In 2017 the Government passed the Aboriginal Languages Act, which recognises the importance of Aboriginal languages and culture to this State's identity and the wellbeing of Aboriginal peoples. In a significant moment, in 2013 the Government introduced the practice of flying the Aboriginal flag on the Sydney Harbour Bridge on Australia Day.

I am advised that work has been undertaken to consider how the installation of additional flagpoles to permanently fly the Aboriginal flag on the Sydney Harbour Bridge could happen. Transport for NSW has investigated various ways to accommodate another flagpole. I am advised that one option was to install two new polls on the eastern arch and two new polls on the western arch. However, this was precluded by the location of new maintenance gantries to be installed on each arch. As part of the commitment to maintain the Sydney Harbour Bridge, Transport for NSW conducts ongoing maintenance to ensure that this national icon is preserved for years to come. These new maintenance gantries will be used to provide safe and efficient maintenance access to the full bridge arch and lateral steel members. Access is needed to protect the intricate web of steelwork of the bridge from corrosion, which is the most important factor in conserving the structure.

A second option was to install a flagpole on top of each pylon. This option was not recommended as the northern pylons are used as ventilation outlets for the Sydney Harbour Tunnel. Another option was to install two flags on the southern pylon and keep the existing flags at the summit. This was rejected as those on the southern pylon, being lower, would appear to be of lesser importance. The sensitivities of this matter to all Indigenous Australians and, indeed, all Australians must continue to be respected as we continue with this discussion.

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (16:12:05): I am proud to be speaking in favour of and advocating for this petition today. As others have done, I pay my respects to the traditional owners of the land we are on, the Gadigal people of the Eora nation, and Elders past, present and emerging. I am proud to join with over 126,000 other Australians who have signed this petition. I welcome those who are present in the gallery today and those who are outside Parliament House. They remind us that this is not a petition that has come from within one small corner of this place, but that there is a movement of public sentiment carrying this petition here this afternoon. This is also a reminder to us that people are watching us here in this place this afternoon. They are watching us to see whether the rhetoric of reconciliation will be worked out into the reality of reconciliation—the reality of reconciliation that is a continuing journey for us as local communities, as a State and as a country. This

journey that continues for 365 days of the year—and is not just brought out as some kind of a trophy on special occasions—is what we are really talking about.

There has been some controversy about the passage of this petition to this place. As the shadow Minister for Early Childhood Learning, I am proud that alongside this petition from adult signatories, there is a movement of children and young people who are watching today and who are invested in this debate. The nature of campaigning and engagement has changed around us. Certain lone voices may not like it—and I have certainly heard from some of those—but that change is no longer within their control.

Around the world, it is children and young people who are leading the way in campaigning for a better future. Thanks to Quality Area 5 of the National Quality Standard in early childhood learning, the importance of respect and mutual learning are now embedded in every early childhood service. Services are assessed and rated on the basis of their ability to develop children's skills in building and maintaining sensitive and responsive relationships, and in collaborating, learning from and helping each other. We have embedded educational quality standards to help young children to respect each other and to learn from each other across our early childhood learning services, so it was no surprise to me that young children and young people have got on board with this issue—young children and young people who want to build a better future.

I hear people say that this is just a flag, and that flags do not change things. Perhaps there is some truth in that, but a flag is never just a piece of material; it is a symbol—a powerful symbol—that represents a past and current reality, and many future hopes and dreams. I hear people say that this is a flag of protest and that it has no place on the symbolic gateway to our State capital city. We on this side of the House say, yes, it is a flag of protest, a flag of struggle for justice, a flag for a struggle that is not yet finished. I hear people say that there are technical difficulties with fixing a third flag on top of the bridge, about the positioning of a third flag pole, and of the relationship between this flag and the two that are already flown.

We on this side of the House say, if we expect three- to five-year-olds to listen to others who are different from themselves, and to learn from each other, then we need to show them how to do it in this place. There are no technical difficulties to be overcome; there is just an ideological difficulty that needs to be challenged. I thank Cheree Toka for organising this petition, for helping us to hear the voices of those with Aboriginal heritage and the voices of those with other heritage who together call for the Aboriginal flag to be flown at the symbolic gateway to our State capital city. I have great pleasure in supporting this petition today.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (16:17:07): I support the petition. In 2017 I submitted this very petition to the House with over 500 signatures and I am pleased to see that it has returned with more than 10,000 signatures. The Australian Aboriginal flag is an important symbol of unity and identity for Aboriginal people. It was designed by the artist Harold Thomas of the Luritja people of Central Australia as part of the land rights movement. It has been adopted by all Aboriginal groups having universal symbolism, with the colour black representing the people, yellow representing the sun, and red representing the earth and Aboriginal people's relationship to land. In 1995 it was proclaimed as a flag of Australia under the Flags Act 1953.

The Aboriginal flag is commonly flown next to the general Australian flag and permanently flies outside courthouses, at public schools and here at Parliament House, in this Chamber, in recognition of these buildings being on Aboriginal land. The flag also provides an important acknowledgement of our country's Aboriginal cultural history, which dates back at least 65,000 years. Where better to fly the flag than on the Sydney Harbour Bridge? Currently the Australian and the New South Wales flags fly adjacent to each other on top of the bridge and four times a year the State flag is replaced with the Aboriginal flag for Australia Day, National Apology Day, Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week.

The campaign to fly the flag permanently on the bridge has been spearheaded by the inspiring Cheree Toka, a young Kamilaroi entrepreneur who wants to change the city's failure to show obvious signs of our rich Aboriginal history. The Sydney Harbour Bridge is in my electorate—shared between my electorate and the electorate of the member for North Shore actually. Cheree came to me two years ago to get my support for her petition. Her passion and drive have led her to run a positive campaign that engages politicians and the wider community. She has captured the hearts of many Sydneysiders who are proud of living in a city that has one of the oldest living cultures in the world. Cheree has been attending events over the past two years to get signatures and I congratulate her on this amazing achievement.

We have a lot of work to do to close the gap in Aboriginal disadvantage and to eliminate discrimination. Permanently flying the Aboriginal flag on an international icon next to our national and State flags will go a long way to show our willingness to stand and work together to achieve a better deal for Indigenous people in New South Wales. It is also an important sign of respect for our long cultural history that predates European settlement. In my view, there is no reason why we cannot erect a third pole on the bridge to accommodate the Australian Aboriginal flag permanently. I appreciate the update from the Government provided by the member

for Manly and believe that, should we be successful here, this would represent a social and cultural win for all of us. I commend the petition.

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (16:20:18): This is a petition about respecting our First Nations people. I acknowledge the 60,000-plus years history of the land on which we meet every day in this Parliament. Every day I come in here and look at that flag that means so much to so many of our First Nations people. I absolutely support the 10,000 people and more who signed the petition to say it should not just be in here, it should not just be out the front of the building, it should be in that iconic spot on the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Thanks to everyone who signed the petition, young and old from near and far, city and bush, rural and regional communities across New South Wales.

I have two stories I would like to share about the importance of this symbol that is the flag. Before I came to this place I was a school teacher. This story makes me emotional. When I first arrived at Brisbane Water Secondary College in Woy Woy from Paris, I had the privilege of taking on the student representative council, the school leaders at that school in 2006. They said to me, "Miss, we want to do some fundraising to put a second flagpole up on our school grounds because we, as students, want to raise the Aboriginal flag at our school." It was fantastic. Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal kids raised funds across the community, within the school grounds and beyond, and paid for that flag.

When we invited members of the community to come to the flag-raising, Aboriginal people came to the school. I was new to the school and thought that was normal, but the school community was saying, "Oh, my goodness gracious, how fantastic to have sitting here so many members of our local community, who we have been trying to get into the school for so long". That says to me that this flag is really important and it did the thing that we are meant to be doing—bringing Aboriginal people to education and success, and celebrating community. Raising the flag is a solid, respectful and very important symbol for our Aboriginal people. It is acknowledging an incredibly important group in our community—it is acknowledging the people who were here long before these whitefellas—and acknowledging the spirit of the land on which we work and play every day. It is acknowledging the ancestors, the Elders, the song lines, the stories and the Dreaming that came so long before us.

Raising that flag in the school grounds made me want to learn more. When two students in my geography class—two Aboriginal boys—came back from Europe and said, "Miss, going to Europe made us realise how important and how beautiful our place is", they inspired me to learn more. I went on to become the Aboriginal studies teacher and, as a whitefella teaching Aboriginal studies to black kids in my community, it was a privilege but also embarrassing to be in that space, which makes me say we still have much further to go, and part of that is putting that flag up on the bridge so that those kids are really proud of their heritage every single day.

In the mid-2000s one of my students, as part of her Aboriginal studies project, said, "Miss, we're going to get that flag up on the bridge." Molly spent a whole bunch of time writing to everyone she could possibly get hold of in the Government, none of whom replied. Molly went on to change her project and do something else, but I am really proud. Molly's class knows that we are debating this in the House today, thanks to you guys, because it is still important. I thank the member for Manly for updating us, but what a hopeless joke! We had a massive protest to get wheelchair access to that iconic place. They said it could not be done, but we now have wheelchair access to the Sydney Harbour Bridge. So we have some places to go. I thank Transport for NSW for its efforts to get there.

I thank Transport for NSW for the amazing effort it has made to acknowledge the Stolen Generation within Central Station. They have consulted with the Aboriginal community. Would it not be great to continue that consultation and take our Aboriginal people on the journey to see the flag flying. Every single one of us in this people's Parliament should be fighting for this symbolic recognition of our First Nation people. We all have a massive responsibility in here to represent our communities. We must learn so much more. We must listen, love and open our hearts to everything that our First Nation people have to offer.

I am privileged to live and work on Darkinjung land. Early next year I invite my colleagues to walk with me and many of our elders to Mount Yengo. It may be on fire at the moment because we have not adopted the land management processes of our Aboriginal brothers and sisters. Mount Yengo is where Biame stepped down from the sky to walk on the earth. It is a symbolic cultural meeting place. Imagine if we could connect Mount Yengo to the city centre so tourists and locals could know that our Aboriginal people are valued in their own land.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Roads) (16:25:45): I acknowledge country and pay respect to elders both past and present of the Eora nation and, in particular, the Gadigal people. I come from Bega. I have Aboriginal communities in my electorate. Those communities are proud of the achievements they have made in terms of Aboriginal employment, Aboriginal health and particularly working with young Aboriginal people. The building of the Batemans Bay Bridge is significant. It has allowed Aboriginal people access to work. I read in my local newspaper of a 45-year-old Aboriginal lady who for the first

time has a job. That is what is happening and it is worth celebrating. It is important that we display the Aboriginal flag on government buildings and if possible we should do so on the bridge.

Transport for NSW has looked at this. I acknowledge the people who organised the petition. I am happy as a result of this debate to see what can be done. There are new gantries. Consideration was given as to whether you could put flags on the pylons. On the northern side of the bridge those pylons are also ventilation stacks. We do not want to put a flag above the ventilation stacks. We do not want to see the flag in any less prominent position than those already on the bridge. That is important. In terms of this debate, Transport for NSW will go back and see what can be done. I acknowledge the members of the Opposition, the members of the Government and the independent member who have spoken in this debate. The key element to a mature debate is to support the specific needs of Aboriginal people as a community, particularly in the regions.

In the same week we opened Sydney Metro Northwest it broke my heart to walk into the Wallaga Lake community and have the CEO of the Aboriginal Land Council say to me, "I need a minibus to get 10 young Aboriginal men to a worksite." If we can build multibillion dollar metro trains surely we can get the transport solution right for that Aboriginal community to transport people to a work site. That is the type of thing we need to do: heads down and tails up and get on with the job. I thank those who are in the gallery. I will have Transport for NSW look at the issue again. There are structural issues that need to be acknowledged and the new gantries have added another dynamic.

Mr Jihad Dib: I seek leave to make a contribution.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is leave granted?

Mr Andrew Constance: No. This is important and respectful to the visitors in the gallery. On a number of occasions during the petition debate members have sought leave. If I was to grant it to one I would have to grant it to many other members. There is a standing orders committee that is happy to look at the number of participants for this debate. I am happy to raise that. I have spoken to Ms Watson and Mr Park about it. I think we should continue this debate through other avenues in the House. That may be through a public interest debate. I flag that. The Government gave up a spot so that the local member and an independent could speak in the debate this afternoon. I note that there are country members who need to get to aeroplanes. I acknowledge the member wishes to make a contribution but I do not want to set a precedent.

Leave not granted.

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (16:30:10): In reply: I thank the members for Manly, Charlestown, Sydney, Gosford, Bega, and the Minister, and acknowledge the member for Lakemba and the member for Balmain, who wanted to make a contribution to the debate this afternoon. The good news is that there could be some progress. What you do not want is a definite "no". Anything that is not "no" is an improvement. There are many on the other side that agree with the petition and want to see this done as well. The campaign will continue. We hope that they will be able to find a technical way to make this happen. I acknowledge Cherie. My great sorrow is that she is not the one putting the case here because she has done that strongly in the community. She has taken a bit of stick in the media from the neoconservatives, but she stuck to the task. Everyone has come together to support her and the campaign. Thank you—let's stick together and make sure it gets done.

I was extremely disappointed and tearful that there was some implication that children were used to politicise this issue. I am a former teacher. Every single day we teach respect in our schools. I do not expect government Ministers to condemn teachers and educators in the media for teaching kids what we should be teaching them. Let us keep this about a technical issue and not make it political with those ridiculous statements. Let us embrace the fact that young people are learning about our society, about loving each other and about how we can move forward as a community. Let's stick to the positives and stay away from the negatives.

Petition noted.

Motions

CHRISTMAS FELICITATIONS

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (16:32:52): It is the end of the year, a time for parliamentarians and people across New South Wales to take stock, reflect and count our blessings. For Christians it is a great time of celebration. It is a time of joy and festivity all over the State with workplace Christmas parties, school concerts and assemblies, carols by candlelight, displays of neighbourliness and Sydneysiders in friendly competition for which suburb has the best Christmas lights. It is also a time to reflect on the year that has been and be thankful for

our good fortune. As members—and particularly as Leader of the Opposition—we rely on so many wonderful people in this building and outside of it.

I start with Madam Deputy Speaker: You have done a wonderful job this year. Thank you for your assistance. I also thank the Assistant Speaker, Mr Coure, for his assistance. When the Speaker, Jonathan O'Dea, took his role we welcomed him. We thank him for his professionalism. Although we know that there is some partisanship within the Speaker's role, we acknowledge that we have seen a change in this place and those of us on this side of the House thank him for that.

It has been a long year, but I am blessed to lead a great team. I thank the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and member for Swansea, Yasmin Catley; the shadow manager of Opposition business, and member for Keira, Ryan Park; and all my Labor colleagues. The Labor movement—from our trade unions to the very newest member of our rank and file—is filled with thousands of decent, hardworking and altruistic people who want to create a better society. I firmly believe that because of the hard work of each and every member of the Labor team, we absolutely have this Government's measure and will continue to hold those opposite to account every day until 2023. I thank the members of our shadow Cabinet for all their hard work over the past five months. Many of them are members of the shadow Cabinet for the first time, and almost all are in new portfolios. I am incredibly grateful for the hard work they have put into getting across their brief and holding this Government to account for its many failures.

I thank the member for Shellharbour and Opposition Whip, Anna Watson. Being an Opposition Whip is a demanding role in any Parliament, but with a Government that is reduced to just a two-seat majority, the job is more important than ever. The member for Shellharbour does a fantastic job testing the Government's majority by cracking the whip and keeping our caucus on its toes. I also thank our Deputy Whip, the member for The Entrance, David Mehan, for his dedication to his duties. It would be remiss of me not to thank Colleen Symington from the Opposition Whip's office, who works with both Anna and David. I speak for the entire Labor team when I say that we would be utterly lost without Colleen.

I thank the Leader of the House. It has been a terrific time since I took over as Leader of the Opposition because the Minister for Transport and Roads and I can now speak, which is just fabulous. When I was the shadow transport Minister that was not the case, and I am very grateful that we can talk to each other when there are issues. I recognise the work of the member for Maroubra, Michael Daley, who has been a terrific help to me. I thank the Labor leadership team in the Legislative Council, including the Hon. Adam Searle, the Hon. Penny Sharpe, the Hon. Walt Secord, the Hon. Mark Buttigieg and the Hon. Antony D'Adam, for all that they do. Labor has had some important wins in the Legislative Council this year and that is because of the hard work of all 14 of the Labor members of the Legislative Council.

I thank my wonderful staff in the leader's office, who have just been incredible, including my chief of staff, Bevan Lisle, Pia Brunner, Alan Mascarenhas, Ben Granger, Leon Fry-Kontaxis, Rebecca Davis, Teresa Mullen, Edward Ovadia, Josh Wright, Morgan Campbell, Tilly South, Sravya Abbineni, Mitch Wright, Roland Kay-Smith, Lucy Margeit and Jenny Williams. I am incredibly impressed at how all the staff in my office hit the ground running. It not easy coming into a role like that, and I am so grateful for how they have established the office and worked with everyone within NSW Labor. We are fortunate to be supported by a wonderful team in my electorate office. All members are very fortunate to be supported by the wonderful teams in our electorate offices. I acknowledge all electorate staff. I also thank Wayne Leach and Domenic Mirarchi for always ensuring I am where I am supposed to be.

I make special mention of my media director, Julian Lee, who is leaving my office next Friday. Julian has been a bedrock for NSW Labor for the last 4½ years and while we are all very excited for his new opportunity, he will be sorely missed by us all, myself included. I am so grateful for what Julian has done for the party. I thank my electorate office staff, including Judith Wagner, Maryanne Duggan, Riki Chiba, Alisa Chen and Michael Ng. It has been an enormous adjustment for them as I changed from being the shadow Minister for Roads and Transport to the Leader of the Opposition and I am truly grateful for all that they do for me and the people of Strathfield. I thank the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, Helen Minnican, Deputy Clerk Les Gonye and Clerk-Assistant Carly Maxwell for all they do to keep this Chamber running. I thank the staff of the Department of Parliamentary Services, led by Mark Webb, for all that they do.

I thank the library staff, who deal with our requests quickly. I thank the Hansard team, who interpret what we say in this place. Most people do not fully appreciate the amount of work that goes into keeping this building running and us being able to do our jobs. I thank every staff member in this building for their contribution. I make a special mention of Irma Carrion, who cleans my office every morning and is always a ray of sunshine. I thank Helen Johnston and Andrew and the rest of the IT services team. They are always so helpful and patient, even when we ask the most basic of questions about things we really should know. I thank the special constables who work incredibly long hours. We too believe they deserve a pay rise.

I conclude by thanking my husband Stephen and my step-daughter Madeleine. I said in my inaugural speech—well, my second inaugural speech—that Stephen is the smartest person I know. To this day that remains the case. He is my biggest supporter and I truly could not do the job without him. I acknowledge the Premier and the Deputy Premier. The Legislative Assembly is a robust theatre of debate and discussion where we legislate on really important issues. But it is important to remember that when we walk out of here we are still people and members of the community with family and friends and other parts of our lives. It is important to know that we are whole people; not just the people who are in this theatre in debate.

I acknowledge the Premier and her family and wish them a very happy Christmas. I note that there has been some speculation about the Deputy Premier's future in this place. Whether he comes back or not—and I am sure he will—I note that it has been great working with him and the Premier. On behalf of the member for Swansea and myself, I thank them both for leading their parties as we lead ours. Finally, I wish all members a wonderful Christmas and very restful holiday season. As I noted, there are people in our State who will be doing it tough this Christmas, so let us all remember our good fortune and hold our friends and family close. I am sure we will all come back raring to work for the people of New South Wales in 2020. I look forward to being back here, but I will have a restful break before then. I thank the House.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (16:41:10): This morning I flopped down at my keyboard to put my thoughts together for this message. I start by saying merry Christmas and thank you to all. I honour all those who work in and around this Parliament. Many before me have properly and sincerely thanked Government and Opposition members and Ministers, the leaders of various parties, the Speaker, the Temporary Speakers, the Deputy Speaker, the Leader of the House, and the Government and Opposition Whips. I also thank all of my colleagues. In particular I thank Colleen Symington from the Opposition Whip's office for helping to manage some of the chaos of this place and ensure we are in the House when we need to be. I also pay tribute to her counterpart in the Legislative Council, Trish Marinozzi, who is a force of nature in her own right and an essential member of Opposition staff.

I acknowledge and wish a merry Christmas to all those who work so hard to keep this place ticking over day after day. Firstly, I acknowledge the hard work of the Clerks team, including Helen Minnican, Leslie Gonye, Rachel, Catherine and Carly Maxwell. I thank Rohan Tyler and the research and training team, and Simon Johnston and the committees and corporate services teams. I thank the Legislative Assembly reception staff and attendants, including April Lowndes, Lynne, Danny Heldal, Peter Tuziak and Chris. We have also enjoyed having Kylie Cook in the Chamber team during her secondment from the cafe. I am so pleased she is in the Chamber today so I could have this exchange with her. She is just fantastic.

I thank the library staff, who do an enormous amount of research for us. The Opposition relies on the library and I pay a big and sincere tribute to them and thank them for their ongoing professionalism in their research and the work that they provide. They are intrinsically important and we must ensure that our library remains well resourced. I thank Lisa Gelzinnis and the rest of the fantastic Hansard team so much for the work that they do. Without Hansard, Parliament would not be a democratic place. We are so pleased to support their work. I wish them all an extremely merry Christmas. Natasha and her team in the Table Office are always willing to give us a helping hand. I thank them. I especially thank Helen Johnston in our IT team, who is one of the most effective and efficient can-do people that I have ever worked with in this place. I can make IT very difficult, but Helen makes it very simple, so I thank her and her team for always being there to help out.

I thank the building services and maintenance team including Phil Herman, the human resources team, the special constables and the security team. The challenges that they have at the back of Parliament House on Hospital Road are definitely testing their patience but they are doing okay. I thank Phil and Carlos in the dining room and the Cafe Quorum team—Lubo Varga, Chandelle, Mark, Gavin, Andrew and Gary in the bar. Finally, I thank the cleaners. I love being greeted by Lourdes in the morning. She is such a beautiful woman, and it makes my day that she is the first person that I say hello to. I wish them all a very merry Christmas.

I also offer my thanks to all of the public servants for the work that they do in delivering essential services across the State, including our teachers, doctors, nurses, firefighters, police officers, emergency service personnel and staff of the government departments. I would also like to pass on my sincere thanks and wish a merry Christmas to the members of the press gallery. They play an important role in our democracy. I wish all of those members of the press gallery who have departed Parliament this year all the best for their futures.

I am grateful to all my Labor colleagues for their support and friendship throughout the year. In particular I thank them for bestowing upon me the great honour of serving as Deputy Leader of the Labor Party. I wish all my colleagues a very merry Christmas. I also thank Jodi for her leadership during a difficult period. I hope she and her family have a great Christmas. I also extend my thanks to Michael Daley for his leadership as well. It was a tough job. Thank you, Michael, for your hard work and have a merry Christmas with your beautiful family. I say

to all those Labor members who took part in the very first membership-wide leadership ballot that they are the lifeblood of our party, and I wish all of them a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Of course this has been a big year not just in New South Wales politics but in Australian politics, with two election campaigns. I thank and wish a merry Christmas to all staffers and party members and volunteers. In particular I thank and wish a merry Christmas to the people of Swansea who have given me the honour of serving them in this place. I also thank my staff, both in Parliament House and back in my electorate office in Swansea. I offer my sincerest thanks and wish a merry Christmas to Tilly South, Cheryl Murphy, Matthew McMullen, Deahna Richardson, Joseph Steel and Jarrod Melmeth. I thank them for their hard work throughout the year. It does not go unnoticed; I am so very appreciative.

Finally, I thank all those in this place and all around the State who will be working over the Christmas period. I thank them for their hard work. I hope that they get time to spend with their families and loved ones. Mr Speaker, Labor colleagues, crossbench members, Government members and parliamentary staff, I wish you all a merry Christmas and a happy New Year. I am sure we are all looking forward to spending time with our families over this holiday period.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (16:48:08): It is a privilege to contribute to Christmas felicitations. I have been a member since 2011 and, even with so few on this side of the Chamber at that time, this is the first time I have given Christmas felicitations. I feel incredibly special to be chosen for such an important role. I have been told 25 times today, "Be careful how you pronounce 'felicitation'," so I hope I got it right. Today we are in one of the worst droughts that this country has ever seen. Women, men, children and families are facing a Christmas with great uncertainty about how they will continue to survive and farm their lands. On behalf of the entire Labor Party I say that our thoughts are with them. The Opposition will continue to work in a bipartisan way with the Government to make sure that whatever support they need is delivered as fast as possible.

Over the last few weeks fires have ravaged parts of the North Coast, the Hunter and the Central Coast. Labor members are certainly thinking of the people who this year will not be able to spend Christmas in their own homes because their properties have been destroyed by firestorms the likes of which this country has never seen before. I say to them that we stand ready to support the Government in any way to make sure they get the financial assistance and support they need. I send a big thank you to the professional firefighters, the rural firefighters, the national parks firefighters and the emergency staff and personnel who have now spent weeks on the fireground. I hope that the fires come under control and that they too can have a fantastic Christmas with their loved ones.

