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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday 13 May 2015

The Speaker (The Hon. Shelley Elizabeth Hancock) took the chair at 10.00 a.m.

The Speaker read the Prayer and acknowledgement of country.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Notices of Motions

General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) given.

PAYROLL TAX REBATE SCHEME (JOBS ACTION PLAN) AMENDMENT (EXTENSION) BILL 2015

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 7 May 2015.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) [10.10 a.m.]: I speak in support of the Payroll Tax Rebate Scheme (Jobs Action Plan) Amendment (Extension) Bill 2015. The Jobs Action Plan was an initiative of the Government from its 100 Day Action Plan when it was first elected in 2011. This scheme was introduced to rebuild the economy of New South Wales and to restore economic growth to communities by supporting, developing and providing opportunity for growth. Since its inception, the Jobs Action Plan has been successful in encouraging businesses to employ more staff and expand their operations.

To ensure the scheme is providing maximum benefit, the Government has listened to businesses and strengthened the scheme by: increasing the value of the rebate from \$4,000 to \$5,000 from 1 July 2013; encouraging the retention of new staff by changing the payment instalments of the rebate, with \$2,000 paid on the first anniversary and \$3,000 paid on the second anniversary; and not requiring businesses to repay the first year's rebate if the new staff member is no longer employed on the second anniversary. This bill once again demonstrates that the Government is listening to businesses. Given the success of the existing Jobs Action Plan, the Government committed in the election to extend the scheme for a further four years, to 30 June 2019.

Since the New South Wales Government was elected, around 175,700 jobs have been created. Data on the Jobs Action Plan shows that to the end of April 2015, 101,983 Jobs Action Plan registrations have been received. Rebates paid to date total around \$93 million. Jobs Action Plan registrations are well represented in both metropolitan and regional areas of New South Wales. Since the commencement of the scheme, more than 80,600 metropolitan registrations have been received, with over 21,300 registrations in regional New South Wales. Businesses in the Tamworth electorate, which I proudly represent, have registered employees under the scheme. Western Sydney is well represented in Jobs Action Plan registrations—in fact, four out of the top 10 metropolitan local government areas are from Western Sydney. Extension of the Jobs Action Plan scheme means employers can continue to hire additional staff and receive the benefits of the current Jobs Action Plan.

Under the scheme, payroll tax liable employers will continue to receive a \$5,000 payroll tax rebate for each additional full-time employee, with the rebate pro-rated for part-time employees based on the number of hours worked compared with the standard working hours of full-time employees. The rebate will still be paid in two instalments, with \$2,000 paid on the first anniversary of the hiring of the additional staff member and \$3,000 paid on the second anniversary of the hiring of the additional staff.

This bill accords with the Government's pre-election commitment to grow the New South Wales economy by enabling jobs growth. It is significant that creating jobs in regional New South Wales underpins regional growth and economic development. Within the Tamworth electorate, the job creation push by our councils, chambers of commerce and businesses is a key focus. The Federal budget noted the potential downturn in mining revenues, but in the Gunnedah Basin there is still significant room for growth in the mining sector, which will create jobs.

There have been mining operations in Gunnedah for 150 years. The balance between agriculture and mining in this region continues to be a challenge, but creating jobs in this area is the number one priority, as evidenced in the recent election. Part of the Jobs Action Plan is to assist businesses, especially those on the payroll tax threshold that would like to employ more staff but have to look at their bottom line. These businesses may be a little stretched, so the payroll tax rebate of \$5,000 is a genuine incentive to increase employment. We believe the Jobs Action Plan is a common-sense approach to creating jobs in regional New South Wales and so continue to drive our economy.

The scheme has been designed to meet the Government's commitment of reducing unnecessary red tape on businesses, and will make New South Wales more competitive and a more attractive destination for employers. Some smaller towns in regional New South Wales are struggling to survive, but in the Tamworth electorate businesses are confident about investing. Towns like Gunnedah, with a population of 10,000, are growing. This is significant as the heartbeat of Gunnedah is now a little quicker, as is the case in Tamworth and smaller centres like Nundle, Werris Creek and Barraba. These towns for the first time have a reliable water supply, which augurs well in attracting industries planning to leave cities like Sydney and head to the country.

The Liberal-Nationals Government is focused on regional growth and economic development through the Jobs Action Plan, which has created more than 170,000 jobs—unlike those opposite. During the election campaign, how did the Labor Party propose to pay for its infrastructure spend? It did so through \$5 billion worth of taxes on businesses. This is a pretty good way to slow the economy and drive small business, the mums-and-dads businesses, to the wall. This infrastructure strategy relied on deferring this Government's abolition of a range of business taxes, including duties on mortgages, tangible assets and unlisted securities.

Instead of creating jobs in government, during the election campaign Labor cancelled major infrastructure projects and wiped out thousands of job opportunities. We know if someone has a job that gives them a reason to get out of bed, gives them a sense of worth, and gives them a sense of purpose it sets a fine example, particularly in lower socio-economic areas where there are generations of unemployment. A family member who gets a job can afford to buy what they want, and this sets an example to start to break the cycle of poverty in many regions not only in regional New South Wales but also in Sydney.

How many jobs did Labor create with its failed Rozelle metro? Zero. What about with the North West Rail Link? Zero. The Western Express Rail Project? Zero. Prior to 2011 New South Wales was ranked last of the Australian States and Territories on key economic indicators. The Jobs Action Plan scheme, in conjunction with a raft of good policy announcements and the Government's direction, is putting us on a sound footing. We are now leading the way in all key economic indicators. Our policies have helped to create more than 136,000 new jobs, but too many people are still looking for work in New South Wales as more young people enter the workforce. Our good track record in delivering for those looking for jobs in New South Wales under the Payroll Tax Rebate Scheme will continue. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) [10.20 a.m.]: I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Payroll Tax Rebate Scheme (Jobs Action Plan) Amendment (Extension) Bill 2015. The Opposition supported the bills predating this scheme, which were introduced in this place in 2011, with reservations. Disappointingly, those reservations have now come to fruition. Shortly I will elaborate as to the reasons the Opposition will not be taking up the Treasurer's invitation to support this bill. On 15 June 2011 I spoke to the Payroll Tax Rebate Scheme (Jobs Action Plan) Bill 2011, the predecessor legislation that set up the scheme. In part, I said:

It is not without its merits, but it is not a panacea for jobs nor will it assist the economy in the way in which the Treasurer indicated yesterday in his agreement in principle speech.

...

New South Wales' seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for March 2011—

this was shortly after the 2011 election—

was 4.8 per cent on a trend basis. Unemployment also fell for the seventh quarter in a row in March 2011 to reach 4.8 per cent, which is the lowest it has been since September 2008, and the economy grew by 4.9 per cent from September 2009 to September 2010. New South Wales' 4.9 per cent growth rate for State final demand is higher than the national average of 4.4 per cent.

I said further:

The Labor Government spent \$12 billion on infrastructure last year, \$11 billion the year before and \$10.8 billion the year before that. It was the biggest infrastructure program ever undertaken in this country and it created 155,000 jobs a year.

...

I know the Treasurer and the Government are spruiking that this bill will create 100,000 jobs; it will not create them. It might assist big businesses, when they decide of their own volition to employ people ... In New South Wales, 132,000 jobs were created in the last year alone and since March 2009 more than 182,000 jobs have been created ... As I said, the bill may be of assistance to businesses; every time they are given a handout they are assisted. But it is not a panacea, as the Treasurer would have us believe.

...

Only 10 per cent of companies in New South Wales pay payroll tax, so how does a payroll tax rebate help the 90 per cent of businesses in New South Wales that do not pay payroll tax? ... Almost every small business in this State, 640,000 businesses, will not be eligible for this rebate.

So as not to be obstructionist and showing good faith in the legislation that was proffered to the place and in the words of the Treasurer in his second reading speech, we supported the legislation and all its subsequent amendments in the last term of government. What happened in response to it? Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics indicates that as at 15 January 2015 the unemployment rate in New South Wales was 6.3 per cent. When the Liberals came to office the unemployment rate was 5.0 per cent and since March 2011 some 56,400 additional New South Wales residents have become unemployed. During Labor's last term in office 248,762 jobs were created in four years. Since the Liberals came to office 91,142 jobs have been created—a net loss of 56,400 jobs.

Those statistics are even more concerning when they are broken down: The general unemployment rate in greater Sydney is 5.1 per cent and the youth unemployment rate is 11.8 per cent; the youth unemployment rate in Blacktown, Western Sydney, is 13.9 per cent; the youth unemployment rate in the inner south west is 16.9 per cent, and the youth unemployment rate in the outer south west is 12.9 per cent; the general unemployment rate for the outer western Blue Mountains is 5.9 per cent and the youth unemployment rate is 13.5 per cent; and the general unemployment rate for the Central Coast is 6.2 per cent and the youth unemployment rate is 16.8 per cent. Those tales of woes continue through the Illawarra, Richmond, Tweed, Central West, Coffs Harbour and North Coast. Across New South Wales economic conditions for employment have downturned substantially. This bill has not done what the Government promised it would.

This scheme has had a slow take-up. Indeed, it has been hampered by the Government doing what it generally does in schemes involving the giving of rebates, cuts or returning funds to businesses and families. A prime example was the Regional Relocation Grant, which was withdrawn in shame by former Deputy Premier Andrew Stoner in July last year—if you do not advertise something, no-one takes it up. When the scheme was established in 2011, the Government announced it would provide a rebate to the first 100,000 jobs created over a two-year period at a cost of \$400 million. As at June 2013, only 20,000 applications had been received. Data to the end of January 2014 showed that approximately 41,000 applications had been received. Even though the Government legislated with the intention of paying 100,000 rebates in two years, after two and a half years only 41,000 applications had been received.

Treasurer Berejiklian announced in her second reading speech on 7 May that around 101,000 applications, to the value of \$93 million paid out, had been received since the scheme was implemented four years ago. The Opposition estimates the liabilities that have been booked up are somewhere around \$340,000. We contend that there are better ways of spending both the money that has been accrued and the \$400 million or more that will be accrued if this scheme is fully booked over the next four years. I state at the outset that the Opposition does support incentives for large and small businesses. Indeed, one of the things Joe Hockey did best in last night's Federal budget was to allocate money for traineeships. Contrast that with this Government's record of decimating the education sector—namely, \$1.7 billion taken out in the last term alone.