I start today's felicitations by recognising and thanking my boss, the Leader of the Opposition, for her tireless efforts, especially over the last few months. This year has been a tough year for the Labor Party. People can say what they want, but it has been a tough year—two elections, two losses and the leadership ballot in the middle of it. Those are not easy times for any political party, but I know that Jodi McKay has given her absolute best, each and every day. She has barely had a day off. She has travelled the length and breadth of this State, meeting with, listening to and speaking with people. We are very proud to have her as our leader, and I am certainly very proud to work with her.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the member for Swansea, gives 100 per cent in this place. She is always a strong advocate for working men and women, and it is great to have her and the Leader of the Opposition leading our team by example. I thank my local colleague the Opposition Whip, Anna Watson, for her work since taking over the role a few months ago. I also thank the Deputy Opposition Whip, David Mehan, for his efforts. It is a real honour to be a Deputy Opposition Whip. I had that role. I had that role because there was no-one else to have that role in 2011. That is not the case at all for my good friend the member for The Entrance, although it was the case for me. In my case I was the last one standing so I took on the role of Deputy Opposition Whip. I thank Anna and David for everything they do to keep us organised and getting here on time.

Many people have mentioned Colleen Symington in the Opposition Whip's office. She is a fantastic individual, a great staff member, a person who gives her absolute best. She tolerates so much. Politicians are very easy to deal with! No, but Colleen deals with them in such good humour and spirit, so I thank her. I thank the Government Whip and the Deputy Whip and all of the people who work behind the scenes to get things done. I also thank my counterpart, the Leader of the House Andrew Constance, and his staff for their efforts in keeping this place running.

I thank the Clerk, Helen Minnican, and the team of Clerks and troops for keeping us all on track. I thank all of the people who work for Hansard and I also thank the cleaners, particularly Irma, who is always a happy, friendly face to see early in the morning. Thanks to the special constables for keeping us safe, the press gallery for keeping us honest, and the staff of the Department of Parliamentary Services for keeping this place running. I give a particular shout-out to the Library staff from nerds like me. I love the library staff; they are fantastic. When I am not having a good day I go down and hang out in the library and it brings back memories of what

I used to do at school. I feel good there. I owe them a book. I think I have now lost three books—but that is okay—and occasionally I mark books but I slip them through; I have a special way in. I thank all of the library staff.

I thank the staff in the office of the Leader of the Opposition. It is a thankless task and a tough job. I know what it is like to be a staffer—it is tough. I thank all of them for the work that they do. When I was the Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly I worked very closely with the staff in that office and they are very, very good. I particularly acknowledge two people who have assisted me, staff members James Evans and Mitch Wright. James recently retired; Mitch is filling that role and doing a great job.

To my colleagues, my Labor Party brothers and sisters, I know it has been a challenging year. However, we have got on with doing what our constituents elected us to do. We come in here and work hard. We challenge the Government, hold it to account and fight for our communities—that is our job. I hope all of my colleagues have a fantastic Christmas. They certainly deserve it. I remind them to keep their spirits up and remember that their job is not to feel sorry for themselves but to get out there and advocate for their community. Our shadow Cabinet has done what it has always done, which is conduct itself as one of the most hardworking oppositions that the New South Wales Parliament has seen. When the Parliament rises, the shadow Cabinet will continue to go out to every corner of New South Wales. I hope all of my shadow Cabinet colleagues enjoy some time with their families, friends and loved ones.

It would be remiss of me not to emphasise the people who support me so much in this place. The good people in my electorate of Keira, the best electorate in New South Wales, have now given me three terms. Three times since 2011 they have entrusted me with the privilege of representing them in this place. I thank them sincerely for that support. Those in my electorate office are outstanding individuals who go above and beyond, each and every day, to serve the community that I am so fortunate to represent. I thank Jenelle Rimmer, Mel Haskew, Lyndon Bartrim, Richard Martin and Myranda Thomas. My thanks are not enough, but I say it not just from me but on behalf of the community that they support and give their best advocacy for each and every time.

The families of all members in this place allow us to do what we do. I wish my family and the families of all members a very merry Christmas and all the best for 2020. We all know that this job is very difficult on families. It is a difficult situation at times. All members thank our families for supporting us as members of Parliament. I thank local Labor Party members. Those of us from political parties are only here because of our rank-and-file members. I particularly thank the branch members within the Keira electorate and, of course, the mighty Illawarra Young Labor, who do fantastic work and support all of the members across the Illawarra region. I thank those people for the support that they continue to give me. I thank them for the advice they give me and the critiques they provide me, as well as the encouragement.

I have been delighted to give this felicitation. I do not know if I will be allowed to do another one, but after nine years it is fantastic to have this enormous honour. I wish all of the parliamentary staff, my colleagues, crossbench members, Government members and all their staff and families a very merry Christmas and all the best for 2020. I ask everyone to please spare a thought for those people who are at the fire front today doing what they need to do to keep all of us safe.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:58:18): On this day, the last sitting day for 2019, I acknowledge and thank the many people who make this place run. I thank the Speaker, the member for Davidson; the Leader of the House, the member for Bega; the incredible Angus McKenzie-Wills from the office of the Leader of the House; and Taylor Gramoski in the Premier's office. I thank my shadow, the member for Shellharbour, Anna Watson. We have worked very well together this year. She has taken to running down the Executive hallway like a gazelle. I also thank the incredible Colleen Symington from the Opposition Whip's office, who also does an amazing job.

The Clerks play an enormous role in making this House function. They have been a huge assistance to me as I have started in the role of Government Whip this year. Their advice on matters of procedure and practice is invaluable. I acknowledge Helen Minnican, the Clerk; Les Gonye, the Deputy Clerk and Serjeant at Arms; Carly Maxwell, Clerk-Assistant Table; Simon Johnston, Director of Procedural Research and Protocol; and Elaine Schofield, Director of Committees. I thank the many staff who look after us in this place. To Hansard, you are amazing. You make members look so much better than we really are.

I thank the Chamber attendants: Ian, Danny, Monica, Hayley, April, Peter, Ian, Chris and Kylie, who is in the Chamber at the moment. I thank the information technology services staff and the catering team. I thank Mark Sheehan for providing my office with Chamber footage. I also thank the Special Constables, who keep us safe, and electoral office services. I thank the best cleaner in the whole place, the famous Martyr. I hear she is soon to become a resident of the Central Coast and I look forward to welcoming her to my electorate. She does an amazing job looking after the Whip's office.

Another group of people I thank for their work is the ministerial staff of this Government. All staff members have a tough job in balancing the many demands on their time and their Minister's time. I would like to name all staff, but I will particularly mention the following for their work this year: Premier's Chief of Staff Sarah Cruickshank, Deputy Chief of Staff Neil Harley, Private Secretary Peta Demery, Michael Evangelidis, Bryce O'Connor, Liv Graham in the Deputy Premier's office, Chris Ashton in the Treasurer's office, Ann Lewis, who runs the Leader of the House's life, Leonie Lamont and Simon Santow in the health Minister's office, Katie Stevenson, Tom Loomes and Alexis Scott in Minister Stokes' office, Priya Pagaddinimath in Minister Dominello's office, Cam Dunger in Minister Mitchell's office, and Ed Strong in Minister Elliott's office. I wish I could name all of them for the great work they do, but time does not permit.

The events of this year were very different to what we might have expected 12 months ago. Our success at the State election in March is thanks in huge part to the fantastic Premier we have. She is also incredibly popular on the Central Coast. Everyone knows her as Gladys. I was very lucky to have secured a number of visits from the Premier to our local area over the past 12 months. I think she has visited the Central Coast more than any other Premier in many years. As part of our election campaign in March I had a large and committed team that worked night and day—all unpaid—to ensure the Terrigal electorate remained in Liberal hands. I thank all of them, and all members of the Liberal Party branches in my conference, for their incredible effort. Not only did we win the seat but we also increased the margin by a very significant amount.

Finally, there is a very small number of people who make my office in Parliament and my electorate office in Erina run so smoothly. They are my work family. I have four staff, but together we achieve a lot more work than you would expect of four staff members. I thank Kerryanne Delaney, who runs my life and makes sure I am always in the right place at the right time. I also thank Donna Golightly, who is a huge asset to our team. I sincerely thank her for the way in which she ensures everyone gets what they need. I thank Ben Sheath, who wrote this speech. We often joke about how council and other large organisations have communications and marketing teams with dozens of people. I have one person and he does better than a large team.

Last but not least, I thank the Whip's secretary, Rebecca Cartwright. She effectively runs the entire Government on sitting days and is incredibly experienced at what she does. Being the Government Whip is a unique job. I acknowledge my great colleague Steph Cooke, the formidable Nationals Whip, and her secretary Viv. I thank my great Deputy Whip Lee Evans, and the upper House Whip Natasha Maclaren-Jones. I thank all of my Liberal and Nationals colleagues, who mostly do the right thing to ensure that Parliament can run smoothly. This is a great time for this Government. I am so proud to have been appointed the Government Whip and to be delivering my first Christmas felicitations as the Government Whip. I wish all members on both sides of the House and all of their staff a very merry Christmas. I look forward to seeing them back again in the New Year.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (17:03:28): As our final sitting week for 2019 draws to a close I join my colleagues in thanking and celebrating each and every staff member inside and outside of this Parliament. I start my contribution by thanking each and every Hansard reporter and subeditor for their invaluable service to this House. It is only through the work of these professionals that this House remains transparent and accessible to every citizen of New South Wales not only for today but also for tomorrow and every day that comes afterward. There is no doubt in my mind that Hansard and its workers are innately critical to the functioning of this House and, more broadly, to our parliamentary system. I thank each and every Hansard worker for your professionalism, your conscientiousness and for elevating the tone of this House at every opportunity. Hansard is essential to this Chamber, and I hope that is never questioned again.

To continue in the same vein, I am sure I speak for every member of this House when I extend my gratitude to the great Clerks of this Chamber. I single out Helen Minnican, Les Gonye and Manuela Sudic. It is the Clerks that hold us to account through the instrument of tradition. They ensure decorum and remind each and every one of us of the responsibility we hold for our community and the incredible privilege that we have been afforded by being able to be in this House. I shudder to think what this House would descend into without the work and wills of our Clerks. Similarly, I thank the Table and Chamber Services team for their professionalism and tireless support on long sitting days.

I make specific mention and offer my personal thanks to Danny Heldal and Peter Tuziak, April, Hayley, Monica, Kylie, Ian Delahunty and Ian Thackery. I thank all of them for their dedication and professionalism this year, just like every other year. I really enjoy working alongside them and am grateful to have their support each day that I am in this House. The little jokes that we have along the way are always a lot of fun. To move outside of this Chamber for a moment, I draw attention to the work of Mark Webb and the Department of Parliamentary Services team. The department is made up of approximately 200 staff members. I will not name them, otherwise I will be here all day. The team includes staff from the facilities branch, capital works, maintenance, procurement, switchboard, cleaning, financial services, human resources, payroll, the research service, the library reference and collection services and—of course—catering. It is no exaggeration to say that this department is at the very heart

of the Parliament of New South Wales. I make specific mention to dining room attendants Mr Gary Chan and Mr Andrew Fitzpatrick. I thank them for always being so helpful, thoughtful and accommodating. I appreciate their conscientiousness and hard work, as do so many others in this House.

I thank the team at the cafe, especially Lubo and Kylie, as well as the entire security staff and the Special Constables on site. We owe the fact that we are able to come into this place and feel safe and secure to the efforts of those men and women. To return to the Chamber, I thank the Speaker, the Assistant Speaker and the Temporary Speakers for their conduct and guidance over the past 12 months. I thank the Deputy Opposition Whip, David Mehan, for his ongoing support. I also vouch for Crouch, my Government Whip counterpart. It has been a pleasure to work alongside the Government Whip and the staff in his office, as well as the Deputy Government Whip, in 2019. I look forward to our continued cooperation in the future.

Speaking of staff, I offer my sincere gratitude to Ms Colleen Symington in my Opposition Whip's office. Colleen is an incredible asset to my team and I thank her for her outstanding organisational skills and dedication. She is an absolute expert at what she does and I am so glad to have her on my side. I thank the girls in my electorate office, Sandra Mitrevski, Louise Hogan and Jessica McLean. I am so proud of each and every one of them. They are so strong. They are empowered women and they support me. But, more importantly, they support the Shellharbour electorate each and every day. I thank them for the job that they do. I owe so much to all of them. I am also very grateful to Alexandra Slater-Maddigan for her enthusiasm. She worked in my office for a short while and produced some great work while she was there.

I pass along my gratitude to the member for Keira, the member for Wollongong and the wonderful staff in their offices, as well as our Federal counterparts the member for Whitlam and the member for Cunningham. Team Illawarra is a force to be reckoned with. I thank them for their contributions and support over the past 12 months. I thank the Leader of the Opposition and the staff members in her office for their invaluable work since the election. It will be a long four years, but the outstanding strength and leadership that the Leader of the Opposition and her office have shown in 2019 have united our team and made it all worthwhile in the end. I am very proud of our Labor team. I extend my thanks to each and every member of the shadow Cabinet for their dedication to their portfolios and for their constant fight to improve the lives of everyone in New South Wales.

Most importantly, I thank my family. Without the support of my husband, Gary, my daughter, Sophia, and my son, Joseph, I would not be standing in this place today. Lastly, I put political differences aside and thank every member of this House for their service to their communities. I wish each and every one of them, as well as their families, a very safe and happy Christmas. I particularly extend a Christmas wish to the member for Kiama. People think we are always at one another's throats, but we are quite good friends. I wish him and the member for the South Coast the very best.

If I have missed anybody, I hope they please accept my apologies. There are hundreds of people that contribute to this place and I am very grateful. This place works like clockwork, not due to the members but due to the staff that are here. As another member has said, they all deserve quite a hefty pay rise. I officially extend my best wishes to every member of the New South Wales Parliament team and every worker across this great State. I wish them a happy and safe time.

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (17:10:39): I start with acknowledging my second home, my office at Engadine, and thank the team for the help that they give me. I thank Anne England, let us call her the chief of staff, and Bella Beattie and Abbey England. They have done a fantastic job keeping me on the straight and narrow this year. With some of the legislation that has gone through they have taken a real battering answering the phones and dealing with people at the front desk. I offer them my sincere good wishes and thanks for the year that has just passed. We also had the election, which added another layer of angst and stress.

I then move on to discussing my third home, the New South Wales Parliament. First and above all I thank Bec Cartwright. Without her, this place would not operate. If she leaves here, she can go straight out to Sydney Airport and take over the air traffic control. At 9 o'clock in the morning she knows exactly what time we are going to be finishing. She is fantastic. Without her in this place and the Government would be more of a rabble than we probably already appear to be. She does a fantastic job and she deserves the thanks of all members of this House.

I also thank the Clerks, especially Helen and Les. It is now heading onto nine years that I have been here—but it seems a lot longer. The support they have always given me in the chair and around the Chamber has been fantastic. I thank the Hansard people. It is not easy deciphering some of the garbled messages that we send in this place. I thank them for making me sound like Churchill. The Chamber staff provide the 93-odd—and I do mean odd—parliamentarians with whatever we need. They make the place neat and tidy and keep us under control—closing doors, locking doors and all those sorts of things. I thank the cleaning staff, the security staff and everyone in this place. This morning when I was watching the new parliamentary video I saw a statistic that up to 600 people are here to run this Parliament on sitting days. Considering there are so few members of Parliament,

it is a mammoth task to run a well-oiled machine. It obviously ramps up and ramps down; when the members are not here it goes back to a skeleton staff.

I thank the information technology department. I am probably known as someone who would still be using a brick if I could—and I literally mean a brick—and talking into it. I am very low-tech and I appreciate the help that they give me and my office.

I thank the people who make me a whole parliamentarian, and that is my wife, Gail, and my sons, Cameron and Adam, and their partners. Without family support this is a very difficult place to be. I thank them and wish them a very happy Christmas with me at home. I call out to our country cousins who are finding it difficult with fire or drought—some with fire and drought. It is a very difficult time. I hope they get a moment or two of relief and have a good and happy Christmas.

I thank the Opposition and the crossbench. We work closely together and we are turning the corner to start working together seriously as a team to make New South Wales a better place. I believe the Opposition, the Government and the crossbenchers all work with the same goal of doing the best for our communities, although we might go in a different direction. I appreciate all the help with committee work that the Opposition has given me this year and I thank everyone involved in the Parliament in this last sitting week.

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (17:15:44): The role of the Opposition in a parliamentary democracy is critical to the success of the democratic idea, but it is a tough game. The Opposition does not have the resources of the Executive and the Government. As Opposition Deputy Whip I thank my caucus colleagues for their hard work during the year. On a personal note, I thank them for their support. I thank their staff, who do a great job supporting us, particularly in our role as the Opposition. I mention the wider Labor movement who stand behind us, prodding us forward to do good things for the people of New South Wales.

The Opposition is well served by a new leadership team. I thank our leader, Jodi McKay, and her deputy, Yasmin Catley, for their leadership since the election in March. Yesterday I watched them walking towards me down a corridor in Parliament, and I saw a vision of the future of our party and the State. It gave me great comfort. The Opposition also welcomed new members into our caucus: the member for Coogee, Marjorie O'Neill, and the member for Lismore, Janelle Saffin. For an opposition to see its numbers go up and government numbers go down after an election is of course welcome and probably a recognition that the community feels we are also heading in the right direction. I acknowledge the hard work given to the cause by Michael Daley in his leadership during the election campaign. He was called upon to lead the party late in the show and he did a fantastic job under very difficult circumstances. I wish him all the very best.

The job of the Opposition Whip's office is made easier by our cooperation with the Leader of Opposition Business in the House, Ryan Park, and his staff. I acknowledge his role in the House. Ultimately, the Whip's office stands or falls with our executive officer, Colleen Symington. Many members have mentioned Colleen today and I do as well. We would not be able to do what we do without her. She is a towering foot soldier for the Labor movement and for public service. She is completely dedicated to her role. When I was elected to the role of Deputy Whip, in no time at all I popped downstairs to let her know. She already had new letterhead prepared with the Deputy Whip's name on it. That is the sort of dedication and thinking ahead that Colleen provides. We would not be able to do what we do without her.

I acknowledge the Speaker's office and all the Acting and Temporary Speakers. The Speaker has tried to change the tone of the Parliament, and I wish him all the best. I will do what I can to assist him in that regard. I think he is doing it all for the right reasons. I hope we have some success in that regard. I thank the Clerk, Helen Minnican, and the staff who support Parliament in the widest possible sense. I will not name any others, except to say the Opposition appreciates the work of the public servants who support our democracy and the Parliament. I particularly appreciate the work of the library staff and how they support my role. The Hansard staff do a marvellous job. They are the connection between this House and the public and we should be supporting them whenever we can. We should support them to continue the role they have traditionally provided in the Parliament.

I thank my electorate of The Entrance and record again my appreciation of the honour it has been to be returned as the member for The Entrance for a second term. I thank the community and wish them all the very best over the holiday period. I look forward to working with them over the next three years to make the electorate of The Entrance a better place for all of its citizens. I thank my staff, Catherine Wall, Alfat Karnib, Danielle Atherden, Peyton Roberts-Garnsey, and our newest team members, Maria Petrovic and Rhys Zorro. Catherine Wall is a fantastic senior electoral officer. I would not be able to perform my role without her. Peyton Roberts-Garnsey is a fantastic campaigner. She helped me get re-elected, so I need to acknowledge her. I extend Christmas felicitations to the Government members and wish them all the very best. I look forward to beating them in the future and, in doing so, making the State a better place for all its citizens.

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (17:21:19): On this last sitting day for 2019, I acknowledge and thank the many people involved in making this place run. This is the end of my second year in this place as the member for Cootamundra and my first year as The Nationals Whip. It has been good to be able to work with the Speaker and member for Davidson, the Deputy Speaker and member for Port Macquarie, and the Assistant Speaker and member for Oatley, and the Leader of the House and member for Bega, and Angus McKenzie-Wills and Ann Lewis from the leader's office. I have worked well this year with the Opposition Whip and member for Shellharbour, Anna Watson, and the Deputy Opposition Whip and member for The Entrance.

The Clerks play an enormous role in making the House function. They have been of huge assistance to me this year as I have started in the role of Nationals Whip. Their advice on matters of procedure and practice has been invaluable. I thank Helen, Les, Carly, Simon and Elaine for all they have helped me with this year. I also thank the many staff who look after us in this place: Hansard; the Chamber attendants Ian, Danny, Monica, Hayley, April, Peter, Chris and Kylie; IT services; the library staff; the catering team; the Special Constables; and the cleaners, who I consistently frighten by my presence at my desk prior to 6 a.m. during sitting weeks. I thank them for always greeting me with a big smile to start those long days.

I thank the ministerial staff for their work throughout the year. There is no doubt it is a difficult job balancing the many demands. I especially thank the Premier's Chief of Staff Sarah Cruickshank and the Deputy Premier's Chief of Staff Mark Connell and their respective teams. In 2019 rural and regional communities have experienced a very difficult year with the unrelenting drought continuing to place enormous pressure on everyone. It has been exacerbated by recent bushfires on an unprecedented scale. Our success at the State election in March is in huge part thanks to our fantastic Deputy Premier and member for Monaro, John Barilaro. He is a great guy. Everyone across the electorate of Cootamundra and rural and regional New South Wales knows Barra. He is a fighter; I am proud to be on his team and deeply honoured to be his Parliamentary Secretary. As part of our election campaign in March, I had a large and committed team that worked night and day—all unpaid—to ensure the Cootamundra electorate remained in Nationals hands. I thank that team and all members of The Nationals branches in my conference for their support.

Finally, there is a very important team that makes my office here in Parliament and my electorate offices in Young and Junee run smoothly. They are my work family. Clare Taylor runs my life and makes sure that I am always in the right place at the right time. How she keeps me on track across the 34,711 square kilometres that is the Cootamundra electorate—not to mention the additional responsibilities I now have across the vast geography of southern New South Wales in my role as Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Premier—is nothing short of astonishing. Frances Crowley, Marie Tame, Jenny Littlejohn and Lynne Curry are huge assets to the team and I sincerely thank them for staying with me on this journey since the start. I thank Kimberley Cavanagh—our water, agriculture and, most recently, speechwriting guru—for her steady hand as we navigate some of the biggest issues the electorate has ever faced. Our recent recruits, Nicole Needham, Cath Sheridan and Brenda Tritton, are already making a significant contribution. Last but not least, I thank the Whip's secretaries, Bec Cartwright and Viv Lee, for so effectively running the Government on sitting days.

The Nationals Whip is a unique job and I thank my Nationals colleagues for placing their faith and trust in me to do the job. It is a great honour for me and one I will always treasure. I acknowledge Adam Crouch, the formidable Government Whip, his offsider Ben Sheath, and Deputy Whip Lee Evans. It is fair to say we have been the A-team and it has been a wonderful year working with them. I thank upper House Nationals Whip Wes Fang and upper House Government Whip Natasha Maclaren-Jones. All up, I think we have done pretty well. Finally, I thank all of my Nationals and Liberal colleagues for their contributions to debates in this place and for their arrival in the Chamber when the bells ring, which ensures the Parliament runs smoothly. Finally, I wish everyone a merry Christmas and a restful and relaxing holiday period.

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education) (17:27:01): I wish a merry Christmas to everybody in this House: our Coalition brothers and sisters, the Opposition and the Independents. The great thing about this place is we all come with great intentions. The way we do it is sometimes different but we are all here for the people. I especially single out my staff in the Parramatta electorate office: senior electorate officer Sarah Thompson, Deborah Howitt, Dianne Abboud, Sue Chambers and Lorraine Doyle who often volunteers. As a Minister in this Government, it is my privilege and honour to have in my Skills and Tertiary Education portfolio team Chief of Staff Mitchell Potts, media adviser Carmel Melouney, office manager Marsha Mannot, senior advisers Katherine Thompson and Ben Turner, and parliamentary adviser Amelia Eames. I acknowledge and thank department liaison officers Ann Burt, Emma Woodward, Ainslea Jones and Cathy Vickery.