Mr Kevin Conolly: Same old lies. That is simply not true, and you know it.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: That is taken from the Premier's figures in his first budget—he was going to take \$8.5 billion over four years; in fact, he took \$9 billion. The member for Riverstone well knows that \$1.7 billion came from education and \$3 billion from health. A constant theme in the lead-up to the last election heard by all those opposite—yet they deny it—is that TAFE is being victimised and cut to pieces by this Government with the intention of hiving most of it off to the private sector. That will be a disaster for employers.

The Labor Party has a commitment to reforming payroll tax, and it has a very good record. This morning I had a quick look at some payroll tax figures. On 1 July 2007 the payroll tax rate was 6 per cent and

the threshold was \$600,000. It was subsequently reduced to 5.45 per cent on 1 January 2011 and the threshold was increased to \$638,000. In contrast to the deception that we will hear during this debate and that we generally hear about the commitment of the Labor Government and Labor Opposition to assisting business, we made substantial cuts to payroll tax and we offered substantial cuts to workers compensation rates, for example.

As shown in last night's Federal budget and the State budget papers, in particular, the midyear review and the budget estimates for this State Government, there is a revenue problem not only in this nation but also in this State. The budget result forecast in the present budget was said to have been a deficit of \$283 million and it was revised in the midyear forecast in December last year to show a budget result of \$272 million. That turnaround is based entirely on stamp duty receipts off the back of a ridiculous escalation in property prices in New South Wales, which is hurting everyone except this Government's coffers. I note an article in last week's *Sun-Herald*—no doubt dropped by the Government—that stamp duty receipts had increased over and above even the midyear forecast.

Mr Gareth Ward: Because of the strong economy.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: It is not a strong economy. It is because of pent-up demand and the lowest interest rates on record, my friend.

Mr Christopher Gulaptis: Pent-up demand is an interesting point. Where did that come from?

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: Fifteen budget surpluses in 16 years—the member for Clarence cannot go there. This budget result will again be propped up by stamp duty receipts off the back, unfortunately, of escalating property prices. That is a problem for the Government and the Opposition because when it inevitably drops it will lead to budget constraints. There is a revenue problem nationally and in this State. What is the Government doing in response to that revenue challenge, particularly augmented by the fact that in two years a \$25 billion steamroller with Joe Hockey's and Tony Abbott's numberplates on it will be coming towards it? What it is doing is relinquishing taxes that it was going to keep, then relinquish and then keep. Tony Abbott got in and monstereed the Premier and now it will relinquish those taxes that are loosely referred to as the Intergovernmental Agreement [IGA] on the Reform of Commonwealth-State Financial Relations taxes. We had those costed by the independent Parliamentary Budget Office [PBO]—something that this Government was reluctant to do—costing only 38 of its myriad promises through the PBO.

The Parliamentary Budget Office advised the Opposition that on average over the next 10 years they would be returning \$500 million conservatively, each and every year, to the State budget. The Government is going to give away hundreds of millions of dollars each year, rising over 99 years to over \$1 billion or more in dividends from foregone revenue from the sale of the transmission and distribution networks. To add to those giveaways of precious revenue, it is now perpetuating the scheme that I have just demonstrated has not worked. In the face of declining revenues this is not the appropriate measure to be implementing at this time. Labor is committed to a review of payroll tax and will work with the Government, if it is so minded, to assist particularly small businesses that just tip over the threshold and fall off the cliff. I would welcome some transitioning measures to assist small businesses that are growing to better cope with a looming payroll tax bill. In that regard, the NSW Business Chamber included a payroll tax proposal in its submission on the 2011-12 budget and what it had to say is quite salient:

The NSW Government needs to remain committed to the delivery of significant reform of the payroll tax system in the long term.

Labor agrees with that proposition. The submission continues:

However, we also recognise that current fiscal constraints mean that there is limited capacity to finance tax reform in this year's budget.

That was three years ago and that statement applies equally right now. The submission also states:

... the proposal being put forward by the NSW Business Chamber is broadly budget neutral ...

I would be interested to see its revision of those numbers before this State budget. The NSW Business Chamber goes on to say:

... and we estimate that these changes will actually save the Government more than \$35 million over the forward estimates.

This is the cruncher:

We recommend financing our proposal by closing the Payroll Tax Rebate Scheme [PTRS] to new applications from 1 July 2012.

That was the NSW Business Chamber's advice to this Government.

Mr Kevin Conolly: Higher taxes on business. That is effectively what Labor wants—more tax on business.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: The member for Riverstone might want to listen to this. His friends are commenting on his scheme. The NSW Business Chamber states:

Feedback from our members has overwhelmingly indicated that the current scheme is ineffective and is not providing employers with any significant incentive to take on additional staff.

That should be crystal clear even for the member for Kiama, who is a slow learner. The statement continues:

We understand that take-up has been running at around 50 per cent of the expected rate.

It was not; it was 25 per cent. The NSW Business Chamber then states:

... assuming this remains the case we estimate that closure of the scheme to new entrants from 1 July will free up around \$310 million from the initial \$400 million commitment.

These savings could then be reallocated to provide relief through broader payroll tax reform.

We do not cavil with that statement by the NSW Business Chamber. It could also be put into other measures, such as rescuing TAFE. The Government could today adopt the proposition that we took to the last election, which was embodied in our \$100 million TAFE rescue package. This Government is obliterating TAFE. What the employers of New South Wales need more than ever is quality employees. It is no use trying to incentivise employers to take on additional employees if they are undertrained or untrained. Worse still, as those opposite will find, in sectors such as the butchery industry a whole generation of people will not become butchers. In TAFE institutions all over this State butchery places have closed. I am told that the fees have gone from about \$900 a year to \$8,000 a year. At Granville TAFE, in the middle of Western Sydney, almost no students are enrolled in our crucial butchery industry courses.

The Government should talk to industry groups about what is happening in TAFE if it wants to help business and make sure there are conga lines of good people, endless lines of appropriately qualified and highly trained young people. Australian children and children from New South Wales must be trained adequately at universities and should not have to pay \$100,000 for degrees that are obtained from some dodgy private operator. Not all private operators are dodgy but if I were given a choice between a private operator and TAFE I would trust TAFE every day of the week. That much-loved institution has been gutted. This money should be redirected to giving broader payroll tax relief, as the NSW Business Chamber suggests, or rescuing TAFE before this Government kills it. Another thing this Government could do to employ people and to foster employment—I will go back to the numbers to which I referred earlier—

Mr Mark Coure: Googled.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: I obtained those figures from the budget, which, for the benefit of the member for Oatley, is now available online. I obtained those figures from the internet using my iPad while I have been speaking in this debate. I know the member for Kiama does that—he is doing it right now—and the member for Oatley should try it one day as it is really helpful.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Melanie Gibbons): Order! The member for Oatley will come to order.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: Let us go back to the numbers that I outlined at the beginning of my speech.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Melanie Gibbons): Order! The member for Oatley will come to order. If members continue to interject they will be called to order.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: Those employment results I was talking about came principally from employment activity generated in the construction sector. One of the very significant levers that a government can pull to really ramp up employment is in the construction sector. This Government has failed to meet its targets on infrastructure each and every year for the past four years.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Melanie Gibbons): Order! The member for Oatley will come to order.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: I have gone through the numbers in the House before. The Government underspent in its last term of government on its own capital expenditure figures by more than \$4 billion. It promised a record \$61.5 billion over the four years. It did not crack the \$59 billion mark or the \$58 billion mark; it did not even crack the \$57 billion mark. Imagine how many jobs could have been generated if this Government had done what it said it was going to do and had spent the infrastructure money it had set aside in the budget. The Government went to the election with almost \$5 billion of capital money unspent. There were jobs going begging all over New South Wales because the Government underspent its capital expenditure. The Government did nothing on the WestConnex. Not a sod has been turned on that marquee project in four years.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Melanie Gibbons): Order! The member for Oatley and the member for Riverstone will come to order.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: Young people are trying to get into the construction sector and they cannot. Mums and dads from the construction sector have been laid off and have been getting insufficient work hours because the Government has failed to spend the money it promised to spend in the construction sector. Nothing is happening in this State. Ten kilometres of tunnelling has been completed for the North West Rail Link—that is all that has happened in four years. Thousands and thousands of jobs have gone begging. If the Government wants to help business, in particular, small business it should spend the money it promised to spend in capital expenditure and rescue the TAFE system. We are committed to tax reform generally—to general tax reform, broad tax reform, root-and-branch tax reform from the top to the bottom. That is why I am looking forward to the discussion starting on the Federal Government's tax white paper.

There needs to be tax reform. This is not tax reform. We gave the Government a chance in its first four-year term but it has not worked. The NSW Business Chamber is asking for a different approach and so are we. We will not be supporting this bill because the Government has done nothing to deserve our support for it. One of the things of which I anticipate other speakers in this debate will remind the Government and the House is the feedback we have had from businesses that have tried to take up the rebates pursuant to this scheme—a scheme that is not advertised and that is hard to find out about. The take-up rate would have been higher if more people had known about it. The Government cannot even give away money properly.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Melanie Gibbons): Order! The member for Oatley will come to order.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: There are difficulties in the administration of this bill, which is full of red tape.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Melanie Gibbons): Order! I call the member for Oatley to order for the first time.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: Small businesses that pay payroll tax, have taken on new employees and have realised that this scheme exists have asked this Government to make it retrospective. It has not done that. There are myriad problems relating to the administration of this bill which we will not be supporting. We are happy to work with the Government if it is serious about giving businesses, in particular small businesses, some relief with a reformed payroll tax system. However, this bill will not reform the payroll tax system.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Parliamentary Secretary) [10.43 a.m.]: Now I have heard it all—the Labor Party lecturing this side of the House on small business. It is akin to Hannibal Lecter giving a dissertation on vegetarian cuisine. We heard the shadow Treasurer lecture the Government about small business. But when he was a Minister every one of his budgets was in deficit. The Labor Party did not meet a single spending target in 16 years of government. That side of politics left a \$55 billion debt and a \$5.2 billion budget deficit. Yet members opposite come into the House and lecture the Government about fiscal rectitude. Now I have heard it all.

When it comes to small business and jobs, Labor has a record of which it cannot be proud. This morning Labor made it clear that it will oppose this bill, opposing a tax cut and opposing support for small business. In response to the comments of the shadow Treasurer, let me be clear that it was Labor that went to the last election saying it would defer \$5.1 billion of business tax cuts in order to pay for its infrastructure plans. If Labor had been elected to government then instead of supporting small business to grow it would have deferred \$5.1 billion of tax cuts. Now Labor is opposing further measures that this Government wants to introduce to support small business.

Indeed the shadow Treasurer spoke about payroll tax receipts going up and responded to an interjection from me, in which I said this was a sign of a strong economy. He said that it was not a strong economy. What an extraordinary statement from the shadow Treasurer—talking down the economy of this State. I would have thought that he would want to talk it up. In fact Labor's record when it comes to jobs growth is appalling—for 40 of the 47 periods in government recording economic and employment data the unemployment rate in this State was above the national average. That is not a record of which Labor can be proud.

The member for Maroubra mentioned TAFE and skills training. I am pleased that the shadow Treasurer has found the budget papers. He has obviously looked them up online. I am sure that when he eventually gets through the detail he will realise that for the periods 2013-14 and 2014-15 the TAFE budget has not changed. In fact it was a Labor Government in 1995 that introduced private operators into the vocational education sector. So for him to say that TAFE is the only provider that should exist in the marketplace is an insult to every student who has studied with a private provider, attained a qualification and found employment.

There are now more than 60,000 additional places in the vocational training sector because we have engaged the private sector in order to support and supplement vocational education and training. Given that the shadow Treasurer was part of a government that allowed the private market to operate in the vocational education sector, I would have thought that would be something of which he would have been proud. As part of our Jobs Action Plan 37,000 regional jobs have been created to date, and over 100,000 jobs were created in the last term of government. But let me be clear: governments do not create jobs; business creates jobs. That is something the Labor Party just does not understand. We saw that on display today with the shadow Treasurer making it quite clear that Labor will oppose this bill. Labor will oppose this Government as it seeks to make life easier for small business. I am disappointed that Labor is opposing these measures.

I speak in support of the Payroll Tax Rebate Scheme (Jobs Action Plan) Amendment (Extension) Bill 2015. I support this bill because supporting business to grow and prosper is in the DNA of every member on this side of the House. We know where the Labor Party stands on this bill thanks to the contribution of the shadow Treasurer in this debate, and I do not think anyone is surprised about where it stands. Payroll tax is quite rightly the most hated tax raised by State governments. Whilst I appreciate that governments must raise revenue, taxing business on the number of employees is an anathema to anyone who wants to encourage business to grow and to succeed. I look forward to the day when governments at a State and Federal level can have the courage to change the tax mix so that businesses, in particular small businesses, can be relieved of this insidious handbrake on the opportunity and prosperity they so rightly deserve.

I frequently talk to businesspeople in my region, such as John Lamont of Nowchem in South Nowra, a successful chemical manufacturing business with a bright future. Nowchem employs 65 people and has a payroll of over \$2.4 million. This equates to a payroll tax bill of over \$100,000. Chance Hanlon owns and operates Hanlon Windows, another award-winning business in my region with 82 employees, a payroll over \$2.5 million and a payroll tax bill also well in excess of \$100,000. The measures in this bill are being opposed by those opposite. Why should business be taxed for simply being successful and providing people with employment?

Many successful businesses find their payroll is over the payroll tax-free threshold. Frequently they are unaware of their tax obligations and get caught out. This leaves many small family owned and operated businesses with large debts owing to the New South Wales Government. One of the great advantages of State governments is the capacity to compete with other jurisdictions. I strongly urge this Government to work towards abolishing this tax. Taxes will always be lower under a Liberal Government because the Liberal Party has at its very core a belief in the unalienable rights of individuals, initiative and enterprise.

I will always be a voice in this House for small business—those people Menzies termed in that landmark speech on 22 May 1942 as "the forgotten people". To quote the founder of my party, he gave the term "the forgotten people" to salary-earners, shopkeepers, skilled artisans, professional men and women, farmers and so on. In the political and economic sense these are the middle class. They are, for the most part, under-recognised and lack self-consciousness. They are envied by those whose benefits are largely obtained by taxing them. They are not rich enough to have individual power and they are taken for granted by each political party in turn. They are not sufficiently lacking in individualism to be organised for what in these days we call "pressure politics" and yet, as I have said, they are the backbone of the nation.

Small business is the backbone of our State and our nation and later tonight I look forward to joining the Illawarra Business Chamber, which is hosting a function to celebrate my elevation as Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier for the Illawarra and South Coast. I look forward to seeing the chief executive officer,

Deborah Murphy, and the president, Sue Baker-Finch, in our Parliament today. Last night I was delighted to host three young and inspiring businesspeople from my electorate: Paul Paterno and Michael Ballardin from Licked Gelateria in Kiama and Christian Lovatt from Bean Roasted Espresso Bar. These three young people work hard every day not only to grow their businesses but also to provide job opportunities for others. They took a risk and they invested in their future. I am proud to be representing these people in Parliament. I will always work hard to be a voice for the forgotten people to ensure that their efforts are recognised and that Government understands the best possible course for it is to simply get out of the way of business, continue to cut red and green tape and provide the right environment for business to grow.

I am proud to be a part of a State Government that has made our State number one again. But there is much more to do and our Jobs Action Plan is a step in the right direction. The Jobs Action Plan was an initiative of the Government from its 100 Day Action Plan when it was first elected in 2011. This scheme was introduced to rebuild the economy of New South Wales and to restore economic growth to communities by supporting, developing and providing opportunities for growth. Since its inception, the Jobs Action Plan scheme has been successful in encouraging businesses to employ more staff and expand their operations. To ensure the scheme is providing maximum benefit, the Government has listened to businesses and has strengthened the scheme by increasing the value of the rebate from \$4,000 to \$5,000 from 1 July 2013 and by encouraging the retention of new staff by changing the payment instalments of the rebate, with \$2,000 paid on the first anniversary and \$3,000 paid on the second anniversary. Businesses are no longer required to repay the first year's rebate if the new staff member is no longer employed on the second anniversary.

This bill once again demonstrates that the Government is listening to businesses. Given the success of the existing Jobs Action Plan, the Government committed in the election to extend the scheme for a further four years to 30 June 2019. Since the New South Wales Government came to office, around 175,700 jobs have been created. Data on the Jobs Action Plan shows that up to the end of April 2015, 101,983 Jobs Action Plan registrations have been received. Rebates paid to date total around \$93 million. Jobs Action Plan registrations are well represented in both metropolitan and regional areas of New South Wales. Since the commencement of the scheme, more than 80,600 metropolitan registrations have been received, with more than 21,300 registrations in regional New South Wales.

Extension of the Jobs Action Plan scheme means employers can continue to hire additional staff and receive the benefits of the current Jobs Action Plan scheme. Under the scheme, payroll tax-liable employers will continue to receive a \$5,000 payroll tax rebate for each additional full-time employee, with the rebate pro-rataed for part-time employees based on the number of hours worked compared with the standard working hours of full-time employees. The rebate will still be paid in two payments, with \$2,000 paid on the first anniversary of the hire of the additional staff member and \$3,000 paid on the second anniversary of the hire of the additional staff member. I support the bill and I encourage the Opposition to get out of the way and, for once, support small business and support growing our State's economy.

[Business interrupted.]

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON COMPANION ANIMAL BREEDING PRACTICES IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Establishment and Membership

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy) [10.53 a.m.],
by leave: I move:

That:

- (1) A joint select committee be appointed to inquire into and report on companion animal breeding practices in New South Wales, and in particular:
 - (a) the current situation in New South Wales in comparison with other jurisdictions;
 - (b) proposals to limit the number of animals allowed to be kept by breeders;
 - (c) calls to implement a breeders' licensing system;
 - (d) the implications of banning the sale of dogs and cats in pet stores;
 - (e) any legislative changes that may be required; and
 - (f) any other related matter.

- (2) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the standing orders of either House, the committee consist of nine members comprising:
- (a) five members of the Legislative Assembly, of whom:
- (i) three are Government members, being Mr Adam Crouch, Mr Alister Henskens, and Mr Adam Marshall;
- (ii) one is an Opposition member, who shall be nominated in writing to the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly by the Opposition Whip; and
- (iii) one is an Independent member, being Mr Greg Piper.
- (b) four members of the Legislative Council, of whom:
- (i) two are Government members;
- (ii) one is an Opposition member; and
- (iii) one is a crossbench member.
- (3) The Chair of the committee be Mr Adam Marshall and the Deputy Chair of the committee be elected at its first meeting.
- (4) Notwithstanding anything in the standing orders of either House, at any meeting of the committee, any five members of the committee will constitute a quorum, provided that at least one member of each House is present at all times.
- (5) The committee report by 31 August 2015.
- (6) A message be sent to the Legislative Council requesting the Legislative Council to agree to a similar resolution, and name the time and place for the committee's first meeting.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) [10.55 a.m.]: The Opposition joins the Government in supporting the establishment of the Joint Select Committee on Companion Animal Breeding Practices in New South Wales. There is great community angst about practices such as puppy farms. I am proud to say that in the past few years members of the Opposition, in particular the Leader of the Opposition, are on the public record ad nauseam expressing concern about this practice. I wish to move an amendment to the motion. Before the last election, when there were only 20 Opposition members in a Chamber of 93 members, there may have been some justification in having on this committee only one Opposition member of the five members representing the Legislative Assembly. As we now have 34 Opposition members it is unjustifiable for crossbench members, who have only five members in this House, to have equal representation on this committee, as nice a fellow as Mr Piper is. I move:

That the motion be amended by:

- (1) Leaving out "nine" in paragraph (2) and inserting instead "ten".
- (2) Leaving out "five" in paragraph (2) (a) and inserting instead "six".
- (3) Leaving out (ii) in paragraph (2) (a) and inserting instead:
- "(ii) two are Opposition members, who shall be nominated in writing to the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly by the Opposition Whip; and"

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy) [10.56 a.m.], in reply: I thank the member for Maroubra for his support for the Joint Select Committee on Companion Animal Breeding Practices in New South Wales. I take on board the issue he raised with respect to the number of members in this place. However, our current position is that the committee complement should remain as it is. We will take that issue into account if any other joint select committees on various breeding practices may or may not come before the House.