I acknowledge the wonderful staff in the Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans portfolio office, led by Chief of Staff Nicolle Nasr, Deputy Chief of Staff Bernard Bratusa, media adviser Nick Marshall-McCormack, policy advisers Alexandra Tooth and Nomiky Panayiotakis, executive assistant

Maria Melia, receptionist Natacha Ajaka, and department liaison officers Jos Ellison, Michael Brimfield and Nessa Abad. I wish everybody a merry Christmas, including drivers Karl, Trevor, Mario and Dominic, who provide exceptional service; all the staff in this place, from catering to the clerks, the attendants, Hansard staff, security, the cleaning staff; and all of those who work in the Whip's office and the Premier's office. Everybody pulls together and makes such a wonderful effort. Without the backing of these people, running the New South Wales Government would be very difficult indeed. I commend all of the people in my electorate, all of those in the Skills and Tertiary Education portfolio and the Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans portfolio and wish them all the best for the new year. Have a happy, healthy and prosperous new year and we look forward to seeing you again in 2020. Merry Christmas.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (17:29:58): On this last sitting day for Parliament in 2019 I thank a group of people whom I rely on, who provide me with support any time I ask, who offer me guidance and inspiration and whom I regard as my second family. People outside this place may not realise that behind every Labor Party and Country Labor member in this House is an army of party members. They are the people in our communities who work tirelessly in pursuit of forming a government that cares about people, about workers and about the environment on which we rely to live. This year has been a tough one for Labor; I cannot sugar-coat it. Country Labor Party members have worked hard to help me defend my marginal seat—the only seat not held by the Government that it thought it could get. Thanks to my party members and supporters, we secured Port Stephens. During the Federal election the same party members backed up, put their shoulders to the wheel once again and secured a local win for my good friend and colleague Meryl Swanson in the Federal electorate of Paterson.

Our two local victories were hard fought and would not have been possible without my local party members. I know that they will continue to fight alongside Meryl and me for the sake of our community and our nation to change governments at the State and Federal level. In Port Stephens we have three Country Labor branches: Tomaree, Raymond Terrace and Tilligerry. The branches meet monthly to discuss issues of importance to our communities. We come from a diverse range of backgrounds but we share common values: a compassion for others, a desire to see everyone get the same chances in life and a fairer New South Wales. Country Labor members bring a perspective to the Labor Party that is informed by our experiences of living in rural and regional New South Wales. Country Labor members across New South Wales make the Labor Party stronger by giving the regions a voice that cares far more than The Nationals ever will.

Being a Country Labor branch member can sometimes feel like a thankless task, especially in areas where it is difficult to make people realise that this Government is not acting in their interests. That is why I give thanks to all Country Labor members today. I thank them for their hard work, for their commitment to their communities and for always standing up for rural and regional New South Wales. I wish them all a safe and merry Christmas. I especially thank all of my local branchies for all their support, kindness and wisdom in 2019. Even after the elections you turn up to help me man mobile offices at festivals, you turn up to functions and you give me hugs and smiles when I need them. To the Country Labor members of Tomaree, Raymond Terrace and Tilligerry—my second family—I thank you and wish you all a safe and happy Christmas with your loved ones. To the good people of Port Stephens, thank you so much for once again entrusting me to represent your interests in this place. It is my genuine honour and privilege to continue to do that. I represent in this place the best electorate in New South Wales and I wish everyone to be safe on the roads and the water, have a happy Christmas and spend a wonderful time with their loved ones.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:33:05): I start with a special acknowledgement of emergency services personnel: police, fire and rescue and paramedics, along with the doctors and nurses in our local hospitals. Thank you. Thank you for everything you have done and thank you in advance for everything you will do. All of you hold a special place in our hearts, as members of Parliament. Many of you will be working over the Christmas and New Year period. I pay special respect and tribute to our police, fire and rescue, paramedics and nurses. During this last parliamentary sitting in 2019, I take the opportunity to congratulate both sides of the House on an interesting and challenging but very rewarding year here in the New South Wales Parliament. I wish all members and their families a restful and enjoyable Christmas period before we continue working for the people of New South Wales in 2020.

There are so many individuals, offices and groups I wish to acknowledge and thank today. I thank the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker for their services and for ensuring that our work in Parliament is done productively and fairly. I now know firsthand just how challenging but also how rewarding this position can be and I am extremely grateful to work with them in my capacity as Assistant Speaker. I also thank the Government and Opposition Whips and Deputy Whips for their service and wish them a merry Christmas. Out of all my parliamentary colleagues, my appreciation goes first and foremost to the Premier of New South Wales, Gladys Berejiklian. As our State's leader and my good friend, Gladys has been a huge support in 2019. This year Gladys

achieved something truly special, becoming the first female Premier to win a New South Wales election. I am committed to her vision and trusting of her leadership. I know that she will do it again in 2023.

Under the Berejiklian Government, our local community has received upgrades to St George Hospital, upgrades to train stations, record investments in school upgrades and long-awaited road upgrades such as the widening of King Georges Road, which is predicted to start next year. The Premier has actively listened to my petitioning and regular lobbying in this process, and for that I am extremely grateful. I also thank the Treasurer, Dominic Perrottet, for ensuring that our State is number one for jobs after recording the lowest unemployment rate in more than a decade. Besides one of my favourite previous staff members who is now working for the Treasurer, Dom has been a huge supporter of my electorate through record funding investments in areas such as health and education. I also wish to thank all Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries and their officers across a variety of portfolios for their attention to the needs of the St George region and for taking the time to visit my electorate. It has been a pleasure working with Ministers, Parliamentary Secretaries and their staff, and I wish them all a very merry Christmas.

A special thank you to the Legislative Assembly team and attendants whose smiles and spirited conversation I always look forward to. Thank you as well to the Hansard team who do a wonderful job to make me sound coherent and polished at all times. I thank the Parliamentary Library staff and the special constables. My five-year-old son loves seeing the special constables whenever he visits Parliament. I thank the catering staff, Lee and Emily, for everything that they have done.

I will never take for granted the privilege of representing the people of Oatley. I cannot conclude this speech without acknowledging my electorate office staff—Team Coure. Thank you to the ever reliable Shane and Diandra, who have given so much to my office and our community and who continue to keep my electorate office running smoothly. Whilst I was sad to see her go earlier this year, thank you to Astrid for her exceptional service. I know you are doing a wonderful job in your new role with the Attorney General. Astrid has been capably replaced by Justin and Anna, who are doing an exceptional job.

Thank you also to all those who contributed to our amazing election result in Oatley. Thank you to the countless volunteers who selflessly gave their time to doorknock, hand out at train stations, display signs, phone canvass, et cetera. Thank you especially to Team Coure: Tim, Shane, Diandra, Astrid, Flynn and Chris. Finally, I say thank you to the most important people in my life, my family. This year, my family grew to four after the birth of Samuel Anthony Coure in August. Sam has brought us such happiness and joy and I look forward to giving my family my undivided attention over the brief Christmas period. It has been a huge year also for Sam's big brother, James, who was in the Chamber yesterday. James is growing into an intelligent, compassionate, happy and well-spoken young man. We are very proud of his achievements, especially his yellow belt in Karate. Thank you to my wife, Adla, for being my greatest motivation and support and an amazing mother to our young boys. I do not know what I would do without you. From my family to yours, we wish everyone a very merry Christmas.

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (17:38:25): In my Christmas felicitations for 2019 I note that I have survived my first eight months as the member for Goulburn, and what an eventful eight months I have had so far. I am truly blessed to represent the wonderful people of the Goulburn electorate and I am extremely proud to be a part of a government that delivers for regional New South Wales. I am incredibly proud of the New South Wales Government's election commitments in my electorate—totalling the staggering approximate sum of \$110 million—which include hospitals, the Moss Vale bypass, the Goulburn Aquatic centre redevelopment, a residential drug and rehabilitation facility, a new water treatment plant in Yass, a new hall for Yass High School and a new police station for Goulburn.

A few other milestones for my electorate include the completion of the New Lansdowne Bridge in Goulburn, the progression of the Barton Highway duplication, planning works are well underway for a new school in Murrumbateman, preliminary investigations into faster rail, the new ambulance station for Goulburn that is almost complete and the completion of the new Yass ambulance station. At this time of year as many other funding streams are coming to a close, I look forward to the funding outcomes to address some of the smaller plights of our community grassroots organisations. These community groups are the backbone of our regional communities. I am very excited to see the outcomes of the third round of the Stronger Country Communities program as well as the Community Building Partnership program.

I have so enjoyed getting to know better all parts of my electorate and witnessing the countless volunteers who support their communities every day. We have some wonderful people doing some wonderful things. In particular I thank the emergency services people who go above and beyond to make our communities safe. I say thank you also to their families, who also sacrifice so much as our emergency services people so selflessly serve. Not only in my electorate but all over this great State, the people of New South Wales hope they get to share some Christmas spirit during the festive season.

I am very aware that in carrying out my role of serving this State and the communities of my electorate I do so as a part of a team. I am very lucky to have a wonderful team behind me. Firstly I thank my hardworking staff, senior electorate officer Alicia Croker, electorate officers Cheryl Callanan and Paige Penning. I say a big thankyou to Amy Gann and Maret Rebane for joining the team when needed. I thank them for their loyalty, their passion and their hard work during what has been a challenging year.

I could not conclude my speech without thanking my family, particularly my husband, Michael. I thank him for his understanding and support throughout the year. To my many supporters during the election, my loyal branch members and volunteers, I appreciate all that you have done and continue to do. I also thank my parliamentary colleagues, particularly the Premier and her staff, the leadership team, the Government Whip, Mr Crouch and his team, particularly Ben, who have given the newbies so much support, guidance and advice. It has been very much appreciated. Likewise, I thank the parliamentary staff, who have also been very helpful. Thank you.

For me, Christmas has always been a time to spend with family and loved ones to think about the year's achievements and start planning for the year ahead. This year will be a very special one as it will be with our first granddaughter, Letty. To be with family back in Boorowa on the farm will be very special. But make no mistake: My greatest wish for Christmas is for it to rain. It is important we support those whose livelihoods and properties have been ravaged by drought and fire. I too take this opportunity to encourage my constituents to shop local. Support your local businesses and buy from the bush when possible. Every little bit counts. I look forward to the year ahead and continuing to deliver for the communities of the Goulburn electorate. I wish everyone a very merry Christmas.

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (17:42:34): Mr Assistant Speaker, I wish you a merry Christmas because we are electoral neighbours. You and I will be seeing each other a lot. I state for the record that I think you are a decent person. I hope the feeling is reciprocated.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: A very decent person. And I think you are a decent person too.

Mr JIHAD DIB: Seasonal felicitations are an important opportunity to thank excellent people. First and foremost, I thank the voters in the electorate of Lakemba for re-endorsing me at the March election. I really appreciate their support. The greatest honour we can have is to represent people. When people put their faith in us, we make sure that we tell their stories and represent their views in this House. I promise them, as has every other member, that I will always be working for them to ensure that they are being acknowledged. But that does not happen without the support of the electorate and the support of our families. I take this opportunity to thank my family and my friends—those who do not see me as a member of Parliament but as a person. They are there with us through the good times and the bad times. It has not been the easiest year for the Labor Party. It is the people in your electorate, your family and your friends who get you through some tough times. They are the really important people who make us the people we are.

Members sit in the Chamber but I take a moment to thank the Speaker's office and the Speaker's staff together with all the people who make the Parliament run, such as the Clerks, who are always so incredibly helpful; the attendants, who are phenomenal; the Hansard staff, who I cannot believe make us sound better than we really are when all we give are scribbled notes or no notes at all and who work late into the night—I really appreciate the work that you do. Of course I thank all of the other staff, including the people we do not see: the cleaners who come in at 5.30 in the morning and make sure that everything is up and running; the Information Technology departmental staff who are constantly there, fixing our problems; the catering staff; and everybody else who is involved in Parliament. People do not see what happens behind the scenes in Parliament, and it takes a great team to be able to make that happen.

I conclude by thanking and acknowledging my electorate office staff. The whole shadow Ministry that I look after has three staff. They run the electorate office and they also run me. I can be a difficult person—I have a bad habit of running late to things, which often worries my staff—but I thank them. They are the people who are often doing the hard grind. They are the ones who are the first point of call every day. They are the ones whom I will ring late in the evening or on weekends to make things happen.

I take this opportunity to mention one particular staff member, Kayee Griffin, who would volunteer for us one day a week. She has had a really tough year with her health and also with the passing of close friends, but Kayee would always give up her time and do everything she could to try to help us out. I really appreciate it and wish her—as I wish everybody else—a merry Christmas. Of course, the best Christmas gift we could get is a break to the drought. See you in 2020.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I thank the outstanding member for Lakemba and wish him a very merry Christmas.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (17:46:02): Christmas is my most favourite time of the year—and as members would well know—and it is a great opportunity for us to reflect on the year that has been and the year to come. Representing our local communities is the greatest privilege that we could have in representing the people of New South Wales. The people of North Shore make this job a great blessing, and this felicitation speech is an opportunity to thank them and everybody that make this job possible.

The Parliament would not be able to function without the support of a number of departments and services, and I thank all the parliamentary staff, from the front desk to the cafe to Hansard, to our wonderful attendants, to the people who have kept me very well fed, to the security team, and the Clerk and her team. I thank the cleaners and maintenance team who have been doing quite a bit for me this year, moving me around. I really appreciate everything they do. As Chair of the Legislation Review Committee, I also thank the committee staff that support me. I spoke about them yesterday as well. I thank all the staff of the five committees that I work on, and the sixth that I worked on earlier this year.

Being a member of the Berejiklian Government truly is a great honour and privilege. I acknowledge and thank the Premier. Quite honestly, she is the hardest-working person in the Parliament, and she ensures that we all work our hardest every day for the people of New South Wales. This year has been a challenging one for me, having a new baby and then going through an election, and the Premier has been supportive of me every step of the way. I thank her for that. I also thank the Speaker for the work that he is doing in this Parliament and for appointing me to his Speaker's panel and giving me those opportunities. I thank the Government Whip, Adam Crouch, and his staff for all the support that they provide.

I will mention a few colleagues who spend a lot of time giving me advice and guidance, and supporting me. They are Eleni Petinos, Mark Coure, Gareth Ward, Stuart Ayres, Andrew Constance, Shelley Hancock, Leslie Williams and Mark Speakman. These are people that I can rely on and lean on when I need to. I thank the different parts of my community, including my councillors at North Sydney Council and Mosman Council, and our media organisations, the *Mosman Daily* editor Fiona Wingett and journalist Andrea McCullagh, Joe McDonough and Stephanie Aikins from *North Shore Living*, Anna Usher from *Mosman Collective*, and Bianca Horwitz and Naomi Sheriff from *Mosman Living*.

As many people are aware, we are in this place and able to do our jobs only because of the work of our staff. I thank Lisa Forrest, Tamika Dartnell-Moore and Chris McDermott, my electorate office staff, who tolerate and support me at all times, and do such a beautiful job for my community. We are always having cakes delivered to the office to thank them for the work that they do on behalf of my community. Mostly, at the end of the day, I thank my family; my new baby Eleanor for the joy that she brings to our lives; my husband, Sam; my sisters, Alexia and Christiana; my mum, Lesley; and my stepfather, Stephen. Thank you and merry Christmas.

The SPEAKER (17:50:00): I have just come from another celebration outside, acknowledging some of the staff in the Department of Parliamentary Services and the Legislative Assembly. I have just been experiencing a bit of the spirit of festive cheer of the season with them and I would like to extend that to those here in the Chamber. As we turn our minds to summer, we look forward to perhaps some more relaxing days in the sun and catching up with loved ones. We also remember those who might have very little this Christmas, particularly the families who have been devastated by fire and drought across the State. I note the Minister for Police and Emergency Services is in the Chamber and I acknowledge the wonderful work he is doing with emergency services staff in addressing some of those challenges.

This was my first year as Speaker, and what a year it has been. In my inaugural speech as Speaker I set out a number of ambitions for this place: that we would embrace both tradition and reform, grow the level of public engagement and, together as parliamentarians, model higher standards of behaviour. I have tried to preside over this House with fairness and balance, to uphold reasonable order and to protect the rights of members, while allowing the vigorous and robust debate that our Chamber is known for. As colleagues, you can judge whether those ambitions are on track or not, but I sincerely believe that we have made some good progress and I hope that we can continue in that vein. So I thank all members in this place for their dedication and goodwill. Here's to three more years of this Parliament.

I am grateful in particular to my Team Speaker staff, led by chief of staff Paul Blanch, and deputy chief of staff Ellie Laing, along with Georgia Luk and Samantha McFarlane. I also thank my loyal Davidson electorate staff: Koharig Boulghourjian, Sarah Ingram, Annie Rinaudo, Richard Tilden and Ryan Aivazian. In fact, I thank electorate office staff across the State for their commitment and service to their members and their electorates, including those whom I have had the privilege of meeting personally.

I acknowledge the invaluable assistance of my Speaker's panel, including Deputy Speaker Leslie Williams, Assistant Speaker Mark Coure, and members representing the electorates of Heathcote, Wallsend,

North Shore, Lake Macquarie and Coffs Harbour. You have been a great support to me in this chair and I appreciate your good-natured and professional service.

To the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee: I again put on record my appreciation and hope that we continue to achieve much together. The stage one reforms to modernise the Legislative Assembly have been met with a favourable reception and I look forward to implementing stage two reforms in the new year.

To the Premier, the Deputy Premier and the Leader of the Opposition: I acknowledge that the task of leadership is not an easy one, and I commend all three of those individuals for showing strong leadership. In particular, I acknowledge the Premier, who is an outstanding person and who, in a modest way, goes about delivering great outcomes for the people of New South Wales, not always making a fanfare about it but certainly focused on making sure that New South Wales not only remains number one but also is delivering for its people, as it should.

Working in the trenches of the House's business, the Whips, the Leader of the House and the Manager of Opposition Business and their offices manage to keep this place lively, interesting and generally running smoothly. I have valued your candid and constructive communications and particularly the cooperation that you have shown including through our respective offices. The President of the Legislative Council, John Ajaka, has been a good friend to me and I particularly thank him for his wise counsel and guidance upon entering this office as a fellow Presiding Officer. Likewise, I thank all the President's men and women.

The Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, Helen Minnican; her Deputy and Serjeant-at-Arms, Les Gonye; Clerk Assistant, Table, Carly Maxwell, and their teams have been a source of substantial support for me and my office on a range of matters. I also appreciate the hard work of the Table Office, capably led by Jonathan Elliott, and Procedural Research and Protocol, ably directed by Simon Johnston. Thanks to all the staff of the Legislative Assembly, including those who work in committees. A special mention to the attendants, who consistently make those who come into our Parliament feel so welcome. I acknowledge the stalwart Ian Delahunty for his capable leadership of that team. I recognise the considerable efforts and skills of Mark Webb, Chief Executive of the Department of Parliamentary Services. I acknowledge the Deputy Executive Manager and Director of People and Engagement Branch, Julie Langsworth, and their team.

That team includes Human Services, Parliamentary Education, Accounting Services, Members' Entitlements, IT Services, Parliamentary Reporting—Hansard, Parliamentary Library, Parliamentary Research Services, Building Infrastructure and Services, Capital Projects, Electorate Office Services, Security and Parliamentary Catering. It is a considerable team. Thank you all for your ongoing help in not only making sure that this Parliament runs well but that we can modernise it and provide a service to members, staff and stakeholders across the precinct. That is outstanding. In conclusion, I wish all members and others in this precinct a very happy Christmas. May the new year be good to you and all your loved ones and thank you for the opportunity to serve in this role in 2019.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (17:57:01): I wish to say that I do appreciate your time in the chair over the last year. I must reflect that this is the first year in this place that I have not been thrown out for more than an hour.

The SPEAKER: You have been so well behaved.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: That is right. I thank you for the change in the direction that you have brought to this Chamber and for your recommendation about the Australian Futures Project. I undertook the leadership program a couple of weeks ago. It was useful, as you indicated to all of us. Having so many parliamentarians attending will bring good things in the future. As we speak to felicitations tonight there are many people across the State who are experiencing drought and fires. I agree with the Deputy Premier when he said we need to buy food and gifts locally from the bush. Having been a tourism operator in the bush and now the shadow Minister for tourism, I encourage everyone to take time out. I will be spending some time with my family at Port Macquarie.

I thank the many people in my community who re-elected me to this place. I am grateful for the faith you have in me to represent you. I acknowledge the many battles we have fought, the most recent being around the removal of jobs in the central business district. That proved the unity of Maitland and the formidable force we can be to ensure that the Government hears us. I thank our leader, Jodie McKay. She is a hardworking, ethical and unifying force in our party. She has brought a level of professionalism to our shadow Cabinet that is appreciated. She is loyally served by her deputy, Yasmin Catley. Ms Catley has also provided support while in that role. I thank Ryan Park for his amazing work as leader of the House on this side. I thank Michael Daley and Penny Sharpe who worked so hard during the election campaign.

I thank from my office Christine Boyd, Garry Blair and Eve Nesmith, and volunteers Jayden Roberson, John Leao and Lauren Sennett, who have worked so hard over the past year. I thank Hansard very much. It is an important role and I appreciate it. I thank the Clerks at the table, the Serjeant-at-Arms and the Chamber attendants, particularly Danny who is always there with a box of tissues—that do not always help me stop crying. The library and IT services need a big wrap because they are not out here but they do so much for us. I thank the cleaners, gardeners and everyone in this place. I thank them all and wish everyone a happy Christmas.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I wish the member for Maitland a very Merry Christmas. I hope she spends some time with her family.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (17:59:45): I speak tonight to give my ninth Christmas felicitations in this Chamber. I have a number of staff who have assisted me in the course of the past 12 months to recognise and thank. My chief of staff, Tanya Raffoul, is the general officer commanding. She has her hands on the nuclear codes and she allows me to do my job with a great deal of protection. The deputy chief of staff, Leigh van den Broeke, is the adjutant. He has never broken a sweat and I appreciate the cool, calm, collected way he goes about his job. Luckily, my executive assistant, Kylie Irwin, has a watch because I do not and she keeps me running on time. My media adviser, Shae McLaughlin, is a super woman. She can put out a statement faster than a speeding bullet. Tom Watson, the senior policy advisor, is the intelligence officer. He provides me with information I would not have even imagined existed. Dom Bondar is also a policy advisor. He has an uncomfortable knowledge of fires. I am glad he is working in the Emergency Services portfolio and not on the other side of that particular debate.

Edward Strong, my parliamentary liaison officer, is the bruiser. He makes sure nobody comes near me who does not need to. Brooke Downes is the energiser. She is the secretary and runs the office in a very efficient way. Ivan Mills, the departmental liaison officer, scavenges information for me in the Emergency Services portfolio. Also, I found out the police liaison officer, Verety Moffat, is actually a sworn officer. I did not know she had a badge; she could have saved me a lot of embarrassment recently. My drivers, Ross Freeman and David Crocker, have been fantastic. Helen Russell, the senior electorate officer, did a magnificent job over the course of the election keeping the clock ticking, as did Antonella Tesoriero who assists her. Aron Mola provides all the ministerial correspondence on behalf of my constituents, and never has a complaint been made. Alice Collins ensures that all the events we run in the electorate are run efficiently.

Like all members of this House, I could not do this job without a wonderful family: my wife, Nicole, who has had a very tough year for a variety of reasons; my son Lachlan who has just finished his HSC but did not let his studies get in the way of assisting me during the election campaign, for which I am very grateful; and my youngest son, William. Tonight I am missing that 16-year-old William is off to a school formal with a lovely young lady. It is his first school formal and I wish him every success tonight and when he does his HSC next year. Finally, as a Minister, I have had the pleasure of working with two parliamentary secretaries: Mel Gibbons has excelled in backing me up over the past couple of weeks during the bushfires; and Mark Taylor, the most senior ranking police officer to ever get elected to this Chamber, who has done a wonderful job as the Parliamentary Secretary for Police and Justice. I wish them all a very Merry Christmas and a very successful 2020.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I thank the Minister and hope that he has some time with his family over the Christmas break.

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (18:03:00): As 2019 draws to a close, I take the opportunity to reflect on this year's parliamentary session. It has been a very busy year for us all, with both State and Federal elections running their courses. While we may have lost some members, we have also gained some new faces. I am sure that our new members have quickly come to grips with how fierce it can be in the Chamber because we are all here with the best intentions. We are serving our communities and making New South Wales a better place for everyone. While debates can get heated, for the most part there are some great friendships and a healthy respect for both sides of the House. With this in mind, I acknowledge those opposite. Despite being fierce competitors in the Chamber, there are many friendships outside it. My Labor colleagues have put up a good fight these past 12 months. Not only have we kept those opposite in check and accountable for the things they do, but also we have made significant contributions to this place.

On a personal note, I thank all members for their kindness and support when I was having cancer treatment and the warm welcome back that I received. While I was away the member for Shellharbour did a brilliant job as acting Opposition Whip. I know she will continue brilliantly in her now official role as the Opposition Whip. However, I am sure she will agree with me that the job of Opposition Whip would be much harder without the help of Colleen Symington, the executive officer of the Opposition Whip's Office. I thank Colleen for all her kindness and hard work. I extend my gratitude to all parliamentary staff, who keep the oldest Parliament in Australia running like a well-oiled machine.

I thank those who work in this Chamber, including the Clerk, Helen Minnican, and the deputy clerks, clerical assistants, parliamentary attendants, Hansard staff—who make us sound much better than we really do—and Chamber staff. They all join us every sitting day, regardless of how late we sit, to ensure that the House continues to run. I acknowledge the hard work of the security staff and special constables who are at Parliament around the clock to ensure we are all safe. I thank the catering and cafeteria staff, who start early and finish late, for always cooking up fantastic meals and keeping us well fed. I acknowledge the hard work of the cleaning and maintenance staff, who do such a great job keeping the oldest Parliament in Australia looking beautiful.