Question—That the amendment be agreed to—put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 32

Ms Aitchison
Mr Atalla
Mr Barr
Ms Burney
Ms Car
Ms Catley
Mr Chanthivong
Mr Crakanthorp
Mr Daley
Mr Dib
Ms Doyle

Ms Finn
Mr Harris
Ms Harrison
Ms Haylen
Mr Hoenig
Mr Kamper
Mr Lynch
Dr McDermott
Ms McKay
Mr Mehan
Ms Mihailuk

Mr Minns
Mr Park
Mr Robertson
Ms K. Smith
Mr Warren
Ms Washington
Ms Watson
Mr Zangari
Tellers,
Ms Hay
Mr Lalich

Noes, 53

Mr Anderson
Mr Aplin
Mr Ayres
Ms Berejikian
Mr Brookes
Mr Conolly
Mr Constance
Mr Coure
Mr Crouch
Mrs Davies
Mr Dominello
Mr Elliott
Mr Evans
Mr Fraser
Mr Gee
Mr George
Ms Gibbons
Mr Grant

Mr Greenwich
Mr Gulaptis
Mr Henskens
Ms Hodgkinson
Mr Humphries
Mr Johnsen
Mr Kean
Dr Lee
Ms Leong
Mr Maguire
Mr Marshall
Mr Notley-Smith
Mr O'Dea
Mr Parker
Mrs Pavey
Mr Perrottet
Ms Petinos
Mr Piccoli

Mr Piper
Mr Provest
Mr Roberts
Mr Sidoti
Mrs Skinner
Ms T. F. Smith
Mr Speakman
Mr Stokes
Mr Taylor
Mr Toole
Mr Tudehope
Ms Upton
Mr Ward
Mr Williams
Mrs Williams
Tellers,
Mr Bromhead
Mr Patterson

Pairs

Mr Foley
Ms Hornery

Mr Baird
Mr Hazzard

Question resolved in the negative.

Amendment negatived.

Question—That the motion be agreed to—put.

Division called for and Standing Order 185 applied.

The House divided.

Ayes, 53

Mr Anderson
Mr Aplin
Mr Ayres
Ms Berejikian
Mr Brookes
Mr Conolly
Mr Constance
Mr Coure
Mr Crouch
Mrs Davies
Mr Dominello
Mr Elliott
Mr Evans
Mr Fraser
Mr Gee
Mr George
Ms Gibbons
Mr Grant

Mr Greenwich
Mr Gulaptis
Mr Henskens
Ms Hodgkinson
Mr Humphries
Mr Johnsen
Mr Kean
Dr Lee
Ms Leong
Mr Maguire
Mr Marshall
Mr Notley-Smith
Mr O'Dea
Mr Parker
Mrs Pavey
Mr Perrottet
Ms Petinos
Mr Piccoli

Mr Piper
Mr Provest
Mr Roberts
Mr Sidoti
Mrs Skinner
Ms T. F. Smith
Mr Speakman
Mr Stokes
Mr Taylor
Mr Toole
Mr Tudehope
Ms Upton
Mr Ward
Mr Williams
Mrs Williams
Tellers,
Mr Bromhead
Mr Patterson

Noes, 32

Ms Aitchison	Ms Finn	Mr Minns
Mr Atalla	Mr Harris	Mr Park
Mr Barr	Ms Harrison	Mr Robertson
Ms Burney	Ms Haylen	Ms K. Smith
Ms Car	Mr Hoenig	Mr Warren
Ms Catley	Mr Kamper	Ms Washington
Mr Chanthivong	Mr Lynch	Ms Watson
Mr Crakanthorp	Dr McDermott	Mr Zangari
Mr Daley	Ms McKay	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Dib	Mr Mehan	Ms Hay
Ms Doyle	Ms Mihailuk	Mr Lalich

Pairs

Mr Baird	Mr Foley
Mr Hazzard	Ms Hornery

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

Message sent to the Legislative Council advising it of the resolution.

PAYROLL TAX REBATE SCHEME (JOBS ACTION PLAN) AMENDMENT (EXTENSION) BILL 2015**Second Reading**

[Business resumed.]

Pursuant to resolution debate interrupted and set down as an order of the day for a future day.

Pursuant to resolution inaugural speeches proceeded with.

INAUGURAL SPEECHES

The SPEAKER: Order! I welcome to the gallery this morning supporters, family and friends of the member for Blue Mountains. In particular, I acknowledge the presence in the gallery of the former member of the Australian House of Representatives representing the electorate of Macquarie, and former member for Blue Mountains, Bob Debus, also the former for Blue Mountains, Phil Koperberg, and former member of the Legislative Council Helen Westwood. I warmly welcome all of you.

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) [11.10 a.m.] (Inaugural Speech): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I begin by acknowledging the traditional owners on whose land we meet today, the Gadigal people of the Eora nation. I also acknowledge the traditional owners of the land I am privileged to represent, the Darug and Gundungurra peoples, and pay my respects to their elders, past and present. Well, here we are, Blue Mountains. Here I am, and here we are. I thank my friends, my family, my community and my colleagues for being here today to hear and see my inaugural speech in Australia's oldest Parliament, the Parliament of New South Wales.

I am humbled and still somewhat overwhelmed by gratitude, excitement, nervousness, responsibility, nervousness, and the enormity of such an incredible job that I am absolutely honoured to hold. All these feelings, I have to tell you, have resulted in the emergence in the past fortnight of the first few silver strands of hair. While I thought that the nerves would kill me, it is actually my locks that will never be the same. Thanks, Parliament! Allow me to tell you a story. Picture another place in another time, late at night, a young girl awake and afraid in her bed, trying to still her racing heart and holding her breath. She is listening to footsteps outside her window and is overcome with a sense of dread. In the blink of an eye, a man stands at the foot of her bed with one finger on his lips indicating, "Shh", and the other hand holding a rifle. It used to live in the old cupboard in the shed.

That young girl closes her eyes. An eternity later, but really only moments, there are shrieks and screams and gunshots. The night erupts. Another eternity after, but really only seconds, the young girl, who is eight years old, races to collect brothers and her sister and pull them close, back under the covers of her bed. The night becomes one of ambulances, police, sobbing, fear, and eventually the delivery of four small, young children to an orphanage of sorts, where they will stay for a short while as their mother recovers from the emotional and physical trauma of a severe beating and internal haemorrhaging. There are, unfortunately, many nights and days similar to this. That small girl of eight is now the woman who stands before you.

Understanding domestic violence and its devastating impact on children, the lives it destroys, the pain it inflicts, has been part of my life and my lifelong work. There is still so much to do, as many in this place have said already, and I want to continue working with you in educative policy, and now through parliamentary processes, to ensure that others might not need to experience what my family did. I was born in Canberra. I grew up in housing commission stock amidst domestic violence and abject poverty. Mum remarried when I was 13 and we moved to the Riverina countryside near Wagga Wagga. I became the oldest of six, as happens in the country. It was not just the rabbits!

I loved being outside. I loved skirting the sheep fleeces in the shearing shed, riding the horse, tinkering with tractors and working the paddocks. But I learned quickly that gendered roles would prevent me from being the farmer. I left home and I studied to become a teacher at Macquarie University. Student politics honed my skills in cynicism pretty quickly, but it was not through the Labor Party; it was with MUAKA—hard yakka—the Macquarie University anarchists and communists, with a "K", alliance. What followed was a string of casual teaching jobs, a temporary project with the public service and the NSW Women's Information and Referral Service, which again saw domestic violence as the number one issue raised.

I then travelled around the world for a year to find myself and I discovered the gorgeous west coast of Ireland, where I lived and worked for the next couple of years. I met my husband and the father of my boys. Love, children, marriage—wonderful times—but then life threw me another challenge. Upon our return to Australia and only a couple of years into his migration, my husband's depression spiralled into a psychotic episode and mental illness turned our lives upside down. Everything one knows and plans for—the routine, the order of life, everything—changes when families deal with chronic mental illness and either attempted or successful suicides.

It was tough being in shock and grief and feeling helpless when trying to learn about how one cares for a family, for oneself, for one's children, and for the person who is mentally unwell when the health system so desperately requires reform and investment. It is a lonely, devastating and anxious place to be. I pay my respects to all those who work in the mental health sector or who live with mental ill health or those who suffer. Unpredictability can be soul-destroying. Emily Dickinson said:

*"Hope" is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul
And sings the tune without the words
And never stops at all*

This is what I held onto as the ground shifted again and again. So this is what has shaped me. As we all are products of our environment and our experiences, so it is the case for this working-class girl who made it from the Housing Commission home, to the farms and then into the Legislative Assembly of the New South Wales Parliament. This is the beginning, this is from where I come and this is where I am going. I am the product and the recipient of what good old Labor Party policy and values have delivered: public housing, public education and public health, with social justice, fairness and opportunity at the very core. I am feminist, I am proud working class, and I am proud union. I survived to tell my story—against the odds, really. As Ruth Park wrote in *Poor Man's Orange*:

So she went on, a child one hour and a woman the next, seeing the world often as a bright and lovely place with every possibility of great happiness for those who searched for it, and sometimes as a bog that crawled and seethed with hidden dreadfulness. She knew the poor man's orange was hers, with its bitter rind, its paler flesh and its stinging, exultant, unforgettable tang. So she would have it that way, and wish it no other way. She knew that she was strong enough to bear whatever might come in her life.

When my sons were young and small—not the giants they are today—I chose to move from Sydney to the beautiful Blue Mountains. It was a sense of community I was looking for and community was what I found. The Blue Mountains electorate is a string of jewels along a ridge top. It encompasses a range of smaller communities that constitute a whole. I stand here today for Blaxland, Warrimoo, Sun Valley, Valley Heights, Springwood, Winmalee, Yellow Rock, Hawkesbury Heights, Faulconbridge, Linden, Woodford, Hazelbrook, Lawson,

Bullaburra, Wentworth Falls, Leura, Katoomba, Medlow Bath, Megalong Valley, Blackheath, Mount Victoria, Mount Wilson, Mount Tomah, Mount Irvine and Bell. I learnt that on the train trip early in the piece but the train does not stop at all the stations any more, thanks to the Baird Liberal Government.

In the absence of time, I make a note of a few interesting facts, statistics and figures about the Blue Mountains, and I hope that you will come and visit some time. It is home to around 79,000 residents. The electorate's 24 townships are situated from 50 to 120 kilometres west of Sydney and cover a 100 kilometre strip of sandstone ridge within the 1,000 square kilometres of a World Heritage area. Within the local government area that comprises the Blue Mountains approximately 70 per cent is incorporated into the World Heritage Blue Mountains National Park. The Blue Mountains is a place of spectacular and natural beauty and attracts more than four million visitors per year, making it one of the top three tourist destinations in Australia.

Based on Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] census data, 59 per cent of Blue Mountains resident workers travel outside the area to work—I repeat, 59 per cent. The top four employing sectors are health care and social assistance, retail trade, education and training, and accommodation and food services. We sit within a national park consisting of remarkable geographic, botanical and cultural values, including protected sites of Aboriginal cultural significance. Our eco-certified national park boasts more than 140 kilometres of trails and walking tracks. Its people are resilient, proud and caring, and embody the essence of supportive community—as our recent history in the aftermath of the 2013 fire emergency demonstrated. Two hundred homes were lost, many pets and much wildlife died and many within our community still suffer. They are still recovering and rebuilding.

But in the same way as people everywhere, those from the Blue Mountains want our Government and our representatives to provide us with hope and opportunities. That word—"opportunities"—is one of the reasons, for example, that I have fought for TAFE and education over many years, most particularly within my local community in the past four years. Technical and further education was and should be a quality, first-class, public vocational educational system. I note the presence here today of TAFE teachers and students from the Blue Mountains, Katoomba and Wentworth Falls campuses and my friends Annette Bennett and Phil Chadwick of the TAFE Teachers Association. Let me state here, as many others have, that there will be no relenting on my part or on my community's part in our campaign to stop TAFE cuts.

The Smart and Skilled policy is actually one of privatisation, of removing accessibility and affordability, of dismantling public education. As long as I breathe, I will stand and fight, speak up and argue, negotiate, lobby and work with others to save TAFE. As a teacher and a parent, I have seen firsthand in the classroom, at the coalface, the ramifications of conservative government policies that removed funding and resources from our schools in the name of cost efficiencies. I pledge once again in this place to work alongside my community and my union, the Teachers Federation, to retain a strong public education system. We will be pressuring the Baird Government to take strong action and honour the commitment to fund the full six years of the New South Wales Gonski agreement. Our children and our teachers deserve no less.

If you believe, as I do, that government is important—because there is not one part of our life that is not impacted by it—you will understand and have experienced the following during the election campaign. Besides TAFE and education, people expressed their views and interests, and raised issues and concerns on every possible issue imaginable: wanting protection for our fragile environment, our land, our water, growing our national parks, preventing coal seam gas fracking, needing access to health care—quality health care—starting with 1:3 nurse-patient ratios and 24/7 resident nurses in our aged care facilities. People were seeking assurances that we in this place would work towards retaining public assets in public hands and fight privatisation and its ideology through every sector, improving public transport services, addressing the gaps in our train timetable, and implementing railway maintenance safety and easy access upgrades. They want us to raise awareness of issues important to workers, especially as we see the increasing casualisation of the workforce and its ramifications—I have been a casual teacher for 15 years.

At the same time we need to support small business and our local tourism economy and—would you believe it—connecting family homes to the sewer, just to name a few issues. Over the past four year the people of the Blue Mountains, more than any other issue, predominantly expressed their wish to have in this place a representative who would listen to them, who would respond to their concerns, who would be prepared to take up matters with government—with departments, with Ministers, with bureaucrats—and someone to speak up and fight for them and to walk alongside them at difficult and joyous times. I pledge today that I will be that representative. Today I put each and every Minister on notice: I will come after you and I will not give up. This is the essence of who I am and—as you have just learnt—this is the fabric of my life.

I would not be here today if it were not for the efforts and belief of an enormous number of people. I cannot name every individual but I need to pay tribute to a few of them. My election win is a shared victory. Today we are joined by the Hon. Bob Debus, former State member for Blue Mountains and former Federal member for Macquarie—and Minister for everything. Bob, I blame you and I thank you. The reason I am standing here is because of your wisdom. Phil Koperberg, thank you for being a great mentor and a champion for your community above all else—above government and party politics. You, Helen Buckle and I were a team to be reckoned with.

Tanya Plibersek, my friend and inspiration, set the bar high for me. Helen Westwood, one of my favourite people, is a woman of substance and integrity. The loss to the Parliament of New South Wales is a gain for the Australian Services Union. My buddies, two of the best people I know, are Councillor Annette Bennett and Geoff Bennett. My other Blue Mountains City Council Labor comrades are Mark Greenhill, Don McGregor, Sarah Shrubbs, Mick Fell, Romola Hollywood and Anton von Schulenburg. Each one of them is one of my fabulous Labor branch members. Its members are what is truly great about the Labor Party. I am one of you—a rank and file member.

A special mention to some of those who worked tirelessly to assist our campaign: Mike and Helen Clifford, Jan and Chris Taylor, the Bradshaws, Alison Maclaren, Margaret Buckham, Eddy Hearn, William Grieve, Rosalind Haining and Madeline Davis, John Park, Ruth Green, Korey Gunnis, Phil Mahoney, Amanda Carr, and the incredible Susan Elfert for your unwavering encouragement. Suzanne Jamieson and, again, Sarah Shrubbs, you are strong wonder women who provided necessary personal support.

Community members came out in force in the Blue Mountains to assist in a myriad of ways. Many of them voted Labor for the first time in their lives. They owned and loved the campaign. Ray Richardson, Christine Sinclair, Anne O'Grady, Serena Monzo, Liz Foss, Miles Killen, Roger Greeley and Francesca Agosto are just a few of them. I must mention Helen Mountford, who is a unique example of the colour, flair and energy that fortified our community campaign. She is now using that flair on our electorate office, changing it from what she said looks like a methadone clinic into something more homely.

Sally McManus, your younger activist self and the woman you are today, forever the tower of strength and honesty, thanks to you and the mighty Australian Services Union crew. Margaret Jones, my warrior woman from the outset, thank you. My friends of strength, never-ending support and good humour over many years are Rosanna Caltabiano, DC Sanders, Rose Tracey and Miriam Williamson. To Susan Templeman, who will be our next Labor Federal member for Macquarie, and Ron Fuller: Your media expertise, your good humour and practical support have been invaluable.

To John Robertson, Lee Bellia, office manager extraordinaire and policy adviser guru, and Andrew Hewitt: Thank you for your solid support and many visits to the Blue Mountains over the years. To the Hon. Peter Primrose and the incredible staff in this place such as Luke Whittington and Jan Clifford: I thank you for your advice, friendship and quiet hard work for the people of New South Wales over many years. My former boss, who joins us today, the wonderful Maree Cairns, reminded me of my patience, ability and courage on days when I felt none.

Now to my campaign team: the extraordinarily wonderful Kim Brislane, tenacious Tom Harris-Brassil and the calm and capable Suzie van Opdorp were amidst a fabulous campaign team, including the amazing young Amy Knox. She will go far. Mark Andrews; Brian Kirkby; Lesley Gruit; Kim Cowper; Lauren and Rorie Hutchins; Rose Jackson; and Senator Doug Cameron—thank you. I also thank my comrades from the Blue Mountains Unions Council for keeping it real. I appreciate working and walking alongside the Electrical Trades Union, the Nurses and Midwives' Association, the Australian Services Union the Teachers' Federation, and Unions NSW.

I thank the Legislative Assembly Clerk and her team in this place for her patience and assistance with me and everyone. To Labor's leader Luke Foley, my Labor Party colleagues and the class of 2015: Thank you for your support and reminding me to breathe. I want to thank my mum and my sister, Janelle, for being here today, for being survivors with a smile—the brave and the gentle. I love you both very much. And a huge thank you goes to David Holmes for providing care and love to my boys and me over the past decade.

My sons, Patrick and Tom, are the light that guides me and the breath that enables me to walk through each day. You are the joy of living. You will always come first, but I hope when I am not around so much that you understand my need to work with our community and now Parliament to try to make this world a better

place. During some incredibly tough times you have supported your mum and each other. Please hold on to this virtue into your futures. It has been the three of us forging a path in this world, looking out for one another, together saving to buy a home recently, working, playing, laughing, crying, hugging, eating, laughing and eating more. You two are my world.

Finally, parliamentarians and politicians are often perceived as an elite group, and we are. I was told this every day of the election campaign. Communities and families in this State must continue striving to have true representation in this place. We are the people who know what it is like or want to understand and care what it is like to struggle against hardship, wonder where money might come from to pay rent, buy food or pay bills. We are the people who are willing to listen, to be humble and quiet when the need requires it, to hear the stories of those who do not have a voice or cannot articulate what it is they need. We are the people who will stand up and speak up. I have many good people surrounding me who will help me remain grounded and real. I know this because so many have asked me not to change and have uttered the words, "Be yourself. Speak your truth." I will finish with some words from Nelson Mandela:

I am fundamentally an optimist. Whether that comes from nature or nurture, I cannot say. Part of being optimistic is keeping one's head pointed toward the sun, one's feet moving forward. There were many dark moments when my faith in humanity was sorely tested, but I would not and could not give myself up to despair. ... a good head and good heart are always a formidable combination.

This is who I am. This is who I will be. This is the Trish Doyle you are in for. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: I welcome all of the family, friends and supporters of the new member for Lakemba. In particular, I welcome local councillors from Canterbury and Bankstown councils. I welcome also Mr George Bitar Ghanem, Consul General of Lebanon. I gather we have some visitors from Ulladulla, Cathie Griffiths and Glenn Royall, old friends. Welcome. Ladies and gentlemen, I call the member for Lakemba.

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) [11.45 a.m.] (Inaugural Speech): Al Salam Alaikom. I greet you in the traditional Islamic form, which is, translated, "Peace unto you." I take this opportunity to acknowledge the Gadigal and the Wangal peoples of the Eora nation and pay my respects to elders past and present.

When my grandfather wore this watch he never imagined that in a different time I would be standing in the oldest Parliament of Australia, delivering my inaugural address, wearing his very same timepiece. Both of my grandfathers were men who never had the opportunity to attend school beyond 10 years of age. They were never wealthy men; rather, they were rich in soul and respect for others. My grandmothers I loved deeply because they taught me to believe that anything is possible. When that generation passed I thought the world was lesser for it.

In accordance with custom, I was named after my paternal grandfather as the first son of the eldest. That was a time when my name did not have the same connotations that it carries today, a time when the true meaning was clearly understood. My grandfather's name, Jihad, is an Arabic word that means to strive and to improve one's self, to overcome struggle and to help others improve their lives. Jihad is charity, jihad is service, and jihad is support of others. It is a name used by people of different faiths because they know its true interpretation. It is this meaning of "jihad" that I want people to know.

Last week I had the greatest honour of being sworn in as the eighth member for Lakemba. I stood here as a proud Australian and took my oath on my very own *Qur-an*. It was the first time someone had done such a thing in this House, and the significance is not lost on me. It is one of the defining characteristics of our nation that we have always sought to better our society and ourselves; and in wearing this same watch, I pay homage to those who believe anything is possible, and I hope to inspire them to make their own change to the world. Over the past week I have listened to moving inaugural speeches of those who, like me, have entered this House to serve. I have been inspired by their respective stories, heard their insights and learned what they stand for.