I thank very much the Cabramatta constituents who elected me for my fourth term in this place. My constituents look to my Cabramatta electorate staff for assistance, and the kindness and helpfulness they provide makes my electorate office a thriving hub for those in need of help and support. I am thankful to have such an outstanding team, who work together. They are what makes my electorate office succeed. I thank Anne McNamara for her compassion and for always fighting to achieve the best outcome for all constituents. I thank Michelle Odisho for her reliability and hard work and for always completing tasks on time. I thank Michael Tran and Kelvin Tran for their dedication, talent and friendship. I also congratulate them both on their recent achievements with the Cancer Council and body building awards. I thank all members and staff of the Parliament of New South Wales and wish them, their families and loved ones a safe, happy and healthy holiday season. Merry Christmas.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I thank the member for Cabramatta and wish him a merry Christmas. The question is that the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Private Members' Statements

SYDNEY GATEWAY

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (18:07:03): Yesterday the environmental impact statement for the Sydney Gateway motorway project was released for public exhibition and feedback. The gateway is the so-called "missing link" in the WestConnex project. It will connect Sydney Airport to the WestConnex interchange at St Peters in my electorate. However, the project does not connect Port Botany to the motorway network, despite the fact that that was the ostensible purpose of WestConnex, as announced by then Premier Barry O'Farrell in 2012. More than eight years and almost \$20 billion later, this enormous project—the largest infrastructure project in the country—does not meet its first and most critical objective. The project has transformed from a road to move truck freight to and from the motorway network into a political road that makes it quicker for motorists from the west of Sydney to get to Kingsford Smith Airport.

It is a \$20 billion failure. Of particular concern to my electorate is the decision by the State's roads authority not to pursue ramps between the interchange and Canal Road at St Peters, citing cost concerns. Those ramps give direct access to the interchange and the Cooks River Intermodal Terminal, which is Australia's largest empty container park and a significant rail intermodal freight hub. More than 30 per cent of containers that move through Port Botany pass through the Cooks River terminal, and the amount of freight moved through Port Botany will continue to grow alarmingly, from about 14.4 million tonnes in 2016 to about 25.5 million tonnes in 2036. Today I add my voice to the chorus of industry groups that are pleading with the State Government to reinstate the access ramps for heavy vehicles at Canal Road. In September, those groups warned the Government:

If Sydney Gateway is to fully deliver its intended benefits of reducing road congestion in and around Port Botany and Sydney Airport, it is essential that the heavy vehicle access ramps at Canal Road be reinstated to the design.

The Australian Logistics Council, the Australian Trucking Association, the Container Transport Alliance Australia, the Freight and Trade Alliance, Road Freight NSW and Shipping Australia Limited have all expressed their concerns to the Government, privately and publicly. I also understand that Ports Australia shares these same concerns. Without those ramps, at least 1,600 additional heavy vehicles will be forced off the motorway network and back onto local roads, where they will add to the already heavy congestion and gridlock in Mascot. By that I mean they will access roads such as Canal Road, Botany Road and O'Riordan Street as they try to make their way through to the port.

The redevelopment of the Mascot station precinct has made that area one of the densest residential suburbs in Australia, but not constructing those ramps will force thousands of extra heavy vehicles through the area every week. This would be a traffic and transport disaster, not to mention a safety risk. It is completely counterintuitive to build a project intended to reduce road congestion, only to push 1,600 more trucks a day—one every minute—onto our congested local roads. Even in a best-case scenario, it is said that aspirationally only 40 per cent of Port Botany's annual freight task can be moved by rail. Whatever the merits of the Botany rail line

duplication, a project that is 35 years too late, it can never deliver enough rail freight capacity to economically move any more than 40 per cent of our freight task.

A majority of freight that moves in and out of Port Botany will have to go by trucks on our roads. The economic heart of our State is the port, and we cannot have its arteries choked by congestion and gridlock. Sadly, this decision will just push more of those trucks back onto congested local roads. To make matters worse, Port Botany is where this New South Wales Coalition Government wants to put its ill-considered third cruise ship terminal, at picturesque Yarra Bay. Such a project would just induce more cars, trucks, and buses onto those gridlocked roads around Sydney Airport. I urge the Minister for Transport and Roads to reconsider the inclusion of the Canal Road ramps before the Sydney Gateway proceeds any further.

WOLLONDILLY ELECTORATE

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (18:12:10): We are now drawing to the end of another year. In many respects this has been a very special year for me and other new members of Parliament. Since my election to this House in March this year I have come to realise, more than ever, that we as politicians can make a real difference to the communities that we represent. The first seven months of service to the electorate of Wollondilly has seen many challenges and opportunities to make a difference. The Wollondilly electorate is varied: Each of its towns and villages has very different issues and their own unique characteristics. I have met with a wide range of constituents and addressed many issues and concerns, each of whom have their own individual needs and expectations. Some are very simple to deal with and others are complex. In some cases the constituents just want someone to listen to them.

Like all areas of our State, my electorate is suffering from severe drought. I have been able to see this personally, and see the resilience and courage of those who are impacted. From the resolve of those involved in the Dilly Drought Drive to the innovation of groups such as the Southern Highlands Key Stakeholders Group and individuals who want to stay on the land, I have seen a strength and commitment that I am proud to be associated with. In recent times the local emergency services from police, ambulance services, the fire brigades—both local and the Rural Fire Service—have shown that when times are challenging it brings out the best in people. I thank all of those from my electorate who so readily face those challenges and show the values that make us all proud. The Mittagong State Emergency Service is one of the busiest in the State and continues to provide great service to the community.

I have had the privilege of attending a number of moving ceremonies that honour our war veterans and those who still serve our country. From the Anzac Day service at Picton High School and the commemoration of the Battle of Beersheba at Menangle Park to the recent Remembrance Day service, the message is always the same: We owe a great debt to those who have served and we must always remember them. An issue that has been in the forefront of the minds of many constituents who have come to see me is the impact of mining subsidence. I have seen firsthand the damage that it has caused, not only to people's homes but also to their everyday lives and their emotional wellbeing. In this issue our State has a responsibility to make things right. There are complex planning issues that need consideration to ensure the semi-rural character of sections of the electorate is balanced with the need for growth—both in housing and the creation of local jobs.

In the next few weeks I am looking forward to attending presentations in many of the schools in my electorate including public schools at Douglas Park, Mount Hunter, Tangara school for kids with special needs, Yanderra, Bowral, Bargo, Thirlmere, Colo Vale and Cawdor, and St Michael's at Mittagong. Those are just some of the schools I will be visiting. I will also be attending graduation ceremonies at Picton High School, Bowral High School and Oxley College. The students of today are tomorrow's citizens and leaders, and I am delighted to share with them these significant moments in their education. Other end-of-year events will include the judging of the Wollondilly Christmas lights, Christmas carol services and the Annual White Ribbon Breakfast conducted by the Camden Wollondilly Domestic Violence Committee. I take this opportunity to wish all my constituents and members of this House a safe, happy and holy Christmas. I encourage them to support those businesses and producers that are affected by the drought. And, yes—toot, toot!—all aboard for a very happy New Year!

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (18:16:11): I commend the member for Wollondilly for his first season in Parliament. He has been an excellent representative for the electorate of Wollondilly, which is very lucky to have a member who represents them with such finesse and force. I wish him and all his constituents the very best at Christmas.

UNEARTHED HOMEWARES

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (18:16:39): There is no doubt that Australians are a resilient bunch. Over the past few weeks, our country has been hit with some of the worst extremes—severe bushfires, drought and everything in between. But still our communities find the spirit to support those from near and far.

With Christmas just around the corner, the ability of our communities to come together is on show through the Buy Regional campaign. As we know, this initiative was launched by the Government to help connect city shoppers with rural sellers, adding a boost to so many of our drought-stricken towns.

It builds on the #buyfromthebush movement founded by Grace Brennan, which has had incredible success in showcasing our region's goods to new customers from all over the country. There are so many deserving businesses that have benefited from these campaigns, and I draw members' attention to one example in my electorate. Almost 18 months ago Ingrid Mansley made the choice to become the new owner of Unearthed Homewares in Cowra. Having been a small business owner myself, I know this decision is not made lightly, especially as she faced unprecedented conditions. Nevertheless, Ingrid embraced the challenge and now has a store that contains a beautiful array of products including art pieces, bags and clutches, as well as furniture and living room decor.

We know that droughts affect entire communities, and in the absence of any significant rainfall, Cowra soon began to feel the pinch. But all hope was not lost. A helping hand was on the way for these drought-stricken communities. I am so proud that it arrived well and truly before Christmas, wrapped in the form of various campaigns including Buy from the Bush and Buy Regional. Hearing the gratitude in Ingrid's voice when she reflects on the impacts these initiatives have had on her business and her life makes me feel so genuinely proud that our communities get on board and support those who need it.

Only weeks after Ingrid's store was featured on Buy from the Bush, business boomed. An influx of customers made their way to her online store selecting the products they had seen showcased on social media. The power of these movements should not be underestimated. Ingrid recently shipped items all over the country—from Queensland to South Australia and even west to Perth. In Ingrid's own words, there is no way all of these customers would have found her business if not for the campaign. For small-business owners like Ingrid, the boost helps inject life into their business and, by extension, the benefits flow to the community.

Not only does spending money in small towns help a regional retailer or producer stay afloat, it also keeps others in jobs. That money is dispersed through the local economy when people continue to shop locally. We have seen it before—the reluctant closure of facilities and services in small towns because people cannot afford to stay open or they move elsewhere in search of work. That is only one of the reasons why I am so proud to be part of this Government that is supporting people in the bush. It is making a real difference. The Buy Regional hub features businesses from as far as Broken Hill, Coonamble, Inverell and White Cliffs across six different categories: wine, fashion, food, gifts for kids, art and design, and Christmas hampers. With stores facing fewer walk-in customers, it is not only our farmers who are under pressure. Small businesses are feeling it too. Many of our community members have dug deep and continue to do so as they battle natural disasters. Those efforts have not gone unnoticed.

As we approach the time of giving, especially to those who have lost so much, it is pleasing to hear campaigns such as Buy from the Bush and Buy Regional have helped eased the burden on some of our most remote retailers. However, as a society, there is still more we can do. As we ring in the new year, it is so important that we continue to keep these issues front of mind. There is no doubt that we will have tough times ahead but I am confident that the wonderful communities of our society will continue banding together to support people who are most in need. For the last time this year, I thank everyone who has given in some capacity, whether through giving time, volunteering or making a phone call to see how friends and family are doing. Those actions embody true community spirit. I am so grateful to be part of that.

CLIMATE EMERGENCY

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (18:21:45): The world is facing its sixth mass extinction. The Government continues not to recognise that crisis but rather treats it as a politicised debate and a public relations bargaining chip. There is no debate to be had. Politicians and decision-makers need to listen to the scientists. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC], we are less than 12 years away from not being able to undo our mistakes. In that period unprecedented changes in all aspects of society need to take place, including reduction of our carbon dioxide emissions by at least 50 per cent. According to the most recent IPCC report, if the required changes are not made by approximately the year 2030, we will likely set off an irreversible chain reaction that is beyond human control. If we fail to do so, we will pass a catastrophic point of no return and all that will remain of our current political leaders' legacy will be the greatest failure of human history.

I speak on this subject today on behalf of every constituent in my community and every resident of New South Wales. Entire ecosystems are collapsing. We are on the cusp of a mass extinction. Unfortunately, all this Government can talk about is money and fairytales of great economic growth. There is more to life than that. In September this year, over 80,000 Sydney students and parents rallied outside our doors at the Domain. They called on both State and Federal decision-makers to clean up the mess. Stronger climate action was demanded at

mass protests across the country. How did the Government respond? It demanded that tens of thousands of school students and workers stay in school or at work that day on threat of penalty. For members who are not aware, the School Strike 4 Climate movement makes three demands—no new coal or gas projects, 100 per cent of electricity supplied by renewable energy by 2030, and the provision of a fund to support a just transition for fossil-fuel workers and their communities.

The inaction of the Government on this crisis is disgraceful. Not only has it failed to listen to the overwhelming majority of our State's constituents but it continues to ignore the issue as smoke blocks out the sun and parts of our State are on fire. Most shockingly, evidence recently surfaced that New South Wales public servants at the 2019 AdaptNSW climate conference were told not to link climate change with our urgent bushfire crisis. Bureaucrats from the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment were sent an email that stated:

... public affairs has issued advice not to discuss the link between climate change and bushfires.

Refer questions in session and plenaries to bushfire reps.

The participants of this panel included scientists and experts who are developing policy and advising the Berejiklian Government on adaptation measures the State could take in relation to land use, planning and dealing with the risk of bushfires. The fact that these great minds were told not to discuss science at a climate conference beggars belief. Gagging climate change experts from speaking in the middle of a bushfire disaster is a new low from this Government. Right now we need to be hearing more from experts and, to be quite frank, maybe a little less from politicians.

Climate change is a real issue that requires a decisive response. All the scientific evidence shows us that our changing climate will see more and more extreme weather events as time goes on. Future generations of my community and of this State deserve better. They deserve to see our best minds discussing and acting on what we can do to mitigate climate change and start addressing the impacts we are experiencing, rather than silencing debate or scoring political points. I conclude today with a statement from climate change activist Greta Thunberg. She states:

I don't want you to be hopeful. I want you to panic ... And then I want you to act. I want you to act as you would in a crisis. I want you to act as if our house was on fire. Because it is.

ALBURY BRAIN AND MIND CENTRE

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (18:26:45): As for all communities, mental health is a major issue for the Albury Electorate. Given this, it was pleasing to have the Premier, Gladys Berejiklian, and the Minister for Mental Health, Bronnie Taylor, in Albury on 2 October to open the new community mental health facility at the Mercy hospital campus, the Brain and Mind Centre. The centre was attended on the occasion by the board and executive of Albury Wodonga Health, as well as the many health professionals who help support the people of my electorate and champions and advocates for mental health in our region. The centre is a great gathering of caring people working under the auspices of Albury Wodonga Health.

The New South Wales mental health Minister accompanied the Premier for the opening and joined her on a tour of the facility. Afterwards Minister Taylor kindly caught up with Friends of Nolan House for discussions about the region's acute mental health facility and to gain a better understanding of the mental health needs and challenges coming from the border region. It is very pleasing to see this project reach completion of construction. Staff will now begin the process of moving out of the old Townsend Street building and into their new workplace. It is expected the first clients will be attending the Brain and Mind Centre in December.

The \$3 million project is the fulfilment of several years of hard work by Albury Wodonga Health and the Government since Greg Aplin, my predecessor as member for Albury, secured funding. This is a modern health facility that replaces the ageing community mental health building in Townsend Street. But much more than this, the cutting edge design fits in with modern mental health treatment programs. It provides an environment that is all about supporting families as they go through difficult times when a family member faces struggles. This is a refurbishment of an existing large building.

But "refurbishment" does not do justice to the scope of the transformation. Treatment rooms are bright and spacious, designed to provide both a healing environment for patients and a safe workspace for staff. Natural light floods into the rooms. Pale timbers and light green fabrics echo the foliage of trees visible in the established gardens outside. This is not an inwards-focused building; corridors draw the eye towards nature. I congratulate the builders, Southern Cross Developers, and the architects and tradespeople who have been working so hard to bring this older building to new life. They have taken a vision for healing and wholeness and shaped this into practical realities that will find their fullest expression in vital services and programs that bring hope and health.

Nolan House at Albury Hospital remains the centre for anyone undergoing an acute phase in their mental health. The community continues to view improvements of Nolan House as an important priority. Like all health projects on the border, this will require collaboration between the States. This is not without challenges. The emergency department is a case in point. The government has responded to the need by budgeting \$30 million to build a new emergency department, followed by \$45 million for the necessary intensive care and acute care units. Unfortunately, the Victorian Government is yet to contribute to these major capital works, even though its citizens are equal beneficiaries of the hospital's facilities. I thank the New South Wales health Minister for his strong efforts to encourage Victoria to join us as a partner on this journey and ensure that our shared hospital gets into a position where it can manage the huge numbers of patients that require medical and surgical treatment.

I thank the Premier for her support on the lengthy journey that forms the story of Albury's Brain and Mind Centre. In her former role as Treasurer, the Premier was the one who signed off on funding this facility. She has visited the site on three occasions now as Premier. That is a terrific illustration of the Premier's dedication to raising the capacity of government services so they can deliver high-quality support in mental health. Her visits have been much appreciated by the people of Albury. Many others have been on this voyage too. Dr Alan England, who at the time was a senior psychiatrist with Albury Wodonga Health, was there from the start providing wise counsel and enthusiasm for the task.

I also thank Les Schmutter, Jane Atkinson, Annette and Stuart Baker, Courtney Avery, Bethany Ward and all the other Friends of Nolan House who daily rise to the challenges facing our society in crafting more supportive and accessible mental health facilities and programs that bring healing sooner and in ways more finely attuned to the needs of the people we love who are caught in desperate times. The development of a new acute mental health facility for Albury continues to be a prominent focus and I will continue to advocate for this to be designed, built and operating. I thank the Speaker and wish him the best for Christmas. I thank all members of Parliament, all parliamentary staff, and everyone in my community of Albury.

PORT MACQUARIE-HASTINGS SPORTS AWARDS

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (18:31:41): I congratulate the winners of the 2019 Port Macquarie-Hastings Sports Awards who were recognised this year as champions in their own right at regional, State, national and international competitions. Hosted by the Rotary Club of Port Macquarie Sunrise, this year's awards acknowledged our supreme sporting champions in the Hastings for their outstanding achievements in their chosen sport. As spectators and passionate enthusiasts of sport, we do not often consider what it takes to become a sporting champion. It takes a tremendous amount of commitment, dedication, blood, sweat and tears for these amazing men and women to reach the top of their game as elite athletes. The 2019 Port Macquarie-Hastings Sports Awards featured nine categories, which celebrate the success and triumphs of our sporting stars throughout the year. A total of \$7,000 was distributed during the morning's proceedings. Port Macquarie Sunrise President Carolyn Ireland praised all the entrants, the organising committee and the judges for once again making the event a huge success. Carolyn acknowledged that this year was one of the toughest yet for the judges as they sifted through 84 online nominations.

Taking out the major award, the 2019 Regional Australia Bank Sportsperson of the Year, was international touch football star Anna Gleeson, who this year championed the winning Australian Women's 35 team to victory at the Touch World Cup in Malaysia and attained the most valuable player in the final. Anna has accomplished so much this year. She claimed the 2018-2019 Touch Football NSW Senior Player of the Year Award, represented on the winning women's over-35 State of Origin side for the NSW Blues and steered Port Macquarie's under-10 girls to the NSW Junior State Cup Northern Conference title in February before wearing the baggy green and gold at the touch football world cup in April. Anna had a remarkable season and sporting year. Undoubtedly, she is a deserving sportsperson to win the pinnacle of sporting accolades in the Hastings.

It would be remiss of me not mention the Sportsperson of the Year nominees, who by all accounts deserve to be acknowledged for their amazing endeavours in 2019: Merche Benson, Jakob Webber, Sascha Arnberger, Glenys Cummings, Cambridge McCormick, Matt Model and Tara Rowe. I congratulate them on their achievements. The AusSport Scoreboards Junior Sportsperson of the Year, primary school age group, went to local cross-country and athletics champion Trent Alley for winning gold at the NSW Little Athletics Championships and for his outstanding representations at the School Sports Australia Cross Country Championships. Sascha Arnberger won the Donovan Oates Hannaford Junior Sportsperson of the Year, high school age group, for claiming the under-15, 59 kilogram kumite 2019 World All Styles Championships in karate.

The Laing and Simmons Port Macquarie Sportsperson of the Year with a Disability went to Jai Jones for his dominant victory and representation in cross-country and State athletics competitions. Gold medallist for the Australian National Championships in Canberra and NSW Dragon Boat Federation 2019 Club of the Year, the Flamin' Dragons Port Macquarie took home the Donovan Oates Hannaford Senior Team of the Year award. I note

our beloved Flamin' Dragons were selected to represent Australia for the 2020 World Championships in France. Well done to them!

Awarded the Patterson Real Estate Junior Team of the Year for 18 years and under was MacKillop College Year 9/10 Boys Basketball team. The judges nominated three recipients to win the Greenmeadows Health Centre Excellence in Sporting Achievements for 2019. They were Hannah Jones in soccer, Lleyton Wall for triathlon and Nathan Smith in swimming. Last but certainly not least, receiving the Hastings Physiotherapy Volunteer of the Year was Nik Lipovac for his commendable service to local cricket. Capping off a wonderful morning was the highly sought-after 2019 Wayne Richards Sporting Scholarship, which this year was awarded to cyclist Luke Meier-Smith for his commendable achievements in the 2019 Australian Mountain Bike Championships and his incredible results internationally, taking out first place in the Garbanzo DH at the World Championships in Canada. I also recognise the talented nominees who were runners-up for the scholarship, Lleyton Wall in triathlon and Shania Madden for dressage.

I believe I speak for all Port Macquarie-Hastings residents by saying we have nothing but love and admiration for what these people have achieved in sporting excellence this year. They are by definition perfect examples of what many professional sports men and women should be. We thank them for being an inspiration to others and exemplary role models in our community. I congratulate them all. I wish all of my colleagues on both sides of the House the very best for the festive season. I hope they get an opportunity to have a rest and enjoy the company of family and friends during the holiday period. I look forward to seeing them all in the year ahead. I particularly wish the member for Manly a very memorable first Christmas with his son, Ted. The member just showed me a video of Ted taking his first steps. That is such an exciting way to begin the Christmas season. I wish everyone a merry Christmas.

BOTANY BAY FORESHORE

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (18:34:12): This evening I speak about the major beach nourishment works that have recently been undertaken along the Botany Bay foreshore. I thank the State and local agencies that have helped to deliver these important works and once again highlight the importance of the State Government's continued support to address the ongoing erosion issues caused by Port Botany and Sydney Airport.

Just a few months ago, the baths at Ramsgate were in a very sorry state. This fantastic part of Lady Robinsons Beach, which has served as a hub for swimming, nippers programs and recreational activity for as long as I can remember, became totally unusable. Where there was once a substantial beach you would be lucky to see a single grain of sand—it was a truly sad loss to our natural environment. However, thanks to a willingness to fix this issue and commitments of significant co-funding, Bayside Council, with the support of the Office of Environment and Heritage and Roads and Maritime Services, has been able to take action. More than 28,000 cubic metres of sand that had accumulated at Sandringham has been transferred back to Ramsgate and the baths have been restored to their former glory. I thank the Office of Environment and Heritage and Roads and Maritime Services, which contributed \$318,500 and \$230,062 respectively. Without that, this project would not have been possible. I am pleased to report that these works are almost complete, and the beach is on track to being fully restored to the public in time for the start of summer.

Although those works are welcome, I note that they only represent a temporary fix. Ongoing erosion problems caused by Sydney Airport and Port Botany will continue to be a problem until there is appropriate funding to deal with these major issues. This was acknowledged in 1997 when the then Rockdale Council, in conjunction with the State Government and Sydney Airport, completed the construction of eight rock and concrete groynes and shifted more than 140,000 cubic metres of sand along the bay at a cost of \$5.3 million. However, while those works provided some relief, the loss of the Ramsgate baths shows once again that we need substantial support to properly protect the bay. It is only made more urgent by a Government proposal to bring floating suburbs into a cruise terminal at Yarra Bay, which will no doubt make the erosion issues on the west side of the bay even worse.

Earlier this year there was some positive news on this front with the support of co-funding to Bayside Council by the Office of Environment and Heritage to carry out the engineering and scoping studies and modelling required for a longer term solution to the bay's erosion problems. I understand that Manly Hydraulics Laboratory has now been engaged to undertake the studies. The first draft of its report is expected to be completed by October 2020.

Mr James Griffin: They are experts and very good.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I note the enthusiasm from the member for Manly. While it is sad that it has taken this long to try to find a solution to a problem that has been on the books since the groynes were put in 20 years ago, at least progress is being made. I warn Government members now that when that study is completed

I will lobby aggressively to ensure that the State Government pays its fair share of whatever works are recommended so that the next generation does not have to see the loss of any more beaches. As I have said, the issues are largely caused by the port, which is clearly the State Government's responsibility, and I expect that fair support will be forthcoming.

Our natural environment is our most precious resource. Our abundant natural beaches are part of what makes New South Wales so special. I do not want to see any more drowning deaths or injuries of those simply wanting to enjoy the water. The safety issues that have been allowed to occur due to erosion along the foreshore are totally unacceptable. I will continue to campaign hard on the issue until my community gets a real solution. I wish a merry Christmas to members on all sides of the House and everyone within Parliament House. It has been a real privilege to be here with everyone this year.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I thank the member for Rockdale. We think he is special too.

GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (18:41:38): I summarise some of the work that the Liberal-Nationals Government has achieved throughout 2019. In 2019-20 we will have a surplus result of \$802 million. Over the next four years the surplus will average \$1.7 billion per annum. New South Wales continues to have the lowest net debt in Australia, projected to be a negative \$8.8 billion in 2019. New South Wales is one of only five jurisdictions in the world to have the highest possible credit rating of triple-A by both major credit rating agencies. New South Wales continues to also lead the way in low unemployment and high jobs growth. In August alone the State added 16,717 new jobs and the unemployment rate dropped to 4.3 per cent, well below the national average of 5.3 per cent.