There is always a lot more to a place than that which appears on the surface; or, worse still, what some choose to see without knowing the stories that highlight the struggles, hopes and dreams of individuals. People of my electorate talk of how they are regularly misunderstood and of the ways in which they suffer from a stigma of superficial analysis. Like all things in life, when one takes the time, it is possible to discover all sorts of gems. The electorate of Lakemba is a tapestry of Australian multiculturalism, with 47 per cent of people born overseas, and more than 150 different cultural groups represented.

It is a fascinating fusion of modern day Australia. Like most of Australia, the first migrants into Lakemba were the British and Irish. The Greeks arrived later, then the Vietnamese and Lebanese. Over the past

decade many migrants from China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh and New Zealand have joined us. Our many festivals and celebrations are filled with colour, harmony, culture and the shared stories of people proud to live in our neck of the woods. However, in my electorate we face some pretty big challenges. Unemployment tracks at rates much higher than the State average; we have three of the 10 lowest average income earnings in Sydney; we have more than 2,600 public housing dwellings and what appears to be a seemingly endless waiting list, but there is a sense of public service not found in many other places.

In my electorate we have numerous organisations that, despite being chronically underfunded, punch above their weight in supporting those struggling with financial distress and disability, suffering from mental health issues, and battling displacement, domestic violence and substance abuse. Many of those organisations run on no more than the smell of an oily rag. Many projects are designed to assist work across an interfaith and intercultural platform so that no-one is left flailing. These heroes of our community provide a helping hand to those most in need—the safety net we all desire. Services are stretched and the need for more resources is paramount. Investment in social infrastructure to support organisations in providing a fair go, a better life and an opportunity for all, is just as important as the investment we make in the physical infrastructure to keep our society moving.

I am a glass half full person. In my electorate there are a greater number of people under the age of 24 than there is in any other part of the State. A concerted focus on education, whether at school, TAFE or university, and the creation of real opportunities that lead to well-paid jobs has the potential to change the profile of the entire generation in one fell swoop. We need to move away from our preoccupation with cost when we are providing services to those most in need, because when providing opportunities we are investing in a better and more egalitarian Australia. The more money we invest in people and in providing opportunities for their aspirations to become a reality, the less money we will have to spend on picking up the pieces of a broken society.

In my electorate some people do it really tough, but it is also a place of big dreams. Do not be fooled into believing that it is not an aspirational community or one that thinks of itself as any less than others. One has only to open the local papers to see the many success stories that fill them. One finds a genuine sense of spirit forged in the belief that every person can do something to make themselves and their community better. It is a community where families set up small businesses, involve themselves in voluntary work and spend quality time with their friends. Indeed, the community is exceptionally generous in its charity work, compassion and support for one another. It is inspirational to see that those who often do it the toughest in our society are the first to put their hand into their pocket—if they cannot give money, they will give something else. They understand there is always someone worse off.

People in my electorate do not want special treatment; they want justice and fairness. They want decent roads and hospitals. They want the same opportunities as others. For example, my predecessor, Robert Furolo, stood up for those who are still crying out for an easy access lift at Punchbowl railway station. People in wheelchairs, parents with prams and those who struggle with stairs do not need me to tell them it is tough. One has only to go to the station and see for oneself. A rejuvenation of the Lakemba shopping precinct will promote the development of a tourist hub in which a diversity of Sydneysiders can enjoy the delights of a multicultural electorate. The potential is there not only to create a stronger local economy and opportunities but also to begin a process of demystification of the area. I invite everyone to come to Lakemba to eat some of the best food from across the globe. Why not have a Moroccan tea, or eat some Lebanese sweets, a biryani or a meat pie whilst browsing shops that sell everything from henna to traditional African clothing.

Former Premier and member for Lakemba, the Hon. Morris Iemma, retains a lasting legacy for the changes he implemented, which saw Riverwood mix its public housing with private ownership—that move improved overall community facilities immeasurably. The electorate also takes in Narwee and Roselands to the south, and Wiley Park, Greenacre and Chullora to the north. Each suburb has its own needs. My job is to advocate endlessly for those who have entrusted me to speak on their behalf in this place. They have entrusted me to ensure they are never forgotten.

As I said earlier, my electorate has amongst the lowest average earnings in Sydney and housing affordability is a major issue. Owning a property should not be the great Australian dream; it should be the great Australian norm. At the heart of a better society, people symbolically plant their roots. They take an interest and ownership in what happens around them. They build a township and become part of its future story. The challenge for us all is to address the current inability for people to own a property and establish themselves in a place they can call home, and to have somewhere to claim as their community.

In the early 1970s my parents, like all migrants, came to Australia to pursue a better life. They left behind loved ones, everything they had known, and took a chance to establish themselves in a growing country. The Australia I grew up in is, and always will be, a proud nation made richer by its cultural diversity and harmony. It has been my greatest honour to have been an Australia Day ambassador to regional New South Wales and a Commissioner of the former Community Relations Commission. I have been privileged to travel across our great State and to hear people's stories from all walks of life. I take that on board in every decision I make.

My parents' story is not dissimilar to that of others who have migrated here—some of whom are in the gallery today. Many of them arrived with little more than a vision for a better life. They worked hard as factory workers, cleaners, tradesmen, labourers—as anything a person with limited English could find. Some had overseas qualifications that were never recognised. They poured their blood, sweat and tears into this nation and gave back when they could. They recognised the need to address a sense of belonging and established local groups to assist new and emerging communities. It was voluntary, but crucial. Their community groups became touchstones for new arrivals and provided vital conduits between the known and the new. In a different time these now community elders were once the community activists, community dreamers and community builders. It is a credit to them that I and many others are able to stand on their shoulders to make our way in the world.

People face many challenges in social cohesion. The sad reality is that intolerance is a symptom of views that seek to cause division in an otherwise harmonious community. Much more unites us than divides us. We have a responsibility to ensure that the rhetoric that seeks to encourage bigotry and disharmony never takes a foothold in mainstream Australia. I am greatly concerned that far too much is made of a person's faith, especially when it may prove to win a few votes here and there. We cannot talk about an inclusive society on one hand and look to divide it with the other. Those who exploit community division in the short term by seeking to achieve a "gotcha" moment must come to realise their actions have long-term ramifications to maintaining a close-knit society. We all bear the responsibility to promote acceptance at any cost—and as a teacher I see that.

I am a proud product of the public education system. I acknowledge those teachers who have worked in this place before me. I acknowledge the Minister for Education. I also acknowledge that the President of the NSW Secondary Principals' Council [SPC] is seated in the gallery. Thank you for being here. As a student I was inspired by those who not only taught me the things I needed to know for examinations but also, more importantly, the things that would make me a better person. I became an English and History teacher and commenced my teaching career on the beautiful South Coast.

Many know the story of my principalship of Punchbowl Boys High School. On the verge of closure, it had become better known for its violence, dysfunction and sense of defeatism. My first day saw me deal with a fight and convincing kids to stay for just a week, to give school a go, to make a fresh start to the year and not to give up. The school needed a new sense of purpose and a belief in the possibility of something better. It may seem like I am glossing over it but with the dedication of passionate colleagues we transformed the school completely. It was not easy, but it is amazing how you find energy when you feel you are making a difference. Our work motivated other schools to follow suit and led to remarkable changes both within the school fence and in the community at large. The school became a lighthouse, and the community built itself around it.

Where students would once joke about joining gangs, they began to see a brighter future. I did everything I could to ensure that no child ever missed out on the opportunity to succeed or an opportunity to have an experience that would make their life richer. I began to talk to the kids one by one, greeting them at the gate in the morning. My wonderful team and I showed them that we believed in them. Do you know what happened? The kids started to change. This encouraged the teachers to change and to give more of themselves. Our students no longer talked flippantly about their future. Instead they looked to a brighter one and strode beyond school into further education, whether at TAFE or university—something which opens doors. I still see many of those kids today in the street. They come up to me, hug me and shake my hand. They say thank you. And that is more touching than anything else you can imagine.

For a multitude of reasons, the very heart of a better society starts with an excellent and well-resourced public education system. I lived it. Education is the great leveller. We need to make sure that, regardless of where one lives, educational disadvantage does not translate into social disadvantage. Over the years and in all the schools I have worked in, my colleagues were the unsung heroes. They shared my belief that students always need someone to be their champion. I wish to place on the record my very good fortune at having worked with some of the finest people I will ever meet. I have had outstanding principals mentor me, and I thank them for the support, the advice and the friendship they have given me.

Punchbowl Boys High School offered a moving story of how a community could take inspiration from one of its greatest public assets and change for the better. Great schools are known for their sense of community and determination to succeed, for their unwavering commitment to every kid and his or her family, and the certainty that all students, regardless of their circumstance, deserve the very best education that society can provide. This commitment that every person matters is what I bring to public service. My educational leadership background places me in a pretty good position, I think, to be able to judge people and to have a better understanding of society at large. Life is funny in that you do not always realise the impact you have had until much later. When I embarked on my political career Omar, a former student, wrote to me. His words were:

... growing up without a dad, it was hard finding a father figure. You were the person who stood out for me. If you can influence a school to better itself, you can inspire a community. You inspired me and now I am studying medicine.

To say I was moved at the time, as I am again now, would be an understatement. I knew Omar well. He spent a lot of time with me because he was often in trouble. He became my shadow and we had many great conversations. I knew how important it was never to give up on him, even when he would bait me to do so. When he left school he did not make it into medicine on his first attempt. But we had taught him resilience and determination and he eventually realised his dream. He has now come full circle, because today he spends his spare time mentoring young kids who need someone to tell them that it is okay and that there is someone to believe in them. I thank him for being here today. If I was not clear enough, let me say it again: Education is the great leveller.

I have always believed in the values of the Labor Party. These values align well with my personal beliefs—ensuring that everyone gets a fair go. John Curtin remains for me a true political hero and one of the finest examples of servant leadership I can think of. I joined the Labor Party after meeting with former Premier and Minister for Foreign Affairs Bob Carr many years ago. I have been fortunate enough to have had his advice on many an occasion. On my journey, I have had the exceptional support, guidance and friendship of Tony Burke and Jason Clare, my two local Federal members and great mates. I thank John Robertson, General Secretary Jamie Clements and the New South Wales Labor leadership team for their support in my preselection. I also wish to thank and acknowledge Luke Foley and my caucus colleagues for welcoming me into this place, and I thank everybody who has helped me when I needed it in any way.

People join a party because they believe in its values and because they want to be a part of something that is the sum of many parts. They give up their time and support their community and candidate to make things better. I want especially to thank my local ALP party members, the backbone of our great party, our wonderful local councillors and all those who continue to give me advice. Our election campaign was phenomenal. It brought together a diverse group of volunteers who engaged in their work with conviction. Made up of the most dynamic mix of people, what we lacked in experience we made up for in passion, enthusiasm and an incredible sense of just what the community can do when it comes together.

My deepest thanks go to George Houssos, who started as a colleague but became a friend; Alexandra Lewis, who joined us as a volunteer and ended up leading the campaign; and Fatima El Cheikh and George Bousamra, who displayed great leadership during the campaign and gave up many hours to make our victory a reality. There are many to thank, and forgive me but this will sound like a roll call—I am going back to teacher mode for a minute. I also want to thank Sarah, Fayez, Anne, Karl, Azzam, Talal, Ingrid, Iman, Rodney, Tepi, Sam, Lynette, Cathy, Rizwan, Feda, Karim, Rana, Khaled, Bilal, the Bangladeshi crew and nearly 300 people who stood with me as we did our very best to make a difference and to make this dream a reality. It is on their shoulders that I have made it here, and I will never forget that. I will always be cognisant of the fact that, without you, I would not be in this place today.

We doorknocked, held street stalls and had conversations with locals at every opportunity. Our grassroots campaign set a benchmark for us into the future. There was something for everyone who wanted to contribute and I hope that, in time, I can repay every person in some small way. I would not be here nor would I be the person I am were it not for the support and friendship of the incredible friends and extended family in my life. I have lived the most wonderful experiences and the line "I am a part of all that I have met" from *Ulysses* sums up perfectly the way people and events have shaped my life and made it richer.

My family is the most important thing in my life. My in-laws, Lyn and Ian, and my brothers-in-law and their families have always been supportive and reliable in every sense. Thank you for always being there, especially at short notice. Dad, and I am not going to look at you right now, whilst I will not forget you standing

under the blazing sun at the pre-poll voting station for two weeks, it is more important to let you know that I have learnt from you the importance of helping others before I help myself. Mum, you have always been our rock—someone we can depend on regardless of the time or the issue. I find it funny that, even at this age, I still come to your place whenever I am feeling a bit sick and I want some soup.

I thank my brothers and sister, their wives, husband and children for always keeping it real for me and for standing with me as only family can. I am proud of you and I love that when we are together there is no boxing world champion, politician, businessmen or anything else; there are only siblings. We still try to work out who mum and dad's favourite is, but I reckon I might be getting close to it now. I love that we have the same laughs we did when we were kids. Our support for one another is special and we have a bond that is unshakable.

I thank my beautiful kids, Amal, Yasmin and Ali, for bringing such joy into our lives. The special times we have together are what I treasure most. Every day I think of you as the reason I am obligated to make this world a better place, and just quietly thanks for always laughing at my bad dad jokes—like that one. It is only fitting that the last thanks go to my wife, Erin. You have been alongside me ever since I walked into that university lecture theatre late. I had a mullet hairdo and wore an orange tie-dye jacket. Thankfully you did not judge me at first glance. You are a wonderful wife, mother, daughter and true friend to many. You are selfless and always keep things in perspective by bringing out the best in others, not least of all me. You have been with me every step of the way and I have achieved what I have only through your support.

There is something special about being here with a gallery full of friends and loved ones sharing this moment, this time. The challenge for all of us in leadership positions is to show what it means to be Australian and what it means to take the lead. The expectation is that we will use our judgement and influence to build a community that has something for everyone and that we will always serve in a manner that unites us and gives everyone an opportunity to share in the bounty of this land. Our role in this great House is to ensure that no-one is left behind and that, no matter what, we do not walk away from someone or something worth fighting for. Yes, it is true: I am an idealist. I always have been. I remain so because I have seen the results of hard work and vision. Without our ideals we dare not dream and without our dreams we remain the same. We cannot afford to sit in this great House with all that has been entrusted to us and not make a difference. Thank you.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! On behalf of the new member for Oxley, I acknowledge the presence in the gallery today of the former member of the Australian House of Representatives who represented the Richmond electorate, the Rt Hon. Larry Anthony; the former member for Maitland, the Hon. Robyn Parker; the Hon. Patricia Forsythe; the former member for Clarence, Steve Cansdell; local government representatives, family, friends and supporters of the new member for Oxley. I welcome you all to the Legislative Assembly gallery today.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley) [12.19 p.m.] (Inaugural Speech): Congratulations, Mr Deputy-Speaker, on your appointment. It is good to have you back in this place. I would like to start my time in this place by thanking the people of Oxley for asking me to represent them in the oldest Parliament in Australia. I also pay respect to the descendants of the First Nation, the Gumbaynggirr, the Dunghutti and the Biripi people in Oxley. I have to say that democracy in New South Wales is in fairly good hands. The inaugural speeches of the class of 2015 have been inspiring, warm and generous, and the people who have come into this Chamber are good people. I am proud to be part of that team.

The people of Oxley have shown faith that, with my 12 years of experience in the other place, I have the knowledge, the experience and the will to continue the strong representation that Oxley has enjoyed for 16 years. People also know I spent my formative years on a dairy farm; that I have worked in the media; and that I have run a successful small business—took a risk, employed people and created jobs. Like the Leader of the Opposition, I have delivered an inaugural speech in the other place so I take this opportunity to talk about Oxley, its people, their dreams and aspirations, the opportunities and a couple of the challenges. But first I give a very big thankyou to the former member and Deputy Premier as well as my party leader for 12 years, Andrew Stoner. Andrew and Cathy are catching up on some long-overdue time together, celebrating Cathy's birthday with an overseas holiday they so richly deserve.

Andrew Stoner's legacy is the transformation of infrastructure in Oxley with a freeway from one end to the other, new hospitals at Macksville and Kempsey and at the same time being part of the tough decisions that ultimately have helped to make New South Wales number one again. It is my job to see that those projects are finished. With the planning meeting of the Macksville community today about the design of the new hospital, we are getting on with the job. The electorate is named after the famous explorer, John Oxley, who came across

the headwaters of the Hastings River in 1818. On seeing the ocean from what he named Mount Seaview he said, "Balboa's ecstasy at the first sight of the sea could not have been greater than ours. It inspired us with new life. Every difficulty vanished and, in imagination, we were already at home." John Oxley went on to become one of the five founding members of the nation's first representative Chamber when the Legislative Council was established in 1824. His two sons served in this place.

The natural beauty of Oxley is breathtaking from the mountains to the sea with four magnificent rivers—the Hastings, the Macleay, the Nambucca and the Bellinger—that meander from the Great Dividing Range into the Pacific Ocean, creating the best beaches and surf breaks in Australia. Oxley is the very best of coastal and country life. Dorriggo and Comboyne are perched on top of the Great Dividing Range with their rich red volcanic soil, a luscious patchwork of paddocks, hedges and rolling hills creating the best dairy farms and dairy farmers in the country—hello, Jenny and Michael Hurrell! Where did our Premier choose to have a much-needed break after the election campaign to recharge his batteries and catch the best waves in Australia? He chose Oxley, of course. The other day I was bit worried when I found myself agreeing with the new member for Newtown on one thing when she said:

I came to recognise the immense beauty of our natural environment and the powerful soothing and calming effect it can have on the madness of our world.

Those words really resonate with me. And then I thought, "What the hell are you doing living in Newtown? Oxley is the home for you!" I might add that a lot of her tribe are moving there. We must do this together, city and country. We are stronger together. We need to bridge the gap between city and country. J. C. Penney said:

Growth is never by mere chance; it is the result of forces working together.

As a Government, we need to plan for the future. We need to look forward and seize the opportunities that exist outside the gates of Sydney. I agree with the member for Epping 100 per cent: Having a job is the most basic human right. That will be my number one priority—to support job creation. Manufacturing is by far our largest industry on the mid North Coast. Like the lion's share of manufacturing in New South Wales, it involves food production. Norco, with a plant on the Bellinger River and just two kilometres from my home at Urunga, is going from strength to strength, paying record prices to its dairy farmers and sending up to 20,000 litres of fresh Oxley milk to China every week. Smithtown is the home of Australia's favourite chocolate drink, Milo. With Nestle's, or Nestlé—I am a Nestle's girl because that was the factory my family used to supply, but it is Nestlé—the parent company defied the normal trend by closing its Asian plant in favour of a \$60 million plant upgrade at Smithtown. That company chose us for manufacturing over Asia.

As a supporter of regional development, as is the member for Ku-ring-gai, he would be interested to know that two of our local companies of which we are most proud—Planet Lighting at Bellingen and our famous Akubra company—arrived in Oxley in the 1970s through programs that encouraged larger companies away from the big smoke and into our rural communities, bringing jobs and opportunities. This has shaped our communities and we want more businesses to look at the great advantages of relocating to our region as well as supporting our local small and emerging businesses to grow and prosper. I will stand with my leader and Deputy Premier, Troy Grant, in making sure that regional industry has a fair go. I commend the Deputy Premier for putting it firmly on the table. By uncapping the potential in the regions, we relieve the pressure in Sydney by giving people job security with a better lifestyle without the pressure of a Sydney mortgage.

As a New South Wales National for almost 30 years, I know the key to economic growth is our primary producers. I remember that our valleys produced large parcels of green beans, but now they mostly come down from Queensland. There is one exception, John Simon, who is my electorate council chairman, and his wife, Noelene. They are in the gallery today and they grow the sweetest and most delicious beans at Gladstone—but only for four months of the year, so they can fund their overseas holiday. But we also know that the vitality and the value of our primary industry sector gradually has waned over the past few decades. I wonder whether we can do more with those vast and incredibly productive alluvial plains in the four valleys. Do not get me wrong: I have nothing at all against those whose business it is to fatten Japanese bullocks for export markets, or who like to run 30 breeders on their 100 acres while they hold down jobs in town. But I wonder whether the wealth of Oxley's natural resources has tempered the incentive to do a bit more with it?