In October I represented the New South Wales Government at the Central Coast Economic Breakfast. It gave me the opportunity to outline many of these facts. Every number matters because every number is an extra job or a better budget result. In 2017 Premier Gladys Berejiklian also attended the annual Central Coast Economic Breakfast where she made it abundantly clear that every region in New South Wales will get its fair share of funding under a Liberal-Nationals Government. As the member for Terrigal, my job is to ensure that our Government delivers on that promise.

The Government is certainly delivering, whether it is almost a billion dollars towards State roads across the Central Coast; over half a billion dollars towards health infrastructure at Gosford and Wyong hospitals; 412 new medical staff across the Central Coast Local Health District; a new school at Warnervale; major upgrades at Terrigal, Wamberal and Brooke Avenue public schools; or record levels of funding worth millions of dollars for tourism and environmental projects, sports clubs, community groups and organisations.

Earlier this month I announced \$6.8 million to upgrade Mardi Water Treatment Plant. With 75,500 extra people expected to call the Central Coast home between 2016 and 2036, such infrastructure investment is absolutely essential. The Government is also protecting important regional infrastructure like the Warnervale Airport, with the Government announcing a review into its operations. In this year's budget the Government was able to commit further funding to build a better Central Coast region. As I said before, with 75,500 more people calling the Central Coast home between 2016 and 2036, it is necessary that all levels of government pull their weight in setting up the Coast for the future.

Our budget this year included \$2.5 million to kickstart the redevelopment of Gosford Police Station; \$60.5 million for stage one of the Wyong Hospital redevelopment; \$6.5 million to complete the Empire Bay Drive intersection at Kincumber—a project I have been working on over the past four years and I am proud that the Government is delivering on; \$104.6 million for the M1 Pacific Highway between Tuggerah and Doyalson, and Kariong and Somersby; \$6.3 million towards the Gosford City Centre water supply and sewerage upgrades; a reduction in the weekly Opal travel cap to \$50 per week for adults, saving Central Coast commuters up to \$686 a year—these are real savings; \$16 million for essential infrastructure works at Mount Penang Parklands; \$500,000 to investigate water quality at Terrigal and surrounds; \$200,000 for Tuggerah Lakes; and a new \$500 million Fixing Local Roads Program to support council road projects.

This year has been a year of delivery for the Government. Throughout this term of government we will be razor focused on continuing to build the infrastructure and services our community on the Central Coast needs. I thank the Terrigal electorate for supporting me at the election in March. As I have said before, and I will keep saying, I am absolutely committed to getting it done for another four years. I highlight the results of the 23 March 2019 State election. I thank the people of Terrigal for their generosity in returning me for another four years to represent them. It is a huge honour and a great privilege to be in this place, in government, delivering record funding to our region from one end to the other. We do not differentiate on the Central Coast. Whether it

is a Labor electorate or a Liberal electorate, we are reaping the rewards to the tune of billions of dollars. I am proud to be part of a government that is absolutely committed. We are delivering on road, school and other infrastructure projects from one end of the region to the other. I am proud to be a part of that. I congratulate the Premier on her hard work and diligence. I also wish everybody a very merry Christmas and a safe and happy New Year.

BANKSTOWN ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (18:46:43): Bankstown is a community rich in culture and diversity. I have been honoured and privileged to represent the electorate for over eight years. In that time we have been consistently short-changed by the Liberal-Nationals Government, enduring cuts to our public transport system and suffering extended wait times at the overflowing car park at our local hospital. We have a disproportionate share of demountable school classrooms as well as ageing and dilapidated local facilities and infrastructure. The Berejiklian Government continues to ignore the local community and refuses to install the much-needed Easy Access lift and make upgrades to Chester Hill station. I have raised this issue for more than six years. Initially Transport for NSW said that Chester Hill was the third most in need of an upgrade but, ironically, it still has not been upgraded. Patronage at Chester Hill station has increased by more than 25 per cent from 2016 to 2018, yet we continue to wait for an Easy Access lift. We are a community with many aged and disabled people and parents with children in prams and strollers who continue to struggle to reach the platform.

The Government's plan to close the T3 Bankstown line over the Christmas holiday period from 24 December 2019 to 5 January 2020, with buses replacing trains between Campsie and Sydenham, severely impacts commuters travelling from Bankstown and surrounding areas. These are the same commuters who have endured additional interchanges following the Government cutting the Liverpool and Bankstown via Regents Park service. Commuters will now be forced to change from their normal train to a replacement bus, then to another train in order to travel to the city. I congratulate Cumberland Council, whom I understand last night unanimously moved a motion that the Liverpool via Regents Park service—the old inner west train line—be restored and to save the T3 Bankstown line. Despite numerous residents raising concerns, the Government refuses to respond or engage with my local community. The refusal by the Premier and the Minister for Transport and Roads to come and see for themselves what commuters face every day west of Bankstown shows the disregard they have for our community.

Commuters west of Bankstown now face even greater uncertainty with the prospect of losing their rail services altogether under the Government's Future Transport 2056 strategy, which could see buses replacing trains at Villawood, Leightonfield and Carramar in 2026 with the line between Bankstown and Cabramatta being entirely closed off. When bureaucrats were asked about this during a recent inquiry they did not respond and we are yet to hear from the Government whether it will commit to keeping the rail line between Bankstown and Cabramatta.

The Bankstown community was also promised a new hospital during this year's election campaign but we still do not know where the hospital will be built. We have been given no information about the location of the hospital or indeed any of the details. How can the Government make an announcement in March of this year but nine months later still not have a proposed location or have put in place any type of consultation with the community, the business community or other representatives in the area? It is a major announcement of \$1.3 billion for a new Bankstown hospital designed to compensate Bankstown for the metro coming through the area. But nine months down the track we are none the wiser as to where it will be.

Most residents of the Bankstown and East Hills electorates would rather see the Bankstown hospital remain at its current location but the Government refuses to confirm this. The existing hospital is already bursting at the seams and there is opportunity to expand across the road should the Government wish to do so. The community welcomes the hospital in this established area. There are concerns about the new hospital's location. Bankstown residents are sick of being in the dark and not being fully aware of what this Government plans to do with the site. There is currently talk of it potentially being at the Bankstown TAFE college, which would be a disgrace because we need to keep that TAFE campus. I certainly would not support the TAFE campus being removed from Bankstown. In 2020 I will continue to fight for the people of Bankstown on those issues.

SOUTH COAST TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (18:51:55): As a public transport user I am committed to improving services, particularly rail services, for our community. Electrification of the South Coast Line has been discussed for as long as I can remember. I am the first local MP to convince the State Government to include electrification between Kiama and Bomaderry in our State's Future Transport 2056 plan. While I commend every effort to improve transport infrastructure locally, I need to respond to some misconceptions.

Unions Shoalhaven recently ran a petition calling for electrification. It had hoped to get its political arm—the Labor Party—to make a rail announcement prior to the election. I understand there was even a fight at a branch meeting between local Illawarra Australian Labor Party MPs over who would table the union's petition in Parliament. The petition ended up being tabled by the then Opposition transport spokesman, not a local MP from the Illawarra. Rather than fight over the optics, I fought for results. At the last State election Shelley Hancock and I secured a commitment of \$125 million to install a passing loop between Bomaderry and Kiama to almost double the capacity of the South Coast Line. In a recent letter to the *South Coast Register*, Union Shoalhaven's Pat David asked: Without electrification explain how you can double capacity on the line for passenger services?

What needs to be understood is that electrifying the line will not deliver any extra services. What needs to happen first is an increase in the capacity of the line so that we can run more services. If we electrify a single track, it is still a single track. The rail line duplication will build a four kilometre crossing loop around Toolijooa, to enable trains to cross each other. Along with an extra platform at Bomaderry, this will create capacity for more frequent services for customers in the Shoalhaven with one passenger train being able to arrive prior to another departing. This duplication will be completed in the current term of government and detailed planning work is now underway, including a review of engineering and environmental constraints.

But there is more good news. New South Wales will shortly retire the Endeavour fleet. The State's new regional rail fleet will be the most advanced fleet to ever service the regions and city, with new bi-mode technology expected to result in cost savings of around \$2 million per year. Our Government is leading the charge for more efficient and sustainable regional rail travel. Our new fleet is being built with diesel-electric bi-mode technology, which is an Australian first. This means that when our trains enter electrified parts of the New South Wales rail network, they can connect to overhead power, which will save around \$2 million annually on the cost of diesel fuel. The new fleet will also have low-emission diesel engines for travel along non-electrified sections of the rail network.

This is great news for those travelling on the South Coast line, as they will have the most tech-advanced long-distance trains in Australia. These trains will be able to operate uninterrupted between Sydney and Bomaderry. Our new trains will have facilities for passengers to charge their phones, recline their seats on longer regional journeys and use their laptops while travelling. The new fleet comprises 29 new trains, to be rolled out progressively from 2023. Since becoming the local MP, I have fought for and delivered more bus services to my electorate such as the 747 bus service that operates between Kiama and Bomaderry to supplement rail services. I have fought for increases to carriage numbers on some of our busiest trains such as the 4.24, the 3.54 and 3.24 Central to Kiama rail services. I worked hard to deliver a new train station at Shellharbour Junction—a project promised by Labor in 2001 but which it failed to deliver during 10 years in government.

Labor in government slowed down the train timetable in order to distort on-time running statistics—all spin, no substance. Labor did not want to deliver more services; it just wanted to play with the numbers to look like it was doing something. When it comes to transport and infrastructure in our region, I am proud of what we have achieved as a government and a community. I am continuing to work hard to make these services even better. When it comes to public transport infrastructure, only this Government has delivered. Those opposite have delivered all sorts of number shuffles and funny games, but never any additional services or substance. I am proud of what we are doing and I am proud of these investments. They are changing lives in our community and they will continue to make a real difference in the lives of the people of my electorate.

VAUCLUSE ELECTORATE REMEMBRANCE DAY SERVICES

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (18:57:23): Each year Remembrance Day is an opportunity for Australians to come together and remember that 101 years ago, at 11.00 a.m. on 11 November, fighting was suspended and the whole world united to mark the end of the Great War. In the Eastern Suburbs, dozens of communities attend events to pay respects to the local servicemen and servicewomen. This year I started Remembrance Day early, on Sunday 3 November at the 2019 Jewish communal wreath laying and remembrance ceremony hosted by the NSW Association of Jewish Service & Ex-Service Men & Women [NAJEX] at the Sydney Jewish Museum. We were joined by New South Wales Governor and patron, Her Excellency the Hon. Margaret Beazley, AO, QC, and Professor the Hon. Dame Marie Bashir.

The wonderful president, Roger Selby, started the occasion with a welcome speech. We began by laying our wreaths at the Sydney Jewish Museum. Then there was the kindling of the memorial lights by Bettina Cass, AO, Valerie Hosek, Melissa McCurdie, Sue Selinger and Naomi Traction. Rabbi Dr Ben Elton introduced the service. I read Psalm 46 alongside NSW Jewish Board of Deputies President Lesli Berger and students from the 3rd Rose Bay Judean Scout Group. Lachlan Corne and Asha Friedman from the Emanuel School recited *The Ode from For The Fallen*, and then there was a really impressive performance of the *Last Post* and reveille by Moriah College student Emma Cass. I mention Rabbi Yossi Friedman, who said the memorial prayer; Rabbi Dovid Slavin, who spoke the Mourner's Kaddish; and Rabbi Kaiserblueth, who spoke the Benediction. The ceremony is

remarkable and joins the Jewish community and others together. I salute the work of NAJEX executive and president Roger Selby; vice-presidents Monica Kleinman and Norman Symon; honorary secretary Jon Green; and board members Harvey Baden, Lesley Barold and Dr Keith Shilkin, AM. On the morning of Remembrance Day, Monday 11 November, I attended the Waverley Council Remembrance Day ceremony, which was held at Waverley Cenotaph on Bondi Road. Terry Boys of the Eastern Suburbs Legion Club recited the Ode to the fallen and the band was from Waverley College on Birrell Street—not that far away. It performed *The Last Post* and reveille after the one minute's silence was observed at 11.00 a.m.

At the ceremony I also caught up with NSW SES Waverley Woollahra Controller Kim Edwards and Eastern Suburbs Police Acting Superintendent Matt Scott, along with Waverley councillors Sally Betts, Angela Burrill, Leon Goltsman and Tony Kay. I commend members of the local RSL sub-branches who regularly attend those events because they do so much for our community. Rose Bay RSL Sub-Branch and North Bondi RSL Sub-Branch do fantastic work for Anzac Day, which I attend annually like many members of this House.

Following that service, Connections, Opportunities, Activities [COA] Sydney held its inaugural Remembrance Day service. COA is a local organisation that provides care services to people with a disability and the elderly. It is capably led by its president, Justice Frank Marks, and CEO, Rachel Tanny. The memorial lights were kindled at that service by Councillor Sally Betts, Romi Rutovitz of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, Anna Marks, president of B'nai B'rith, Miri Orden from the National Council of Jewish Women of Australia and Jewish Folk Centre and Romy Dinte from the Jewish National Fund.

Army chaplain Rabbi Mendel Kastel from local Jewish House represented the house, its membership and the board and presented the prayer for Remembrance Day. Trevor Leach from the Central Synagogue presented the prayer for the welfare of veterans. The president of Wolper Jewish Hospital, Danny Goulburn, OAM, did the Call to Remembrance and Lorna Berger, executive director from the Women's International Zionist Organisation NSW, recited the Ode to the fallen. We ended with a beautiful rendition of the Australian anthem by Shirley Politzer, OAM, and Adam Leizer from Moriah College. I also thank the guest speaker, my local Federal member, Dave Sharma, who kept me company at all those events. He is a good man and it was a heartening service—the first of many to come for COA, I am sure.

Remembrance Day is building momentum in my local electorate with community outreach and the organisations that pay their respect to servicewomen and servicemen, both past and present. It is fitting we do that because in giving their lives and service they have allowed us to have a wonderful, thriving democracy that we, as MPs, are part of. I commend my private member's statement to the House.

TRIBUTE TO SHIRLEY GORRIE

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (19:02:35): I wish the Deputy Speaker and his family a lovely, safe and happy Christmas, and a happy 2020. I pay tribute to Shirley Gorrie, who passed away on Friday 15 November 2019 at the age of 85. Shirley was born in Marrickville. She moved into the Canterbury local government area in the 1960s and married John Gorrie. John went on to become the longest serving mayor of the former Canterbury Council, serving as mayor of Canterbury in 1984, and from 1987 until 1995. Sadly, John passed away in December 2015. My predecessor and wonderful friend the Hon. Linda Burney paid tribute to John in this place on 25 February 2016. I will not repeat everything she said on that occasion about John Gorrie's many contributions to the community of Canterbury. I note that Shirley was a supportive partner throughout John's career. Both John and Shirley did amazing work for our local community. They raised two daughters, Elizabeth and Catherine, and ran the tuck shop at St Michael's Catholic Primary School in Belfield.

As the mayoress of Canterbury, Shirley also made her own contribution by supporting many groups in our multicultural community. In particular, she worked tirelessly to raise funds for the mayoress' charity fund. While she was mayoress, she became a director of the Eurobodalla Homes Trust and she supported this organisation as a director for many years. Shirley worked as a volunteer driver for Meals on Wheels. Shirley was particularly active as a member of the Red Cross through its branch in Belmore. Shirley regularly took part in Red Cross Calling. She represented the Red Cross in Campsie on Anzac Day, and she contributed to the centenary of the Red Cross in Australia in 2014. Shirley was honoured as a Paul Harris Fellow by the Campsie Rotary Club, and she served as president of Campsie Inner Wheel.

Both Shirley and John were stalwarts of the Labor Party in our local community and particularly in Canterbury. They were the fantastic go-to people. They were amazing contributors to our local community whilst also understanding the needs of our multicultural communities. While John was the mayor, particularly in the 1980s and 1990s, he was involved in a lot of community work at a time when many new migrants were coming into our local communities. John and Shirley were welcoming and they opened their arms to every single person from our multicultural community. Shirley and John were members of the Belfield-Campsie North branch, and she has passed on her dedication to the Labor cause to her daughters. Shirley was deeply interested in politics and

she was a regular viewer of question time in the Federal Parliament. I do not know if she watched question time in the New South Wales Parliament, but if you ever wanted to know anything about what was happening in the world, Shirley could bring you up to speed.

I offer my deep sympathies to Shirley's family and friends including Kayee Griffin, a former mayor of Canterbury and a former member and deputy president of the Legislative Council. Kayee was a loving, caring and supportive friend to Shirley over many years, especially during Shirley's illness. Kayee was also a good support to Shirley's daughters, Liz and Catherine. To Liz and Catherine and Shirley's grandchildren, Charles, Alexander and Benjamin, I offer my sincere condolences. We probably will not see the likes of Shirley and John again in our lifetimes. They were very, very good people and they dedicated their lives to the community and to lifting up the lives of many others. Shirley was loved and respected throughout our community. The hearts of people across Canterbury are heavy today, the day on which her funeral was held. I could not make it because I was here. I am very sorry that I was not there, but I know that there were many former representatives who attended to provide support to the family. Shirley will be deeply missed.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): I thank the member for Canterbury and I pass on my commiserations to her and her community on the death of Shirley Gorrie. I thank the member for her heartfelt contribution and for her kind words at the start of her contribution.

CITY OF CANTERBURY BANKSTOWN TALENT ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (19:08:00): I commend all of the organisers, participants and supporters of the City of Canterbury Bankstown Talent Advancement Program [TAP]. TAP, formerly known as the Bankstown Talent Advancement Program, is an artist development program for young singers. Secondary school students who go to school or who live within the City of Canterbury Bankstown area are eligible to audition. Over 100 students usually audition and between 24 and 27 are selected from the annual audition process. TAP is run in a partnership between the City of Canterbury Bankstown and the Department of Education. It was established in 2002 by long-time directors Wendy Tierney, Helen Pain, Kerry Sebio and Ian Millard. Directors Wendy Tierney and Helen Pain are still with the program and continue to work tirelessly to assure the successful management of TAP and its artists.

TAP students learn vocal development, vocal health, movement, stage skills, presentation skills, public speaking, repertoire development, costuming, make-up, songwriting and audition skills, and gain valuable industry knowledge to assist in future career opportunities in areas of the arts. Apart from the principal focus of developing voice and performance skills, students develop self-confidence, social skills, cooperation and teamwork, adaptability, perseverance, as well as industry and vocational knowledge. They also gain opportunities for community service and an understanding of other cultures and, importantly, make lasting friendships with other peers who have similar interests and talents.

TAP runs throughout the school year and offers a wealth of activities, such as an annual three-day camp to start the year off where the students meet each other and go through a wide range of activities and 12 workshops, where each student prepares and performs a song for each day. During the workshop a visit from an industry professional is organised, allowing the opportunity for the young singers to receive feedback, advice and insight into what the music industry entails as well as a little motivation to keep the students excited and focused. TAP offers myriad performance opportunities as TAP students are in high demand all year and are requested to perform at events such as the Sydney Royal Easter Show, Rotary functions, the Sydney Opera House, Darling Harbour and National Rugby League and Australian Football League matches. An annual showcase is held at the conclusion of the year where each student performs to a sold-out ticketed audience of 300 people.

The Talent Advancement Program shows no signs of slowing down and goes from strength to strength, graduating its vocalists onto a solid starting platform to build strong careers within the music industry. TAP has produced some amazing artists such as the 2004 *Australian Idol* winner Casey Donovan. Casey has had some amazing roles in Australian musical theatre productions such as *The Sapphires*, *Rent*, *We Will Rock You* and her most recent role as Matron "Mama" Morton in *Chicago*. Recording artist and *Australian Idol* finalist Paulini has also performed in Australian musical theatre productions, such as *Saturday Night Fever*, and was excellent in her portrayal of Rachel Marron in *The Bodyguard*. Some other TAP graduates include Joel Newman, whose alias is Joel Taylor and who is now a successful Los Angeles based musician; Arnott Olssen, who is a *Popstars* finalist and well-known Sydney performer and blogger; Maria and Christine Pirrelli of Audio Vixen, *X Factor* finalists; 16-year-old Lara Dabbagh, who reached the final 12 in this year's series of *The Voice*; and my personal favourites, the Rennie Brothers—both Shaun and Adam.

Adam and Shaun have performed internationally and Shaun is a well-respected musical theatre director in the Australian scene. Adam is an established international cabaret and musical theatre performer and replaced Craig McLachlan in *The Rocky Horror Show*, when it toured Australia. His version of *Stranger* from the musical

Big Fish is outstanding—one of my favourites—and I highly recommend looking it up on the internet to have a listen. Every year the TAP students perform in Martin Place. On the day they were scheduled to do so this year it rained, washing out the event. I quickly organised for them to come for a tour of Parliament House, hosted by John Ajaka and Alister Henskens. At the end of the tour they sang a beautiful version of *I am Australian* near the Fountain Court. Members can see the video of the performance on my Facebook page.

I was also very privileged to attend the TAP annual concert in September at the Bryan Brown Theatre. The performances were outstanding and some stand-outs were Brendan Tran, who always makes me smile; Theoni Marks with her version of *Listen*; The Dabbagh sisters, Aysha and Serina, who are future *The Voice* finalists in the making; little pocket rocket Lily Constable; and I could not have been prouder of Courtney Emmas, who sang a cracking version of *What I Did for Love*—a future musical theatre star in the making. The TAP program goes from strength to strength, with all of this year's 26 outstanding local students doing our city proud and several students being acknowledged as young ambassadors for Bankstown youth.

Not all TAP students will pursue a performing career. However, I have yet to meet a student who does not rate participation in TAP as a personal highlight in their performance education journey. Rod Bertram from Birdie Productions has been a long-time sponsor and supporter of the TAP program. His dedication, along with that of Wendy and Helen, will see another fabulous group of young talent come through the ranks for them to nurture next year. Auditions for next year's TAP program are taking place at the Bankstown Arts Centre on 4, 5 and 6 December. I highly recommend that the future stars of my local area book an audition.

SYDNEY WATER SUPPLY

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (19:13:28): Greater Sydney, like the rest of the State, is in severe drought. Our water supply is declining rapidly, and we need urgent action to drought-proof the city. Sydney dam levels have dropped below 47 per cent. At this time last year they were at 65 per cent. Each day the capacity reduces by billions of litres, with lack of rain and evaporation from high temperatures intensifying losses. Declines would be greater without the desalination plant, which is producing 250 million litres each day. We now need 1,000 millimetres of rain and a major deluge to break the drought. The average annual rainfall for Sydney is 850 millimetres, but we have had only 581 millimetres in the past 12 months. There is no sign of reprieve with warm and dry weather predicted. I welcome the planning Minister's decision last week to put a freeze on all new mining in Sydney's water catchments. Mining results in the loss of eight million litres of water a day from our dams, through the drying up of sensitive swamps and creeks and the draining of our groundwater supply. Sydney is the only city in the world that allows coalmining in its water catchments.

If we ask Sydneysiders to reduce their use of fresh water, the same should be asked of mining operations. The freeze should be made permanent and a phase-out of all mining in the water catchment region should be introduced to reduce pressure on the quantity and quality of our supply. I share growing concern that flushing our toilets, washing our clothes and watering our gardens with drinking water is shockingly wasteful, particularly during drought. It is vital that we invest in long-term sustainable water infrastructure to expand water recycling, which presents significant potential to increase water capacity. Treating wastewater to a potable standard is 30 per cent to 50 per cent cheaper than desalination and uses one-quarter to a third of the energy.

Water recycling is a growing solution to water supply across the globe. It is widely used in Singapore and parts of the United Kingdom and the United States, as well as in Queensland, Western Australia and the Goulburn Valley in this State. The Australian Government released guidelines to help guarantee water quality in recycling and the State Minister is researching the process and recently visited sites in Israel. The City of Sydney Decentralised Water Master Plan found that recycling wastewater could provide more than half of the water demand across its area. It wants to expand its urban stormwater recycling facility at Green Square, which can treat up to 900,000 litres of stormwater a day, with a new wastewater treatment plant for residential, commercial and community buildings.

The city also worked to ensure that new pipelines for recycled water were built along George Street as part of the light rail construction and along the Wynyard Walk, so that the central business district can connect to existing wastewater recycling infrastructure at Barangaroo or support its own new infrastructure. Current Independent Pricing and Regulatory Authority rulings make water recycling prohibitive because Sydney Water can charge a massive premium to remove the waste that comes out of the recycling process through the sewerage system. This prevents financial incentives for commercial recycling operators to provide recycled water services in residential developments. Since the introduction of the "retail minus methodology", no new water recycling facilities have been built in the city. Not surprisingly, residential developers have been hesitant to invest in dual plumbing systems.

Our pricing system should reflect the dangerous situation of the drought and encourage sustainable water supply solutions. I support the city's call to remove the surcharge so that removal of waste in the recycling process

in residential buildings is charged in line with other businesses. To ensure water recycling can continue to expand, dual plumbing systems should be mandatory in all new developments. Improving water efficiency provides significant potential to reducing our draw on drinking water supplies. Through the WaterFix programs, Sydney Water works with home owners to improve their buildings' water efficiency. This great program needs to be actively publicised, particularly in apartments where there are few incentives to improve efficiency due to shared charges.

While the Department of Communities and Justice—Housing installs energy-efficient water fixtures in new homes or where they need to be replaced, and there is some retrofitting underway, most social housing properties are old and have inefficient taps, showers and toilets. We need an urgent program to retrofit all existing social housing properties to improve efficiency, reduce departmental operating costs and reduce water usage. This would also save tenants money, who, unlike private tenants, are charged for water use regardless of fixtures and metering. We cannot make it rain, but there is no shortage of innovation and solutions to reduce Sydney's demand on our drinking water. I call on the Government to take urgent action to cut the impact of mining on our drinking water, promote water recycling and improve water efficiency in homes.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I thank the member for Sydney for his private member's statement and wish him all the very best for the festive season. It has certainly been a big year for him in the New South Wales Parliament and I thank him for his contribution.

LINDFIELD LEARNING VILLAGE

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (19:18:53): Madam Deputy Speaker, may I firstly put on record what an outstanding job you have done, as I indicated in my Christmas felicitations earlier today, and I have very much appreciated your strong performance and support as Deputy Speaker. I am delighted tonight to deliver a private member's statement on the Lindfield Learning Village within my electorate of Davidson.

I am delighted that a major milestone has been reached at Lindfield Learning Village with the lodgement of a State significant development application for stage two. Stage two of the Lindfield Learning Village will enable the school to accommodate up to 2,000 students from kindergarten to year 12 on the Lindfield site, which was once home to a campus of the University of Technology. Stage one of the Lindfield Learning Village has been tremendously popular with parents and students, with demand far in excess of the available places. Stage two is scheduled for completion in 2022. It will provide additional new permanent classrooms and high-quality technical spaces for science, engineering, hospitality, visual and performing arts, music and film.

Lindfield Learning Village is an exciting and important development for school education in New South Wales. I am proud to be part of a government that is delivering such an important project for my local area. I recently attended a regional parents and citizens event at the school, commencing with a tour of the school and its excellent facilities conducted by its highly capable and respected principal, Stephanie McConnell. The Secretary of the NSW Department of Education, Mark Scott, then addressed the gathering in outstanding fashion. Indeed, the whole set of proceedings and the meeting was chaired by the P&C president, David Hope, who has demonstrated a real dedication not only to the region but also to education.

In his outstanding speech Mark Scott outlined the progressive learning model the Government-led Lindfield Learning Village is founded on, as well as the progress of education in New South Wales more generally. One of the exciting aspects of the school philosophy is the idea that children are best taught not according to age but ability. This approach allows for acceleration as well as remediation and specific support. The school has a "home base" structure, where students from kindergarten to senior high school are grouped together to create a strong identity within the larger campus. Home bases also improve school connectedness, which research shows is a strong predictor of student wellbeing. The home base groups also encourage daily interaction between older and younger learners. Older students can mentor younger students and younger students see the learning opportunities they can look forward to.

The Lindfield Learning Village also has specialised expertise and wellbeing support to transition students between school and their first post-school destinations, whether that be in the workplace or in further education. The State significant development application for stage two is a major milestone for Lindfield Learning Village, which will deliver high-quality school resources and a twenty-first century learning model for students to succeed. I commend everyone involved in creating and supporting that vision. The Government is investing some \$6.7 billion over the next four years to deliver more than 190 new and upgraded schools to support communities across New South Wales. That is an ambitious and admirable objective and it will be a fantastic achievement. But for my electorate I am delighted that Lindfield Learning Village is part of that delivery of positive educational outcomes for the people of New South Wales and the constituents of Davidson.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I thank the Speaker for his compliments and I wish him all the very best for the holiday season.

WYEE POINT RURAL FIRE BRIGADE

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (19:24:33): I thank the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker and their team for their kindness, generosity, respect, and the opportunities I have been given this year. I thank the Government generally. There has been a lot said in this place about the State's Rural Fire Service crews over the past few weeks as we battle a bushfire crisis of unprecedented levels. I acknowledge those north of my electorate who have experienced some terrible situations. I acknowledge one particular crew this week that recently marked an important milestone while being called on to assist in the efforts to contain several large fires that are currently bearing down on the Central Coast and Hunter regions.

I was very honoured to attend the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Wyee Point Rural Fire Brigade last month, and even more honoured to catch up with the brigade's founder and inaugural president Graeme King. In 1991 when I began my public life as a member of Lake Macquarie City Council, Graeme was president of the Wyee Point Progress Association. Wyee Point was then a very small community on the southern shores of Lake Macquarie. Like many in my electorate, it is surrounded by vast areas of natural bushland, had a distinct lack of basic utilities and services, but was nonetheless a very tight-knit and active community. Graeme was working very hard then for his community, which was significantly affected by the major 1993-1994 bushfires.

It was then that Graeme began campaigning for Wyee Point to have its own rural fire brigade. A public meeting held at the local caravan park attracted a significant crowd of local residents who voted unanimously to pursue funding for their own brigade. Graeme approached me and the then Lake Macquarie mayor, John Kilpatrick, as well as the then local fire control officer, Steve Sowter. By June of that year funding had been secured and the first brigade had been formed with 16 members. A shed in Government Road was also secured from the Department of Mineral Resources to form a base for the crew. They were given a Leyland Boxer fire truck by another brigade. Graeme was elected as the brigade's first president.

The Wyee Point Rural Fire Brigade headquarters was officially opened in October of that same year, which is a testament in itself to the will of Graeme and the Wyee Point community. Having started with 16 members, the crew's ranks quickly swelled to 24. Six months later the brigade had 60 members, including juniors, and had advanced plans to build a new station next to the original shed. Graeme has held the position of president for all of the brigade's 25 years, but he has also held the positions of deputy captain, treasurer and community education officer. He has spent almost all of those years as an active firefighter, although he has slowed in recent times by illness. He remains active in administrative and mentoring roles. I acknowledge his ill health and wish him and his wife all the best.

While Graeme has been involved in countless firefighting efforts locally, he has also served with larger efforts in outlying areas, particularly in the Bulga area, which has seen a number of significant fire emergencies over the past few decades. Like many of our RFS volunteers, efforts are not limited to fighting fires. Graeme and his crews helped out in storm disasters, including the big Sydney storms, and attend incidents such as car accidents in the local area. Like any community organisation that relies on the efforts of volunteers, numbers at the Wyee Point brigade have fluctuated over the years, but it remains strong. Graeme was made a life member in 2007 and remains the brigade's only active foundation member, despite the issues with his health.

This week members of the Wyee Point brigade are assisting with firefighting efforts on the major blaze on Gospers Mountain in the Wollemi National Park and in the Bulga region further up the Hunter Valley. In previous years, crew members have assisted in northern New South Wales, and even as far as Queensland and Tasmania. Wherever they are needed, they will chip in with their expertise. I am pleased to say that the brigade is now much better equipped with resources than it has ever been, and more skilled in firefighting techniques. I know many of the men and women who are currently members of the Wyee Point brigade. The camaraderie in the crew reflects the friendships and spirit that continue to thrive in the Wyee Point community, and I dare say within RFS brigades across the State.

These are people who will never walk away from protecting their town from fire, although we hope those types of threats are few. Graeme's commitment, not just to the Wyee Point Rural Fire Brigade but also to his local community generally, is significant and unwavering. I was honoured to join him and current brigade captain Grant Millard at the brigade's twenty-fifth anniversary dinner last month, and I am honoured that I am able to recognise their efforts and the efforts of the brigade over the past 25 years here in Parliament House. I again thank them for their commitment and extend to them the appreciation of the entire community. I pass on my thanks and wish all RFS volunteers and emergency service personnel a safe fire season.

CLEVER CARE NOW

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (19:29:27): I was delighted to recently attend the sixtieth anniversary celebration of Clever Care NOW, formerly known as Nurses On Wheels. Established in 1959, the organisation currently provides home nursing, patient transport, social support and learning programs in St George and Sutherland Shire for the growing needs of the community. In 2016 just in the shire alone there were around 37,000 people aged 65 years or more, thus the importance of services provided by Clever Care NOW and other organisations that focus on the health and wellbeing of seniors.

For 60 years Clever Care NOW has provided a much needed service to the sick and elderly in St George and Sutherland Shire districts. The service has continued to grow and evolve to keep up with the changing health, medical and social needs of the community. Today, Clever Care NOW provides mobile nursing, pre- and postoperative care, day trips, patient transport, community health checks, flu vaccination and children's literacy programs. The children's literacy program Ready to Read is a not-for-profit initiative with the vision of increasing early literacy levels across all communities. With 7.3 million Australians lacking the literacy skills required for everyday life, the initiative is vital to increase our younger generation's chances of securing employment in the future. The Ready to Read program is developed by experts in childhood education and speech pathology based on research and evidence, Ready to Read has helped thousands of children across Sydney start school with confidence since 2001.

While providing services for the younger generation, Clever Care NOW's main focus remains the health and wellbeing of our seniors. The team of mobile, qualified and dedicated nursing staff are available seven days a week, 365 days a year and in-home care can be arranged within 24 hours. Clever Care NOW also liaises with doctors, healthcare professionals, carers and families and can refer clients to other community and allied health services including physiotherapy, nutrition and meals, community transport and home modifications. Clever Care NOW also encourages social participation and inclusion through its affordable door-to-door Day Tripper program, which runs five days a week.

Older people are at heightened risk for anxiety and depression, particularly where there is co-occurring physical illness, dementia, disability or difficult life experiences such as bereavement or social isolation. The highest age-specific suicide rate across all ages is observed in males 85 years or older. Clever Care NOW's popular social program sees a qualified nurse accompany patrons on sightseeing trips around Sydney. The service is often booked out. The most important aspect of Clever Care NOW's services is the home nursing program. The program enables clients to maintain their independence and dignity by providing a caring and compassionate service while aiming to improve quality of life.

The nurses provide support to Clever Care NOW patients by assisting them with medication management and supervise pre- and post-surgery progress and recovery. Another important service provided by Clever Care NOW is patient transport, which assists the frail, the aged and the wheelchair-bound or bedbound to attend appointments, social outings and family events including weddings and funerals. I congratulate the many people who have worked with Clever Care NOW over the past 60 years, including when it was known as Nurses On Wheels. I congratulate the current dedicated team of staff, in particular Chairman Garry Sheffield and CEO Jill Deering on the significant milestone.

PORT MACQUARIE COMMUNITY THANKYOU DAY

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (19:33:17): I inform the House about a special event that happened in my community last Sunday on 17 November. It was a community thankyou day all about recognising our superheroes: the RFS volunteers who had worked so tirelessly over the previous weeks and months to protect our homes, our property and our lives. The event was organised largely by the Lake Cathie Progress Association, the Lake Cathie-Bonny Hills Lions Club and Revive Lake Cathie, though there were many people and organisations that contributed to making sure it was a successful event. Literally hundreds from the community turned out to make sure that our RFS volunteers knew how much we appreciated the work they had done on the ground.

I commend In Phase Productions, who provided us with the sound equipment and allowed the two bands, Chill Factor and Alter Ego, to perform at the event. I acknowledge the principal of Lake Cathie Public School, Jock Garven, who stepped up to be the master of ceremonies, and Craig Dixon, a local real estate agent who was the auctioneer who made sure that we raised some extra money for our local RFS. The fact that representatives from all levels of government attended the event spoke volumes about how much we appreciate how important the Rural Fire Service volunteers are. Port Macquarie-Hastings Council Mayor Peta Pinson attended the event, along with Federal members Pat Conaghan and David Gillespie. The Treasurer and the Minister for Police and Emergency Services also attended. RFS Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons was very quick to accept my invitation

to join us at the community event, as was RFS district superintendent Cam Baker and local area command superintendent Paul Fehon.

It was such a successful day. Many people enjoyed the opportunity to come together as a community and talk and think about what had happened in the previous weeks and how close a call we had. Thankfully, our RFS volunteers were there to support and protect us. The community has enormous support for the local Lake Cathie RFS brigade. I acknowledge captain Chris Brown for all his work. I thank also his wife, Kylie Brown, who for weeks organised all of the food and catering to make sure our volunteers were fed. She asked me to recognise the local businesses that supported us during the weeks of the horrific bushfires, and I am delighted to comply.

I thank Andy's Chinese Takeaway, Barry's Yard Care, Caramel's Coffee Shop, Coffee Injection, Got Ya Back Productions, Grass Baa Ba, Idlewild Eggs, the Lake Cathie and Bonny Hills Lions Club, the Lake Cathie Bakery, the Lake Cathie Bowling Club, the Lake Cathie Progress Association, the Lake Cathie Tavern, Local Directories Mid North Coast, Mid Coast Eggs, Middle Rock Pizza, Pavey's Glass, Port Patios, Sports and Spinal Physiotherapy Clinics, the Dashing Bean, the Westport Club, Wiggly Tail Butchery and Woolworths Lake Cathie.

A number of businesses paid to make sure that their staff had time off during the recent fires. I acknowledge Bunnings Port Macquarie, Port Patios, TAFE Port Macquarie and the Westport Club for their support. The RFS volunteers are very much appreciated in our local community and they do receive ongoing support outside of the bushfire season. I acknowledge the Lake Cathie Amateur Fishing Club. Its members support our brigade every year through proceeds from their fish auction. Without their continued support our brigade would not be as equipped and prepared as it is for the fires during the summer period.

I also acknowledge Charles Sturt University [CSU]. Incredibly, over the past few weeks—and continuing into the months ahead—the university has accommodated 200 firefighters in its student accommodation at no cost. Firefighters have come from across the State, nation and globe. They will be stationed in Port Macquarie for many weeks to come. I thank Charles Sturt University and the firefighters who have come to support our RFS volunteers and Fire and Rescue firefighters on the ground. I visited the accommodation for breakfast. The firefighters are provided with a hot breakfast every morning, served by our local Lions club volunteers, supported by the local Rotary clubs. I met an Australian Capital Territory firefighter who had been a volunteer for many years. He said he had never been looked after so well. I thank the CSU so much for its contribution.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): I thank the member for Port Macquarie and wish her and her community all the best throughout the fire season, knowing all the problems they have had up there.

BLACKTOWN ELECTORATE

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (19:38:46): The electorate of Blacktown is a truly wonderful community to represent. Tonight I thank all those who support me in this role. I thank the parliamentary staff, the Clerk, Deputy Clerk and assistant Clerks; and the Speaker's staff. I thank the Chamber attendants, including Ian Delahunty and Danny Heldal, who were particularly helpful during the debate on the petition signed by 10,000 or more persons. They guided everyone from Doonside into the gallery. I thank the Hansard staff, the Special Constables, the cleaners, the library staff, the catering, printing and payroll staff and the many hundreds of parliamentary workers who run the day-to-day operations of this place. We appreciate them. I thank the Leader of the Opposition. She has gone from strength to strength this year and I appreciate her friendship and support. I also thank her staff in the leader's office.

I thank all my parliamentary colleagues for their support and guidance throughout the year. I thank the shadow Ministers and the Whip, the member for Shellharbour. In particular I thank Colleen Symington, who is watching the broadcast. She makes the Opposition work well and, more importantly, she looks after me with a supply of food and lollies. I thank the many Ministers and members of the Government who have helped me throughout the past two years—a number of them have been good and others need to improve. Regardless of whether we agree or not, I appreciate their support. I thank the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker, the Assistant Speaker and all the temporary speakers. I have been fortunate to not have been thrown out in my two years but I am looking forward to a red card one day.

I have an outstanding staff in my office, led by Elizabeth Banks and ably supported by Wendy Chen, Kimberley Campbell, Justine Ndayi, John Costello, Subrina Can and Usha Singh. A lot of them job share and enjoy their time. They deal with many interesting and sometimes confronting issues. I appreciate all their help throughout the year. Recently I stepped down as mayor of Blacktown; I now realise I have got my life back. I thank the staff at council over the 15 years that I served, led by CEO Kerry Robinson. I also thank all the council staff who do a wonderful job. I thank the new mayor, Tony Bleasdale, the deputy mayor, Julie Griffiths, and all the councillors, particularly my fellow ward four councillor Carol Israel. I not only stepped down as mayor under

the two-year rule but also stepped away from council altogether. Carol has the extra workload since we do not need a by-election. The election will be held next year.

I thank the various branch members who have worked so hard to help me and have given me support, advice and critiques. I particularly thank Satish Kumar, Rachael Hanlon, Stuart and Jenni McKinder, Paul Mills, Adam Boiden, Geoff and Cherie Harrison, Dennis Riddell, Patrick Dako, Adrian Michaels, Mark Lynch and many other members across the branches. My community is absolutely wonderful—whether it is the schools, the various service clubs such as Lions, Rotary and Apex, the many food support groups including Foodbank, the sporting clubs, or Blacktown Workers Club, Blacktown RSL, Seven Hills Toongabbie RSL, Rooty Hill RSL or West Tradies that all donate lots of money to various charities in the local area. I thank the local media, the *Blacktown Advocate*, SWR FM and the *Western News*. They do wonderful work in the area. I thank the people who helped me out in gathering signatures for the petition for lifts at Doonside station.

I am proud to be part of the new Better Foundation, which raises money for Blacktown Mount Druitt Hospital. I thank Nermeen Yacoub, the chief executive officer, Deputy Chair Kerry Robinson and all the directors, donors, medical and allied health staff. My thoughts and prayers go out to those devastated by the fires and drought. Over the years I have been fortunate to meet with many people from the country. Blacktown's sister city is Liverpool Plains Shire Council. I have a great friendship with Mayor Andre Hope, Councillor Ron Van Katwyk and Colleen Wills from the Country Women's Association in Quirindi. They are wonderful people. Finally, I express my huge appreciation of my wonderful wife, Anne, who has run the Mayoress Christmas Gift Appeal and is involved in the Lions Club and many fundraising activities. I thank her and my son, Stephen, for their wonderful support and understanding in allowing me to undertake many long hours in public life. I wish one and all a merry Christmas.

NEW SOUTH WALES PARLIAMENTARY LIONS CLUB

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (19:44:03): I inform the House about the New South Wales Parliamentary Lions Club's gala charity dinner, which was held last week. It raised almost \$34,000 for SpinalCure Australia. Spinal cord injury is a truly devastating condition that robs a person of their independence, health and dreams. SpinalCure has been raising awareness about the possibility of a cure for spinal cord injury for 25 years, leveraging support from government, philanthropists—like Kerr Neilson of the Neilson Foundation—and business to drive funding and support Australia's leading researchers.

Through the work they are funding, they hope to see the first Australians with spinal cord injuries standing by next year. There have been extraordinary breakthroughs in the science, and we have come to a time when a cure is no longer a matter of if, but only a matter of time and funding. These treatments are profoundly changing the lives of research volunteers already, but also have great potential to reduce the economic burden of spinal cord injury to the State and national economy. The New South Wales State Government gave a great boost to the cause earlier this year, investing \$15 million into research projects. That is a wonderful start but more is needed to get these emerging, cutting-edge treatments to Australians as soon as possible.

It was a privilege to be part of the Lions Club's effort to raise money for that worthy cause. I thank our guiding Lion, Warren Latham; Lion Geoff Provost from Tweed Heads; Lion Alister Henskens from Ku-ring-gai; The Nationals Whip secretary Viv Lee; Lion Vin Pan; Lion Yang Liu; and Lion Pear Lin, who helped on the night. I thought the highlight of the night was the interview by Sandra Sully, from Channel 10 News, who interviewed Sam and Cameron Bloom. Sam suffered spinal injuries a few years ago when he was on a family holiday in Thailand. Her husband, Cameron, is a cameraman who photographed the journey. He and another person wrote a book that is presently being filmed as a movie, starring Naomi Watts as Sam Bloom and some other extraordinary actors.

I thank the CEO of SpinalCure, Duncan Wallace and Sam and Cameron Bloom, who were present for that interview. I also thank the sponsors for their generosity—The Star, NSW Mineral Council, Manildra and the Australian Hotels Association, which fronts up every year to help support the New South Wales Parliamentary Lions Club. Over the past eight years the Lions Club has raised over \$2 million for a variety of charities. It is bipartisan and in 2020 I implore members to consider becoming part of the Parliamentary Lions Club. Members who are already a member of the Lions Club can become associate members of the Parliamentary Lions Club. It plays an important role. Members are here in Parliament anyway and the club does not hold many meetings but has raised a significant amount of money over the years. I commend SpinalCure for the work it is doing. As members can imagine, it would be phenomenal to see people with spinal injuries walking next year.

*Community Recognition Statements***EAST HILLS ELECTORATE**

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (19:48:21): I congratulate and thank the many people in the community who volunteer their time to help others. As a new member of this place, I have visited and met with many community groups and individuals, and have also attended numerous functions, celebrations and award presentations in the East Hills electorate and its surrounds since being elected. Our community is grateful for the contribution of our volunteers, whose tireless efforts strengthen our communities. With the numerous fires our State has suffered this year, I also thank all those who have bravely fought the fires and those who will spend many hours rebuilding after the devastation the fires have caused. I take this opportunity to wish all the residents of the East Hills electorate and the people of New South Wales a very merry Christmas. Please ensure that you take care on the roads, remember to slip, slop, slap, and stay safe and happy over the holiday period. Happy New Year to you all!

MAANAUV SRIDHAR

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (19:49:11): I pay tribute to the hard work of Maanauv Sridhar in helping to collect approximately 1,000 signatures for the Doonside lift petition of the 10,000 signatures needed to ensure a debate on the issue in the New South Wales Parliament. Maanauv is a year 8 student at Blacktown Boys High School. While most kids are on their iPads, on social media or playing computer games, Maanauv was gathering the signatures of local residents, shoppers in malls, community event participants and public transport users. Maanauv was working hard for the elderly, for people with disabilities and for mums with young children who struggle to use Doonside train station. He wanted to remind the Government not to forget the Doonside community and that urgent action is needed. I commend Maanauv Sridhar. He is a wonderful young man with great community spirit. His enthusiasm and dedication to the community will stand him in good stead for a successful future.

WOODPORT PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (19:50:11): I congratulate Woodport Public School on receiving a grant of \$531.28 for Swedish language classes for students. I believe that New South Wales is one of only two States in Australia that provide grants to schools for language lessons. I thank the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning for providing funding through the NSW Community Languages Schools Program. Language classes improve the learning experience for students. They are fun and interactive. I have received positive feedback from Anna, the Swedish teacher at Woodport Public School. The language classes also play an important role in helping our primary school students maintain links to their heritage and cultural identity. Studies show that children who learn a second language show greater cognitive development in higher-order thinking skills. Their brains acquire the capacity to think quickly and strategically, creating a solid foundation for their schooling. Congratulations again to Woodport Public School and principal Judy Boland on receiving this funding and on providing yet another fantastic opportunity for the school.

PORT STEPHENS TOURISM AWARDS

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (19:51:15): Port Stephens is leading the way in nature-based tourism and adventure tourism. Port Stephens' successful tourist drawcards were recently recognised by the tourism industry at the 2019 NSW Tourism Awards. I congratulate our much-loved local whale and dolphin cruise operator, Moonshadow-TQC Cruises—an iconic local business that received its third gold at the 2019 NSW Tourism Awards in recognition of its excellence. It gained a well-earned entry into the NSW Tourism hall of fame. Joining them on the winners' podium was Port Stephens 4WD Tours, which took out its second gold. Oakvale Wildlife Park was awarded silver for Excellence in Accessible Tourism and bronze for Tourist Attractions. I was recently at Oakvale's fortieth birthday celebrations. It is safe to say that this beautiful business is much loved by locals and tourists alike. Sand Dune Adventures, another local standout, entered into the hall of fame last year. This year it backed that up with a silver in the Adventure Tourism category. I congratulate Moonshadow-TQC Cruises, Port Stephens 4WD Tours, Oakvale Wildlife Park and Sand Dune Adventures. They are more than businesses—they make memories for a lifetime.

WINSTON HILLS LIONS CLUB

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (19:52:25): I congratulate the terrific fundraising efforts of the Winston Hills Lions Club. For the past few weeks the Lions club team has collected money at Winston Hills Mall for people affected by the tragic bushfires across the North Coast, Sydney and now parts of the Hawkesbury. I thank Winston Hills Lions Club members for their tireless efforts, especially President Ian Field, Secretary Richard Stanek, and Treasurer Alan Watson. Over \$5,500 was raised at Winston Hills Mall. The Lions team also sought an additional \$3,000 from other community members. The community of Winston Hills has again shown

how community fundraising does outstanding work for the whole community. I thank them and the local Lions team for helping people right across New South Wales.

SOUTHERN CROSS AGED CARE HOME REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (19:53:15): On 11 November 2019 I was pleased to attend a very special Remembrance Day commemoration at the Southern Cross aged care home organised by my friend Paul Graham. As I have told the House on many occasions, Paul is a navy veteran and the former president of the Mascot RSL Sub-Branch. He took great care in arranging a comprehensive commemoration ceremony at the nursing home where a number of veterans live. Hymns were sung, *The Ode* was read, and the *Last Post* and *The Rouse* were played. It really was a wonderful thing to do for residents who may have been unable to leave the home but for whom Remembrance Day remains sacred. I commend Mr Graham and Ms Anne Slattery for their very thoughtful service to our elderly. Lest we forget.

WESTPORT WOMEN'S BOWLING CLUB

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (19:54:10): I recognise the amazing ladies from Westport Women's Bowling Club for coordinating a charity bowls day to raise funds for the Hastings Cancer Trust in our local region. Partnering to deliver better health outcomes for cancer care in our community, the Westport Women's Bowling Club has continued its eight-year tradition of raising funds for the Hastings Cancer Trust because it knows that every dollar raised is spent locally and will directly benefit a family impacted by a cancer diagnosis. President of the Westport Women's Bowls Club, Diane Parry, recently presented a cheque of \$1,500 to the Hastings Cancer Trust's Steve Thomas, who praised the women for their support and hopes the partnership will endure for years to come. To date, these extraordinary women have donated a mammoth \$16,825 to the trust. This means that the funds are directly invested into specialist equipment and services to significantly aid a patient's recovery. During the course of the year our bowlers have also generously donated \$335 to the Cancer Council NSW through a Biggest Morning Tea event and a further \$500 to Sailability and Riding for the Disabled. I congratulate and thank them for their fundraising achievements.

KU-RING-GAI MAGICAL MYSTERY TOUR

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (19:55:17): What better way to start a Monday than rolling up to take part in the Ku-ring-gai Historical Society's Magical Mystery Tour conducted by the amazing doyen of the society Jo Harris. From Killara we drove to Roseville, West Lindfield, Wahroonga and Warrawee and visited a number of interesting sites. My top two were seeing where boats took the timber of sawmillers to Darling Harbour from Fiddens Wharf and the grounds of Pibrac House in Warrawee, one of the unique architectural masterpieces in our area. By the afternoon, as you would expect, we were all a little ravenous and Jo had another surprise for us in store: lunch at Meals on Wheels in Turramurra. Not only did I have a great meal but I saw the new coolroom, which was funded by a New South Wales Government Community Building grant. Sadly, work commitments meant I had to say farewell after lunch and I missed the second half of the tour. However, Jo has promised to show me the other sites at a later stage and I look forward to it. Thank you again to the Ku-ring-gai Historical Society for a great morning. I wish everybody a happy Christmas and happy Hanukkah.

BLACKTOWN WOMEN'S AND GIRLS' HEALTH CENTRE

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (19:56:22): I inform the House that the Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre is holding an open day on Thursday 28 November 2019 from 11.00 a.m. to 2.00 p.m. Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre is operated under the stewardship of Jhan Leach. Two people from the centre were finalists for the Blacktown City Woman of the Year Award for their achievements and their contributions to women and girls in the community. Nominees were Jane Attard-Taylor, program coordinator, and Dr Olayide Ogunsiji, chairperson for the management committee, who also received the highly commended award. The open day is an extremely important day for people to find out the various services on offer, including self-confidence and resilience art therapy, pink ribbon morning tea, hepatology awareness, money care workshops, anti-domestic violence support workshops and various health and exercise classes. I thank the Blacktown Women's & Girls' Health Centre for its important work and wish it the best for a successful open day.

SOPHIE WILLS

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (19:57:28): I pay tribute to a young lady by the name of Sophie Wills. Sophie is a Hawkesbury local and a Western Sydney University paramedicine student who is leading an effort to increase the survival rate for residents who suffer a cardiac arrest in isolated Wisemans Ferry. She has formed a committee that has received a My Community Project grant of \$35,000 from the New South Wales Government to start a community-based public defibrillation scheme. This funding will pay for defibrillators and the associated hardware, cabinets and signage as well as training and resources. Sophie and her team at the Community Defib Project aim to have defibrillator units so that no-one is more than a five-minute

drive from the nearest one. The project is a collaboration between Western Sydney University, Wisemans Ferry, Forgotten Valley Inc. and the Defibshop. I thank Sophie Wills and the others involved for their initiative and commitment to saving lives.

MICHAEL TYNAN MEMORIAL CHALLENGE

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (19:58:35): I acknowledge the outstanding initiative that is the Michael Tynan Memorial Challenge and commend Madeline Tynan Davey on yet another successful event. Madeline launched the Michael Tynan Memorial Challenge in 2016 in honour of her late father, Michael Tynan OAM. Much like her father, a passionate businessman, family man, and philanthropist, Madeline's passion for helping others is exemplified by the over \$1 million raised for the wonderful teams at the St George and Sutherland Medical Research Foundation and University of Wollongong Medical Research. I was incredibly pleased to participate in the final challenge for 2019 earlier this month, where Madeline's dedication to giving back saw over 200 participants walk over 30 kilometres from Otford to Bundeena for medical research. I commend Madeline for her continued dedication to giving back to our community. I acknowledge the entire Tynan family for continuing Michael's legacy, including his wife, Annette, and their children Francene, Kieran, Daniel and Claire. I also acknowledge Madeline's own wonderful family, including her husband, Wayne Davey, and their children Nicholas, Samuel, Brendan and Prudence. I commend the Michael Tynan Memorial Challenge for its outstanding work.

GRAHAMSTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOL DEBATING TEAM

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (19:59:44): Members in this place know how challenging debating can be. Maybe we can learn a thing or two from the champion debaters at Grahamstown Public School. The school's debating team, including students Alex Hopwood, Michiko Versluis, Matilda Dodd and Emily Ryan, recently won a number of debating competitions and will proceed to the State finals this week. Those students won the local Raymond Terrace primary schools debating competition before also taking out the regional Hunter Central Coast Premier's Debating Competition. I am told that the Hunter Central Coast is the largest region in the competition with over 170 schools competing.

I congratulate the school's debating coordinator and assistant principal, Veronica Teasdale, who has coached these students to victory. I am delighted to see students from Grahamstown Public School achieving success in the difficult realm of debating. The art of sensibly and respectfully sharing opinions and viewpoints is something that is often not done well in this place. Well done to the Grahamstown Public School debaters. Their families, school and community are proud of their success. We are behind them as they face their next challenge—the State finals. Good luck.

GREEN POINT CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (20:00:45): I am pleased to announce Green Point Christian College has been drawn in the ballot for the Premier's Anzac Memorial Scholarship. Only 20 spots are available to students from across New South Wales and Green Point Christian College has been successful in having one student from year 9 or 10 selected. In September and October 2020, 20 young people from schools across the State will travel to significant sites and battlefields in Greece and Singapore. It is an amazing opportunity. The tour will give students important insights into Australia's involvement in the world wars and the experiences of the men and women who were involved in those conflicts. I congratulate Green Point Christian College on being drawn in the ballot. It is a fantastic opportunity for its students. The next stage of the process is students completing a piece of work that will then be submitted to the Office of Veterans Affairs for the final selection process. I wish all year 9 and year 10 students at Green Point Christian College all the best in submitting their pieces of work for their prize.

LEVER STREET COMMUNITY GARDEN

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (20:01:52): On 27 October I had the privilege of helping open the Lever Street Community Garden in Mascot. The garden will have fruit trees, vegetables, nuts and herbs growing in a water-efficient and sustainable system for everybody in the neighbourhood to enjoy. It will help build a community and it will rejuvenate what was once a fairly dingy park. This community garden was the result of a passionate group of locals, including Hasan Mahboob, Belinda Jacob, Peter Buxton, James Shelley and Ros Mulholland, who have campaigned tirelessly for more than two years for the establishment of this urban oasis. I am very happy that I was able to provide some funding for this community garden in 2017 and to be in attendance for its opening recently. I commend all those involved in the construction of this garden and I wish this project all the best for the future.

NSW CHAMPIONS OF SPORT

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (20:02:46): Recently the NSW Champions of Sports gala night was held. Many athletes across western Sydney were acknowledged for their efforts and triumphs both domestically and on the international stage. As the member for Seven Hills it was great to see two persons from the Blacktown and Parramatta regions awarded on the night. From greater Blacktown I acknowledge and congratulate the terrific indoor skydiver Amy Watson on her achievement as the New South Wales Young Athlete of the Year. At just 13 years of age Amy became the world's youngest indoor skydiving world champion, taking out gold in the junior freestyle at the third Fédération Aéronautique Internationale Indoor Skydiving World Championships in France this April. From the greater Parramatta area I congratulate the fantastic cyclist Geoff Stoker on being recognised as the New South Wales Masters Athlete of the Year. Geoff recently won gold at the 2018 cycling world championships in Los Angeles in the United States of America. I congratulate Amy and Geoff on their incredible athletic wins. They are both fantastic role models for sporting kids across western Sydney.

DISABLED SURFERS ASSOCIATION HASTINGS BEACH

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (20:03:59): I recognise the Disabled Surfers Association Hastings Branch, which is an outstanding volunteer organisation in Port Macquarie. Since it was established in 2001 it has delivered valuable surfing activities for people with all forms disabilities. The old saying "surf's up" has drawn some excitement over the past week as the Disabled Surfers Association in Hastings prepares to commence the next surfing session of the season. Saturday 19 October saw participants Glen Newbould, Keith Lawlor and Aaron Fox take to the surf. They were excited in reuniting with some old friends while hoping to make some new ones along the way.

Supported by dedicated committee members President Dave Hancock and Secretary and Treasurer Jenny Knox, the organisation has recently decided to modify their usual program by holding all club events at Flynn's Beach, Port Macquarie. Surfing commences at 9.30 a.m. followed by the popular barbecue lunch at 12.30 p.m. Currently the Disabled Surfers Association operates with a regular committee group of 15 people, helping upwards of 30 participants per session learn how to surf. The organisation is aiming to recruit upwards of 60 volunteers to support the demand which has increased over the years since the organisation reformed in 2011.

HAWKESBURY VALLEY ANIMAL WELFARE LEAGUE

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (20:05:01): I thank the volunteers at the Hawkesbury Valley Animal Welfare League for the important work they do in caring for surrendered and neglected animals and promoting and assisting responsible pet ownership. I also extend my thanks to those who donate to this vital cause and to those who assist in any other way. As part of their work, the Animal Welfare League NSW, of which the Hawkesbury Valley Animal Welfare League is a branch, is associated with the Getting to Zero model, which aims to achieve zero killing of healthy and treatable cats and dogs in local communities. This is just one of many of their great initiatives. I wish everyone involved with the Hawkesbury Valley Animal Welfare League all the very best and I encourage them to keep up their wonderful work.

ENDEAVOUR SPORTS HIGH SCHOOL

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (20:05:53): I congratulate the new student leaders of Endeavour Sports High School on their appointment. To be democratically elected by your peers is not only an honour but it also demonstrates the competencies of those individuals in the key areas of effective leadership, communication, organisation and innovation. I encourage them to make the most of such a fantastic opportunity to develop life skills and qualities that shape community and professional leaders.

I congratulate school captains Akash Biradar and Hannah Higgins and vice captains Jaiden French and Daniella Metirtikas on their successful appointment and extend my best wishes for their final year of high school. I also take this opportunity to commend the outgoing captains of Endeavour Sports High School for their service. I acknowledge 2019 school captains Steven Gamu and Ella Robinson and vice captains Waku Cakaunitabua and Maya Svagelli who have been great ambassadors for their school and peers during their term. I extend my best wishes to those student leaders as they continue to embody Endeavour Sports High School's motto of valuing individual potential and achieving personal best.

AVOCA SHARKS FOOTBALL CLUB

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (20:06:53): I congratulate the Avoca Sharks 14 years girls football team—or soccer as they are commonly known—for taking out the Football NSW Champion of Champions tournament for 2019. They have had an almost perfect season, with only one loss out of 25 games. They scored a whopping 82 goals over those games. The Avoca Sharks team qualified for the Champion of Champions

tournament when they beat the Woongarrah team 3-0 in the Central Coast grand final. This saw them progress through to the statewide games where they were up against Ponds Football Club, AC United, Gladsville and Avalon. I congratulate them on this phenomenal achievement. It is fantastic that this under 14's local team from the Central Coast can be recognised in this way as the New South Wales Champion of Champions. I congratulate each player, their coaches, manager and of course the parents of this fantastic under 14's Avoca Sharks girls' team on being the New South Wales Champion of Champions.

MICHAEL O'BRIEN, PORT MACQUARIE-HASTINGS ANGLER

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (20:07:55): I recognise the overwhelming support generated by the Port Macquarie-Hastings community in raising funds for local angler Michael O'Brien, who was injured on 14 April this year in a life-altering boating accident off the coast of Crescent Head. More than 600 people packed the Settlers Inn Hotel on 12 October to attend the Spinal Road 2 Recovery charity auction in support of former carpenter and avid fisherman Michael O'Brien after he broke his T9 vertebrae, which severely impacted the use of his legs.

Over 200 auction items were listed on the night with attendees raising a mammoth \$85,000 to \$90,000, which will go towards Michael's self-contained granny flat on his parent's property and potentially a new car if funds allow. Rallying behind Michael to coordinate the charity auction were Hailey Smith, Margaret Riddell, Ben Archer, Lyn and Grant Lugg, Rikki and Kodi Baird and Jason Isaac, with auction items collected by Ned Kelly's Bait & Tackle shop. A jubilant Michael thanked his family, friends and the community for getting behind him and giving generously to support his road to wellness. I extend my sincere gratitude to everyone who has supported Michael's recovery and rehabilitation.

HOMELESSNESS

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (20:09:08): I thank certain agencies for the work that they have done to end homelessness encampments in the Hawkesbury through a project called "It's no place to call home". Led by Hawkesbury City Council, the agencies are Wentworth Community Housing, Platform Youth Services, New South Wales Family and Community Services, NSW Police Force, Hawkesbury's Helping Hands, Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District, Hawkesbury District Health Service, and Homelessness NSW. The agencies sought to house those who were sleeping rough along the Hawkesbury riverbanks, and they had great success. They connected with every person living on the Hawkesbury riverbanks, visited daily to build relationships and helped find them a home and the support they needed. I thank everyone involved in the wonderful initiative for the vital work that they have done and the great success that they have achieved.

MENAI HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT LEADERS

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (20:10:00): I congratulate the new student leaders of Menai High School on their appointment. Not only is being democratically elected by your peers an honour but it also demonstrates the competencies of the individuals in the key areas of effective leadership, communication, organisation and innovation. I encourage them to make the most of such a fantastic opportunity to develop life skills and qualities that shape community and professional leaders. I congratulate school captains Will Straker and Janan Codmani and vice-captains Chloe Doran, Freya Bygrave, Will Delezio and Jayden Tran on their successful appointment. I extend my best wishes for their final year of high school. I also commend the outgoing captains of Menai High School for their service. I acknowledge 2019 school captains Dani Belani and Taegan Charles, and vice-captains Mia Enright-Bullock, Aurora Rymaszewski, Daniel Ferlazzo and Dylan Holdstock, who have been great ambassadors for their school and peers during their term. I extend my best wishes to the student leaders as they continue to embody Menai High School's motto of "Care and commitment".

KINCUMBER ROUNDABOUT

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (20:11:02): It gives me great pleasure to update the House on the progress of the Kincumber roundabout. At the 2015 State election I was happy to secure funding for the major infrastructure project, which is a \$20 million commitment from the New South Wales Government. Every day about 25,000 cars go through the roundabout, which is a pinch point in our local community. I congratulate Anna Zycki and the team at Roads and Maritime Services [RMS], who have done a fantastic job. The project turned out to be a lot more complicated than when it was first envisaged. I also thank all of the 25,000 drivers who go through the roundabout for their understanding. It has been a major job realigning the traffic work to upgrade the roundabout by removing and moving all the services, power installations and the underground cabling. The roundabout has reached another milestone with the next stage of the second lane going ahead. I congratulate RMS and thank all the locals for their understanding.

PYMBLE GOLF CLUB

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (20:12:05): I acknowledge Pymble Golf Club in my electorate and welcome Jason Atkins as its new general manager. I will visit the club next week. I acknowledge two projects through which the club is looking to save water. The first project is looking at cleaning up Cowan Creek, which runs through the golf course and does not have strong water flow due to fallen trees, overgrown shrubs and collapsing banks. The club is looking to clean and stabilise the banks, improve the creek mechanics and creek water volume capacity, enhance the aesthetics of the area by beautifying the creek, ensure that native trees and animals have an environment in which they thrive, and ensure that the Cowan Creek water flow is maintained and the creek continues to flow into the Hawkesbury River. They are all admirable objectives. The second project underway is the installation of a reverse osmosis plant or a desalination plant to treat bore water. I commend the club, wish it well and look forward to visiting it.

KIM GREEN

Ms ELANI PETINOS (Miranda) (20:13:16): I recognise Kim Green of GyMEA for her outstanding and decorated professional netball career. Having played for the Miranda electorate's own GyMEA Netball Club as a junior, Kim debuted at a national level when she was still in high school. In 2003 Kim played for the Sydney Swifts and Canberra Darters, before joining the NSW Swifts in 2008. In 2017 she joined the Giants and in 2018 led the team to a second consecutive finals series. Kim is one of Australia's most successful and decorated players, having made 74 appearances for the Australian Netball Diamonds, contributing to the team's world championship gold medals in 2011 and 2015, a Commonwealth Games silver in 2010 and gold in 2014. Kim was also named the 2014 Trans-Tasman Netball League co-most valuable player, and the NSW Swifts' most valuable player for 2013 and 2014. Having recently announced her retirement after celebrating her 200th elite level game this season, the former Australia vice-captain has an extensive and distinguished career to be proud of. I congratulate Kim on 17 years of achievements and extend my best wishes for her future endeavours.

HYLTON MOORE OVAL BASEBALL STADIUM

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (20:14:27): It has been almost 10 years in the making but Hylton Moore Oval baseball stadium now has lights. It has been my pleasure to work hand in glove with the Central Coast Baseball Association and the Central Coast Marlins Baseball Club. Hylton Moore Oval is recognised as one of the best baseball pitches in the country and now it has been topped off with a fantastic set of lights. My staffer Ben Sheath and I attended the first game under lights. I had the pleasure of switching the lights on. The State Government had made a \$234,000 commitment to deliver those lights for our community. Now that pitch will be used for world-class events all year round. I again congratulate all the hard work and dedication from the Central Coast Baseball Association and Central Coast Marlins. On the night I switched the lights on I was lost for words, which is a first for me, because the Central Coast Baseball Association surprised me by making me its patron. I am incredibly humbled to be given that honour. I congratulate the association on its hard work.

BRENNA TARRANT

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains)—Earlier this year I was approached by the Western Sydney Academy of Sport and asked to become an ambassador for one of their young AFL athletes, Brenna Tarrant. Soon after, I had the pleasure of meeting Brenna at my office in Springwood and I have to say, what an inspiring young woman she is! Brenna's sporting achievements are many. Most notably, she is the only NSW player to be selected into the 2019 Under 18 All Australia Team squad, as well as receiving an invitation to the AFL Women's Draft Combine - an annual, post season event where young players are selected by AFL Women's clubs for the following year. Brenna is also the recipient of the 2019 Western Sydney Academy of Sport Woolworths Scholarship, bringing her one step closer to realising her dream of playing AFL at the highest level. I would also like to make mention of the Western Sydney Academy of Sport and thank them for their support and mentorship of talented young athletes from the Western Sydney region through their holistic development programs. It has been an honour for me to be welcomed into the Academy's ambassador family and with much anticipation I look forward to watching Brenna's incredible journey unfold.

REMEMBRANCE DAY SERVICES

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—I was privileged and honoured to attend Bass Hill RSL Sub-Branch and Chester Hill-Carramar RSL Sub Branch's combined Remembrance Day commemoration service on the 11th November 2019. I take this opportunity to thank and congratulate the executives of Chester Hill-Carramar Sub Branch including President Ivan Tilmouth, Vice President Michael Bowman and Secretary Lloyd Newman and Bass Hill RSL Sub-Branch including President Ron Duckworth, Vice Presidents Ian Muirhead and Kevin Mahony, and Secretary Gary Roser for coordinating a well-received engaging Remembrance Day service for our local community. I thank the Sub-Branches for the kind invitation to attend the service and to lay a wreath

in honour of the brave service men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice. It was pleasing to see so many members of the local community in attendance, including many school children and teachers who came together to pay tribute to and give thanks to the Australian service men and women who served and continue to serve our nation.

LYN MACINNIS OAM

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)—I rise to congratulate Lyn Macinnis OAM on her nomination for the 2019 Myall Lakes Community Awards. Lyn has spent a lifetime contributing to our community, giving freely of her time, energy, expertise and assistance for anyone in need. A member of the Presbyterian Women's Association, Lyn started volunteering at the Taree Saleyards canteen in 1968. In 1971 Lyn started with Taree Meals on Wheels and today still continues delivering meals once a month. Taree Red Cross welcomed Lyn to their ranks in 1977 and honoured her with Life membership in 1994, a Telecross volunteer since 1990 Lyn still continues to call every day. As they say if you want something done give it to a busy person, Lyn added the Bushland Health Group to her plate. Joining the Ladies Auxiliary in 1979, Lyn has served in executive position continuously since the 1980's. Lyn is still active volunteering weekdays across the Bushland facilities and best of all are Lyn's cakes and slices which she still bakes for the Red Cross and Bushland Auxiliary stalls. Lyn Macinnis has made an incredible contribution to the Taree community and it is an honour to recognise her in this house.

VOCAL CHRISTMAS TREE OF ANGELS

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)—Christmas can be a difficult time for people whose lives have been affected by crime and life tragedies. Last Saturday I was pleased to be present at a very special ceremony organised by the Victims of Crime Assistance League Inc. NSW (VOCAL). The ceremony included the lighting of seven candles representing yesterday, today, tomorrow, hope, love and gratitude and peace, and was focused around a Christmas tree on which the families and friends of victims of crime placed angels. The tree was blessed by Reverend Kimberly Sawyer and soloist Sari Kelana gave a stirring rendition of "Angels". As part of the service, Kylie Farthing (a victim, survivor, thriver, and inspirer) shared her story of survival, and the emotional and legal support she received from VOCAL during a very difficult time in her life. Current CEO, Kerrie Thompson, spoke about how VOCAL came into being as a homicide support group, until the first CEO, Robyn Cotterell Jones, saw the need to extend VOCAL's support to victims of all types of crime. I am enormously proud of VOCAL's work of supporting and empowering victims of crime and their families in my local community.

THAT GREAT MARKET LINDFIELD

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)—"That Great Market" is a lifestyle market held each month in East Lindfield in my electorate of Davidson. It importantly emphasises quality locally made and produced items. The market is free, fully accessible and provides a relaxed family friendly vibe where people can browse local products, meet the makers, and enjoy live music and food. It takes place among the leafy trees of Lindfield, with offerings including jewellery, bags, plants, clothes, and locally made condiments and honey. The market also promotes sustainability so people are encouraged to bring re-usable coffee cups and shopping bags. I am grateful for events like "That Great Market" in my community that provide a relaxing day out, while encouraging sustainability and promoting local products. I have enjoyed attending it with my wife.

HOTEL JESMOND AHA AWARD

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—The AHA NSW Awards for Excellence are recognised as the most prestigious awards programme in the hospitality industry. The awards honour the achievement of excellence in NSW hotels across a variety of segments including accommodation, dining, entertainment, marketing, social media, community service and talented employees. A number of local hotels from the Wallsend electorate were finalists, up against hotels from right across NSW. Hotel Jesmond was a finalist in the Best Sporting Entertainment Venue, Best Regional Tab Venue, Best Parmi, Best Burger, Regional Chef of the Year and Regional Hotel of the Year. They took out the top prize for Best Burger and Regional Chef of the Year. Congratulations to owner Daniel Ferguson, Head Chef Paul Thornton and his staff, Steph Carter, Alex Boulus, Samantha Wright, Brent Smith, Tiarne Shanks, Luke Picone, William Holt, Ken Way Woon, Sheikh Mohaimenur, Shanahan Payne, Joshua Merrill, Jemma Walsh, Lucas Rowston, Parash Karmacharya, Pratikumar Raichura, Alice Everard, Catie Crampton, Kate Maclure, Lucy Herbert, Madeline Butler, Piper Walter, Ashlee Sunderland, Brandi Kennedy, Connor Thorp, Bradley Fowles, Edan Tickle, Hayden Ivers, James Williams, Jourdan Tadros, Lucy Koch, Matthew McRae.

2019 GLAPD SPORTS GALA

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)—I recognise the 2019 GLAPD Sports Gala Day that was held on Saturday November 2 at the Whitlam Leisure Centre at Liverpool. The Annual Gala days have been held for some

time and reportedly have grown bigger and better each year. The participants in the event are migrants to Australia from Africa. This year the countries represented at the Gala included Rwanda, Burundi, DR Congo, Uganda and Kenya. The day featured in particular enthusiastic games of soccer and basketball followed by an awards ceremony. Awards were also given for other sports including volleyball. GLAPD is the Great Lakes Agency for Peace and Development. It is an international humanitarian non-profit and non-political agency which was formed to contribute to peace and development in the African Great Lakes Region. Among many other activities it runs a settlement program for migrant families with a refugee background to regional Australia. It also fosters the culture of the members of its communities to support social cohesion.

100TH BIRTHDAY JOYCE TOMKINSON

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—I would like to acknowledge and wish a very happy birthday to Bowral resident Joyce Tomkinson. Joyce celebrated her 100th birthday on November 18th surrounded by family and friends. She was delighted to receive Birthday congratulations from many dignitaries including Premier Berejiklian. During the Second World War, Joyce worked in a number of factories in England where she met her first husband, Raymond Jack Ashby, a Canadian soldier. When pregnant with her first child, Joyce made the incredibly brave decision to sail to Canada to be reunited with Raymond who was sent back with his troops. After a number of events which saw return to England Joyce then moved back to Canada where she met her second husband, John Tomkinson. Together they made the decision to immigrate to Australia and became citizens in 1984. Her daughter describes Joyce as funny witty and charming and believes this is the secret to a long life and happy life. Congratulations Joyce on reaching 100 years and I wish you many more happy and healthy years ahead.

HOSPITAL ART AUSTRALIA

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)—Hospital Art Australia has been operating since the first Paintfest took place in July 1999 at Gosford Hospital. Hospital Art Australia is a community-led group of men and women who draw and paint pictures to be displayed in hospitals and aged-care facilities throughout NSW and Australia. These paintings provide an escape for patients and visitors to enjoy during an otherwise traumatic and clinical experience to hospitals or other health-related facilities. Pat De Carle was the founding member of Hospital Art Australia and was inspired to establish the group after watching a video of a similar movement in the United States of America. Since 1999, Hospital Art Australia has grown exponentially and has spread to over 150 facilities throughout NSW and Queensland with Hospital Art being hung in 13 major NSW hospitals. I would like to thank the members of Hospital Art Australia and co-coordinator Ms Mary Taaffe. I would also like to pay tribute to founding member Pat De Carle on establishing an admirable community group, which begun in my electorate all those years ago.

AUSTRALIAN CHINESE BUDDHIST SOCIETY'S 38TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MINGYUE LAY TEMPLE

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, today I rise to acknowledge the Australian Chinese Buddhist Society's Celebration of the 38th Anniversary of the Mingyue Lay Temple. The Society has played an important role in strengthening multiculturalism in the community and providing a location for those who adhere to Buddhism to deepen their spiritually. The Mingyue Lay Temple is a very significant location for those living in Western Sydney, and has become a prominent prayer location since its inception 38 years ago. It was great to attend the Anniversary Celebration, where both distinguished visitors and community members came together to acknowledge the work of the Society. I thank the Chairman of the Society, Mr James Chan, and the President of the Society, Mr Vincent Kong, for their work in the Society and for extending the Celebration invitation to me. I look forward to continuing support the fantastic work of the Society in the coming years.

NSW FIRE AND RESCUE TRAINING ACADEMY GRADUATION

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—I would like to congratulate the NSW Fire and Rescue Training Academy's fourth graduated class of 2019 for their recent success in their training and preparation to become qualified NSW firefighters. These 15 men and women graduated on Friday 19th July and are now stationed across the state. Undertaking vigorous and difficult training has pushed their body and mind to the limit through a range of purpose-built training props to simulate fire, rescue, hazardous material handling and other emergency situations. Yet, this has ensured they are prepared for the horrors and dangerous nature of fire. Coming from a variety of different careers, trades or professional backgrounds, each individual man and woman brings something unique to NSW Fire and Rescue. Their diligent work and desire to protect our community will no doubt save many lives and homes of NSW Residents. Congratulations and thank you to all 15 firefighters of the NSW Fire and Rescue Training Academy's fourth graduated class!

RYAN COSGROVE AND THE STEVE WAUGH FOUNDATION

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)—I would like to take this opportunity to recognise a fantastic King Langley local identity, Ryan Cosgrove. Ryan is currently the hard-working and dedicated president of the Kings Langley Public School P&C Committee and I thank him for his advocacy of this great school. However, I wanted to acknowledge his most recent fundraising efforts for The Steve Waugh Foundation. Last week Ryan completed his fourth Captains Ride which aims to raise awareness and raise funds for children with rare diseases. Ryan travelled an impressive 744 kilometres by bike through Queensland with 60 other riders over a 6 day period. Ryan has raised an incredible \$11,000 for The Steve Waugh Foundation. Along with his team mates they have raised a total of over one million dollars. The Steve Waugh Foundation provides grants for those aged 0 to 25 for medicines, specialised equipment and treatment therapies, respite camps and awareness of rare diseases. Well done to Ryan and the fantastic riders of The Steve Waugh Foundation for their hard-work and dedication over the last few months with fundraising for this very important initiative.

2019 FAIRFIELD RELAY FOR LIFE

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—On the weekend of 16th and 17th November 2019, the Fairfield Showgrounds sprung to life as the community celebrated with the Cancer Council NSW in the annual Fairfield Relay for Life. The annual Relay always proves to be a great weekend out for the whole family as schools, businesses, associations and community groups all band together to raise awareness and funding for cancer related research and support services. With each passing year the Relay continues to grow from strength to strength with a fantastic array attractions, stalls, performances and activities on display throughout the day – there's always something for everybody. Along with my Parliamentary colleagues Nick Lalich, Hugh McDermott and myself, we were proud to sponsor a new attraction for the relay with a community dunk tank – which myself and several other community leaders participated in. The dunk tank was quite a successful attraction which managed to help fundraise on the day while providing a fantastic source of entertainment. I would like to commend and congratulate the Relay for Life Organising Committee for all their work in the lead up to the Relay and all the volunteers who helped make the day an incredible success.

FAIRFIELD RELAY FOR LIFE

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—I was honoured to join 51 teams and 388 participants at Fairfield Showground to help fight back against cancer through the Fairfield Relay for Life. Teams participated over a 24 hour period to raise funds for the research, prevention, information and support services provided by the Cancer Council. Alongside the relay's community activities, participants also had the opportunity to celebrate the lives of loved ones lost to cancer and to cherish those who were survivors. Events such as the Relay for Life help contribute to the enormous strides we have made so far in the battle against cancer. Cancer's death rate has fallen by more than 24% since 1982, and with the assistance of the Cancer Council and its dedicated volunteers, this progress can be continued. I wish to thank Fairfield Relay for Life co-chairs Michael Tran and Kelvin Tran, Cancer Council Ambassador Sinilia Radivojevic; the NSW Cancer Council's Denise Daines, and all participants, volunteers and donors who have supported this fantastic event.

LYN FLANAGAN

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Mr Speaker, today I would like to congratulate Lyn Flanagan for making history in becoming the first female president of the Balranald Ex-Services Club since its creation in the 1950s. Lyn has been a member of the Club for 52 years and joined the Board of Directors in 2015. Lyn is also the only female member on the Board, but she hopes her appointment will set a precedence and encourage more women to get on the Board. Despite Lyn making history, she has an eye on the future and wants to get the younger generations involved. In her free time Lyn also caters for the bowls tournaments and is Chairperson of the PHN Far West Community Advisory Council. I thank Lyn and the many others just like Lyn in regional communities that take on these volunteer roles to ensure their communities don't lose valuable social clubs.

ANGLICAN SPRING FLOWER SHOW

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—Mr Speaker, I wish to congratulate Lesley Attwood and the committee of the Anglican Spring Flower Show who again put on a magnificent display at the Gundagai District Services Club. The dry weather, strong winds and birds were a challenge to gardeners which meant entries were down on previous years but it was another successful flower show and visitors were very impressed with the displays and the beautiful lunch. The Gundagai Flower Show is believed to be one of the oldest in the region and one keen gardener remembers the show started in 1946 ... and it's still going strong. Well done to the committee and volunteers who presented the stunning flowers from around the Gundagai region for so many to enjoy.

AUTISM COMMUNITY NETWORK EVENT

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)—I was pleased to recently attend the Autism Community Network Event, hosted by the Member for Oatley Mark Coure and Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services the Hon Gareth Ward MP. I appreciated the opportunity to hear about the fantastic work the network undertakes to support families and individuals with autism from the Network's founder and General Manager Mr Steve Drakoulis. The Autism Community Network is a not-for-profit organisation. It supports more than 1,600 families across Sydney and Regional NSW through a variety of ways including support groups, social groups, and information days for families to exchange advice and support one another. I am interested in holding an event in Heathcote next year to assist with promoting the network and ensuring families and individuals with autism in my electorate are supported and connected.

ALSTONVILLE RSL SUB-BRANCH CENTENARY

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—I congratulate the Alstonville RSL Sub-Branch on their centenary in June this year. I recognise the incredible work of Mark Quilligan, President, and members of the Alstonville Sub-Branch in supporting veterans and their families and commemorating important moments of defence force history. I wish all members and their families a Happy 100 year birthday.

THE ROCK SWIMMING POOL

Dr JOE MCGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—The determination of a small country NSW council to retain residents and support its community splashed into the spotlight in October this year, with the completion of The Rock War Memorial Swimming Pool upgrade opening on the 26th. Five years worth of planning, fundraising, designing and grant applications has resulted in the refurbishment of the out-dated facility, in addition to updated and fresh amenities at the complex at The Rock. As Member for Wagga Wagga, I have spoken at length about the need to support responsible regional growth across the electorate and this is a great example of just that. I was delighted to attend the grand opening of this updated facility, alongside Lockhart Shire Councillors, members and staff, including Mayor Rodger Schirmer, deputy-mayor Greg Verdon and general manager Peter Veneris. I would like to specially acknowledge the Community Steering Committee members, including Amy Basham, Katherine Hannam, Bec Kingston, Jessica Ball, Anthea Driscoll and Petrina O'Connor, as well as members of The Rock & District Touch Football Association, The Rock Progress Association, individuals and groups involved in the project's success. Special thanks to Cootamundra MP Steph Cooke, who officiated the opening in her capacity as Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Premier.

MAITLAND'S RIVERLINK BUILDING

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—In recent years Maitland, much like other towns and cities, has struggled to keep its central business district viable by reimagining and activating spaces with innovative events, architectural and design features. It's been imperative throughout the process that Maitland retained its connection with the river. Much of that hinged on the success of a new building, aptly called the Riverlink building. The Riverlink building was recognised for both its design and the role it plays in Maitland's rejuvenation at the Australian Institute of Architects NSW awards. It was awarded the esteemed NSW Architecture Medallion, the Public Architecture award and the Blacket Prize for design excellence in a regional community. Judges noted that it was an architectural centrepiece that improved connectivity and celebrated the history, value and ambition of Maitland. It was also lauded for improving the pedestrian connection between the river and the main street. Congratulations to all who have been part of the project, from genesis to completion.

KINGSWOOD HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT LEADERS

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney)—As the end of the 2019 school year is quickly approaching, I wish to offer my congratulations to the incoming student leadership team of Kingswood High School. The leadership team for 2019/20 includes, Captains: Laine Fox and Lily Sammut and Vice Captains: Ace Viray and Gabrielle Veltman. Student leader's play an important role and I have no doubt these students will make positive and valuable contributions across their school community.

BARRIE WILLIAMS

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)—On behalf of the Sydney Electorate I wish to record the sad passing of my constituent and friend Barrie Williams. Barrie was an amazingly positive person during cancer treatment, remaining involved in community and travelling, always saying he was "fabulous" because he was alive and enjoying life. Barrie was an active citizen, engaged in community campaigns, from opposing the monorail and rebuilding the stadium to addressing climate change. He supported independents in politics, working with those representatives who fought for their community and fair treatment for the LGBTIQ community. He

grew up in the Mallee, was called up to fight in Vietnam and was badly injured. He lived in Asia, including many years in Singapore, and had a long work history in IT. Barrie was married and separated with two daughters and was a proud and involved grandfather. Some years ago he began a new life back in Sydney and sponsored his long time partner Roger Lew from Malaysia. Barrie's families and friends will miss him. I am proud to have worked with Barrie and valued his friendship and support.

BAPS SHRI SWAMINARAYAN MANDIR (BAPS) – DIWALI AND ANNAKUT FESTIVAL CELEBRATIONS

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt)—I was honoured to attend the celebrations of Diwali and Annakut hosted by BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir. Diwali is one of the widely celebrated Hindu Festivals and represents the triumph of light over darkness and good over evil whilst the Annakut Festival is celebrated the day after Diwali. This Annakut festival marks the welcoming of the Hindu New Year. The festival was a joyous occasion in which a grand display of food was offered to the Hindu deities. BAPS is a volunteer-driven organisation dedicated to improving our community by fostering the Hindu ideals of faith, unity, and selfless service. BAPS is also responsible for the creation of the Akshardham Cultural Complex in New Delhi. The complex has been visited by numerous international dignitaries. It was delightful to hear devotees at the festival singing "Thaal", songs of devotion to the Lord asking Him to partake in the Annakut offering. I would like to thank Mayatrik Thanker and BAPS for the kind invitation to attend both celebrations.

STOP CSG SYDNEY

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)—Today I rise to recognise Stop CSG Sydney, a fantastic independent community group based in the inner west. Stop CSG Sydney was formed in 2010 by a group of concerned local residents to stop a coal seam gas mining test drill site in Campbell St, St Peters. Since then they have successfully campaigned to cancel PEL 463, the licence covering the Sydney basin and are committed to supporting other Stop CSG groups across NSW to stop this toxic industry. Stop CSG Sydney continues to work with other Stop CSG groups across NSW, primarily in relation to Santos drilling in the Pilliga Scrub at Narrabri to preserve its unique environment, flora and fauna. I want to thank everyone involved for their continued commitment to the important work of protecting our natural environment.

THE CHILDREN'S BOOKSHOP BEECROFT

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer)—The Children's Bookshop in Beecroft will be familiar to any resident in Beecroft and Cheltenham as a local institution. Established in 1971, it is the oldest specialist children's bookshop in NSW. In January 2005, Paul MacDonald, formerly a teacher for 20 years, took over the bookshop. Since then he has grown the business to include an enormous variety of books, also hosting story-times and book-signings. Paul also services many preschools, primary and secondary schools across the state. Paul and his staff have a real passion – not just for reading, but also finding the right book for the young reader. I was saddened to hear that after forty-eight years the shopfront will be closing down. This is a great loss to our community, which has enjoyed the warmth and charisma of the bookshop over the decades. However, I was reassured to hear that the business will still carry on servicing schools as it has previously. I wish Paul and his team all the best in their future endeavours. And while I will dearly miss being able to pop into his bookshop, I'm glad to hear he will still be spreading the love of reading to local kids.

CONSERVATION VOLUNTEERS AUSTRALIA

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy)—I would like to recognise that in the coming months, Conservation Volunteers Australia will be helping to replenish the Georges River by planting thousands of baby Sporobolus plants along the south bank of the Chipping Norton Lake. Sporobolus is a great food source for crabs, prawns and fish. It is anticipated that this new food source should help to enhance the abundance of marine life throughout the river. Whilst great for the environment, this should also be exciting news for the many recreational fishers who like to try their luck at fishing spots along the river. While Conservation Volunteers Australia has already begun planting the Sporobolus plants in Chipping Norton, they are planning to continue doing so at different sites along the river for the next couple of months. I would encourage anyone passionate about supporting our river ecosystems to contact the organisation and lend their support. I thank Conservation Volunteers Australia for the work they are doing to regenerate the Chipping Norton Lakes area and I know it will build upon the great work that the Liverpool Action Group has been doing there for some time.

FIRE AND RESCUE NSW MEREWETHER AND STOCKTON

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)—Today I express my deepest gratitude to Fire and Rescue New South Wales Stations 376 Merewether and 446 Stockton who joined the fight to protect lives and property in the horrendous Mid North Coast fires. Through some of the worst fire weather New South Wales has ever seen, 376 and 446 worked with crews from Wangi Wangi, Tarro, Minmi, Tingira Heights, Wallsend and Belmont in

Strike Teams Whiskey and Oscar, going above and beyond in the face of catastrophic conditions. Amid the loss of over 400 homes, the deaths of four people and horrific devastation throughout the state, their efforts have not gone unnoticed. These people are true heroes. Thank you for everything you have done, and will continue to do as we enter another long summer. Your communities are very proud.

COMO JANNALI FOOTBALL CLUB 35A TEAM

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)—I congratulate the fantastic Como Jannali Football Club 35A team on being 2019 Football NSW Champions of Champions for their division. This sensational team were Sutherland Shire Football Association's Minor Premiers and Premiers and also State Cup Champions leading into the 51st Champion of Champions Finals, which saw 38 of the best grassroots football club teams from across the state converge at Valentine Sports Park. The Como Jannali team convincingly defeated Southern & Ettalong United Football Club with an impressive five goals to nil, exemplifying the skill and tenacity that made them such a threat throughout the season. I acknowledge this impressive team of athletes, including Joshua Bulgin, Ryan Butler, Todd Calderwood, Christopher Clarke, Damian Cutcliffe, Jamie Donaldson, Mark Elton, Andrew Head, Brad Heffernan, Dean Heffernan, Murray Heslehurst, Dylan Hughes, Mathew Keep, Michael Keep, Stephen Keep, Andrew McDonald, Matthew Merralls, Christopher Oliver, Andrew Paine, Nicholas Reily, Darren Reynolds, and notably, player, coach, and manager, Brett Heffernan. I congratulate the Como Jannali 35As on such a successful season, and extend my best wishes for those to come.

OPENING OF THE NEWLY CONSTRUCTED MERCURE HOTEL

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)—It was recently my pleasure to attend the opening of the newly constructed Mercure Hotel at The Fiddler in my electorate of Castle Hill. Lewis Land Group partnered with Accor Hotels in order to deliver the 78 room, \$20 million hotel. It is the newest hotel not just within my electorate, but within Greater Western Sydney as well. The event was a terrific success, being joined by Alex Hawke MP, the Federal Member for Mitchell, Dr Michelle Byrne, Mayor of the Hills Shire Council, Simon McGrath of Accor Pacific, Alex Thorpe from Veriu Hotels and Chris Galvert and Michael Latham of Lewis Land Group, with cake-cutting and plaque-unveiling being the order of the day. The hotel will make up a part of the greater Fiddler complex, which provides employment for around 200 Hills District locals. This is a sign of the continued development of North West Sydney as a destination for business people and holiday makers, with so much to do and see in the region, and also with greater connectivity to other parts of Sydney due to the Metro and road-developments making travel in the area easier.

THE DELI 40TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron)—Recently I was able to attend the 40th anniversary celebration of The Deli Womens and Children's Centre in Eastlakes. This organisation has grown from humble origins to one of the leading providers of social services for women and children in the Heffron electorate and wider Eastern Suburbs. For women who have experienced domestic violence or children who have experienced trauma, The Deli is a wonderful resource and a source of comfort. I'd particularly like to congratulate the Manager, Vicki Johnston, for her terrific leadership of this organisation. In a perfect world, services like The Deli Women and Children's Centre wouldn't exist, but in the meantime, I am glad that those who have been through these situations have places like this to turn to.

2019 NSW TOURISM AWARDS

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I rise to recognise Janette Hyde who is a truly inspirational, dedicated and generous woman from Port Macquarie who was presented with the Dean Gorrard Award at the NSW Tourism Awards on 14th November 2019, at the Four Season Hotel, Sydney. The Award recognises Janette's outstanding contribution to tourism over decades and her impact on the promotion of the sector which is so critical to our local economy. A remarkable lady who literally achieves anything she sets her mind to Janette has served eleven years as President and thirty three years as a member of the Greater Port Macquarie Tourism Association. Janette was the chief instigator in luring the NSW State Touch Football Competition to Port Macquarie which has been an annual fixture on our sporting calendar for 30 years along with the Junior State Cup that draws over 17,000 players and spectators to our region. In setting a real benchmark for regional tourism in NSW, Janette also spends her time working for several organisations in our community including the Port Macquarie Chamber of Commerce, Food & Wine Tourism Taskforce and Bravehearts. Once again, I congratulate Janette for her integral contribution to our local community.

SHEREE GRAY

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter)—I congratulate Hunter Valley Police District Senior Constable Sheree Gray for being awarded the Rotary Community Award at the prestigious 2019 Rotary Clubs of NSW Police Officer of the Year ceremony. The popular officer, who recently coordinated National Graffiti

Removal Day in Muswellbrook, claimed the honour at a special dinner at the Hyatt Regency, Sydney, on Friday, November 8. The award recognises the exceptional efforts of NSW Police Force employees, who have worked for the benefit of the community, putting service above self whether on or off duty. Due to her efforts Sheree Gray also received a Legend Award at the Graffiti Removal Day Volunteer Reception held at Parliament House for her outstanding contribution to the removal and prevention of graffiti in the local community. Again I congratulate Senior Constable Sheree Gray on her outstanding success and contribution to the electorate of Upper Hunter.

SENIORS STORIES 2019

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge the terrific work of the one hundred seniors who have shared their tales of triumph and tragedy in this year's edition of Seniors' Stories Volume 5. In this year's edition there are three entries from my electorate of North Shore. Duncan Jefferson of Mosman with his story 'Funniest, Happiest', who wrote a simple story where over dinner the family list their funniest moment of the day, and their happiest moment, ending with Duncan stating "I've been the happiest man on this planet since I first set eyes on this woman". Caterina Zavaglia of Milsons Point wrote 'The Lilac Chair', a story following the character of Agnes, and her daughter Ginny. Ginny is soon to be married, and the story follows the tribulations between mother and daughter. And lastly David Cook of North Sydney 'The People You Meet'. A story about being accepted at the local pub 'The Carpenter's Arms', and that though there are many ways to find a kind of 'love', the pub is one of them. I encourage everyone to go out and get a copy of the book and hear the many amazing experiences and memories from seniors in our local community.

COMMENDABLE ACTION

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—I rise to recognise the dedicated emergency service personnel who responded to the scene of a serious motor vehicle accident on the Mitchell Highway at Orange on the night of 11th October 2018. The single vehicle collision involved a truck which departed the roadway and collided with a nearby fence. The driver of the truck, who was the sole occupant, sustained life threatening injuries which consisted of an open chest wound and exposed vital organs. Emergency services were contacted and police arrived on scene shortly after. Senior Constables Katy Watts and Tom Martin of the Central West Police District effectively administered first aid to the injured driver.

Orange Fire and Rescue attended the scene and assumed responsibility of the first aid and extraction of the driver. Station Officer Matthew Jeffery, Leading Fire Fighter David Beattie, Senior Fire Fighters Timothy Collins and James Patrech attended to first aid and extraction of the driver, ably assisted by civilians who were first on scene. Of particular note, Timothy Collins is recognised as being instrumental in providing lifesaving first aid until the driver was airlifted to hospital, managing to survive. The actions of emergency services and civilians at this incident is commendable.

FAREWELL TO MCAULEY PRINCIPAL GERA GUILHAUS

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse)—On Monday 18 November 2019, I visited McAuley Catholic Primary School, Rose Bay for a special morning tea for School Principal Gera Guilhaus. Gera is retiring after 40 years of service to the Sydney Catholic Schools including at McAuley. Parents, carers, students and local community members came together to celebrate Gera's amazing commitment to the school together with school leaders Mia and Leila who also made a presentation to her. Kindergarten students performed some very sweet musical numbers and the room was decorated with students' artworks with messages like "Mrs Guilhaus is as nice as a fairy godmother" and "Mrs Guilhaus is as precious as an antique". It was also good to see Father Chris Slattery and Monsignor Tony Doherty AM who joined for the occasion, previously serving at the school's Parish Priest for 12 years. Gera has been strong advocate for her students and how nice to see what an impact she has made on local students over the years. She is always welcoming and I loved attending the annual School Christmas Liturgy at St Mary Magdalene Church Rose Bay. Gera has contributed enormously to making McAuley the wonderful school that it is and I'm sure I will be there again soon. Gera, Happy Retirement – I wish you the best of luck!

HOMELESS CONNECT

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—It was with great pleasure that I attended the Lismore Homeless Connect Day held at the Winsome Hotel in North Lismore on 10 October 2019. It was a special day aimed to connect homeless people with essential services in the Lismore area and was organised by Social Futures and Momentum Collective, two social welfare organisations active in our region. It was a well-attended event with several local organisations supporting it by providing haircuts, meals, links to employment, health and wellbeing services, as well as pathways to housing. I would like to thank Social Futures CEO Tony Davies and Momentum Collective CEO Virginia Walker for their support of this event which took place this year on World Homelessness Day. Since 2011 homelessness in NSW has increased by 33% and the homelessness rate in the Northern Rivers is higher than the average so this is an extremely important issue which can only be solved by a whole of

government approach and the support of community organisations such as those which made the Homeless Connect Day a success. I congratulate all those involved in this day which made life a little brighter for those experiencing homelessness in the Northern Rivers.

The House adjourned, pursuant to resolution, at 20:16 until Tuesday 4 February 2020 at 12:00.