When I am driving across the electorate, besides having a grumble about how much fireweed there is in so many paddocks, I often contemplate what it would be like if there were large, long paddocks of high-value

crops growing without irrigation for dairy cow rations and beef feedlots, for food processors and manufacturers, or even for licensed hemp production for the fibre and textile market. I am talking more about rethinking what we do with the land to optimise its use and the value of its outputs as well as increase overall economic activity while supplying raw materials to attract secondary industry. Can we think differently about land tenure so that there can be leasing and share farming for the younger or entrepreneurial farmers who want to farm but who cannot afford the capital cost of land, which is particularly high in this lifestyle-rich environment? Western New South Wales agriculture is climate constrained. Oxley agriculture is incumbency constrained.

I am a little passionate about this. My parents were share farmers. Their share farm was the first step along their journey towards achieving their ultimate goal of owning their own dairy farm, which they did. It was approximately 25 kilometres from The Nationals stalwart "Black Jack" McEwen soldiers settlement lot in the Goulburn Valley in Victoria. I want the next generation of young farmers to have the same opportunity. We believe in the guiding set of principles that underpins my party, which is that all Australian should have an equal opportunity to contribute and share in the wealth of our nation. We believe that initiative should be rewarded and that those who are prepared to work hardest should reap the rewards. Another sector that is due for a major rethink is forestry, particularly native hardwood forestry. Think blackbutt, spotted gum, ironbark and tallowwood which are grown, processed and marketed into a range of products by numerous businesses in Oxley.

Wauchope Timber from around Yarras features in the Sydney Opera House, transported by that famous Frenchman "Froggy" Cassegrain, whose son and famous winemaker, John Cassegrain, is with us today. The tradition continues today, with Hastings Valley timber being used to decorate the high rises at Barangaroo. Our mills and the harvest and haulage businesses operate in a sustainable and renewable industry, and they have the right to continue to do so. There are some outstanding issues in the sector that I will be following through to underpin our industry's economic viability, social licence and environmental credentials.

There is a need to rethink the tenure trap that started with the unscientific scramble to change tenure on large swathes of forest estate in exchange for Greens preferences. The Leader of the Opposition recently fell into this trap. I wish he could have looked into the eyes of all the workers at our local timber mills to see their continued disappointment that Labor would treat them in that way. The tenure trap overlooks the fact that hardwood forest ecosystems evolved under the management regime of the first Australians and that the forests still need to be managed for their protection against the many threats that assail them—especially wildfire. It would be ideal if we had a "forests of care" outcome; not a "bush or scrub of neglect". Why is it that countries such as Germany and Canada are able to come to sensible forestry decisions that are both sustainable and wealth creating? Their environmental experts work alongside their foresters to come up with a best-practice solution that is a win-win.

There is also a compelling case to review the Water Act to acknowledge the reality that North Coast is very different from the Murray-Darling Basin. I believe the Water Act can be tailored to satisfy the differences between Bellingen and Bourke and Wauchope and Walgett. I am glad to say that The Nationals have always understood the contribution of farmers and that good infrastructure is vital. That is why regional infrastructure is going to be a big focus for this member. Two thousand people are employed in Oxley building the Pacific Highway motorway, which will traverse the entire electorate—a \$3.2 billion investment. It will transform our community, bringing jobs and growth and enabling our goods to get to market faster and more efficiently. More importantly, travel will be safer for all.

Over the next four years the towns of Nambucca Heads, Urunga and Macksville will join Kempsey in being bypassed. Tourism provides 8.5 per cent of jobs in Oxley and we need to ensure that the Legendary Pacific Coast campaign is built on so that when the 16,000 vehicles bypass all those beautiful communities every day there is a constant reminder of what is there through an innovative signage campaign, using old and new media. We also need to turn our attention to the Waterfall Way and the Oxley Highway—the east-west routes—looking at twenty-first century ways to traverse the Great Divide, without constant landslips and costly repairs.

Rail continues to play a big role in Oxley. It connects our retirees with their families and ensures the socially disadvantaged have a low-cost travel option. Each week 50,000 tonnes of freight are moved on the North Coast line. Like many people in my electorate, such as Ray Campbell at Kempsey station, I too have a connection with the railways. My grandfather was a ganger and my husband was introduced to Oxley through his father—a Barnardos orphan who served us in World War II. He became a steam and diesel train driver on the North Coast line and took Warren and his brothers and sisters to Nambucca Heads for regular holidays. This

year this vital line is celebrating its centenary in Wauchope. We need more rail advocates in the twenty-first century such as Don Neal and Janet Rainbow, who are here today, to continue the hard work and passion to establish projects like the Great Hastings Valley Railway and the Wauchope Gateway project.

We also need to get the Dorrigo steam railway museum opened. But I know I have a good friend in the transport Minister, the Hon. Andrew Constance, who is going to help deliver all this for me. As Andrew knows, we need more commuter services along the North Coast, as has occurred at Bathurst, and we need the trains of the future to ensure the fastest travel times and connections not just to our major cities but also between major regional centres. We must support our local councils as well and help them move on to a stronger footing to ensure that local residents have the water, roads, services and planning that encourage ongoing regional development. To achieve this, we need leaders with courage. Tough decisions are not always popular but I will not shy away from doing what is right.

In that leadership vein, I acknowledge the presence in the gallery of the Mayor of Kempsey and head of the Mid North Coast Regional Organisation of Councils. My four years as the first Parliamentary Secretary for Rural and Regional Health were the best years in the upper House—but eight years of opposition were challenging. With the support of the Hon. Jillian Skinner, I was co-chair of the team that developed a blueprint for health delivery in the country for the next 10 years. I will support good, common-sense ideas and promote those who are prepared to lead to provide community-based initiatives that keep people in their homes and out of hospitals—those such as Jenny Zirkler from Nambucca Valley Care, who is here today, and Sheree Smith, who owns a medical practice and is also here. Sheree, with the community, has created a dialysis facility in partnership with the local health district in Nambucca Heads—the first of its kind in New South Wales. I drove past Kempsey Hospital last week and it is like a phoenix rising from the ashes, with the \$90 million investment giving the people of the district the facility they deserve. It is a different service from that provided by Slim Dusty's grandmother in the 1900s in Kempsey—she was the district's first midwife.

I salute Royal Far West, which has a strong connection to Kempsey. Under the inspiring leadership of Lindsay Cane, it continues to take hundreds of children and their families for intensive medical treatment, a week at a time, at the historic premises on the Manly beachfront. Now Royal Far West is reaching out to children all over the State, with modern technology providing speech therapy, reading classes and even psychology treatment via the Internet. We need to continue the investment in the education sector, ensuring our TAFE system graduates people for jobs that our local industry needs. I know that the Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business, John Barilaro, is right onto that. I will also work to ensure that our high-growth areas such as South West Rocks have the complete education and supporting facilities they need. I look forward to working with Adrian Piccoli, the education Minister—my mate—to see that that happens.

However, even paradise is not perfect and, as a community, we have many challenges to face in Oxley. I believe one of the biggest decisions that one can make in life is to have a child. It is a child's right to expect a home based on love, stability, security and unconditional support, but the sad reality is that more and more children in our communities are not provided with this strong, vital foundation. In this country today 143,000 children are living in a vulnerable situation. Sadly, one of the biggest impacts on the Oxley electorate is the number of children living in less than ideal circumstances, which is having a profound impact on law and order in too many of our towns. There are 695 children in foster and kinship placements on the mid North Coast—just one is too many.

I am excited to be part of the Breaking the Cycle project, coordinated by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, that is operating in the Kempsey shire. I thank the Premier for his support. This is a groundbreaking opportunity to address the systemic failure of social policy too focused on good intentions and not enough on outcomes. I am determined that this will not be a talkfest. We must listen to the people on the ground who are making a difference to the lives of young people who are doing it tough—people such as Brian Darby in Dorrigo who has pulled many kids off the streets and into the boxing ring; Sheri Foster in Kempsey, teaching families how to run a home and wanting to place volunteer grandparents with families; Mark Morrison from the Macleay Vocational College, who has equal amounts of passion and compassion; and the inspirational Richie Donovan from the Nambucca Valley, who continues to shape the lives of many fine athletes, including Greg "the Goanna" Inglis of Bowraville. I also thank the Attorney General for meeting recently with the families of the Bowraville three. Hopefully, this nightmare is coming to an end and justice will be served for Colleen, Evelyn and Clinton—and that will not be a moment too soon.

There are many people who have been part of my journey whom I want to acknowledge. First are my parents, who are here with us today. I thank them for turning east in the Land Rover and caravan in the

1977 May school holidays. The Cobb Highway was closed and we could not get to Wilcannia to go fox shooting—we had great school holidays—so we turned east and ended up at the Grassy Head caravan park, smack in the middle of the Oxley electorate. That holiday transformed our lives and took us on the journey north. My dad was the secret weapon in the campaign we have just run. He spent countless hours listening to the people and would leave it to the last second to confess that I was his daughter. Many said that if I was his daughter then that was enough for them to support me. Thank you also to my mum and my brother Kenton, who are here today. My brother is having a rare day off work. He owns a small business with his wife, Monique, in Dorrigo. They are a constant reminder of how tough it is and why we must continue our agenda of reform to help those who provide jobs and opportunities.

There is my campaign team executive, led my John Simon, with Noel Atkins, Mary Tarr, John Supple, Brian Irvine, Barry Ramke, Anna Shields and Janine Reed. Other key contributors are also here: Maureen and Tony Barwick, Patricia Baker, Susan Ramke, Les Wells, Cheryl and Barry Lewis, Kay and Dallas White, Barry Reed, Mary Kell, David Scott, Gordon Manning, Norma Daley, Alan and Nancy Taylor, Kaye Irvine, Loretta Caelli, and Caroline and Rex Fowler. You all continue to inspire me and I know that you will keep me real. They galvanised 200 booth workers across our 43 booths on election day, which is a stunning effort. The Nationals secret weapon is our grassroots army. A big thank you to my Federal colleagues David Gillespie and Luke Hartsuyker. They wanted to be here today but there is something about a budget in Canberra. I look forward to continuing to work together to deliver for our region. My good friend and loyal soldier Ann Lewis—another Goulburn Valley girl—thank you, and to the team at head office, led by Ben Franklin during the campaign and now Nathan Quigley, and, in particular, Alex Fitzpatrick.

The Oxley team kept their head down and got on with it. I genuinely acknowledge my fellow candidates who poured their heart and soul into the election campaign and gave the people of Oxley a genuine choice on election day. My political compass, Wal Murray, you are with me every day. Your decency, common sense and your down-to-earth approach were your secret weapons in politics. You were not one to look over your shoulder to seek out someone more important. His daughter and Mayor of Moree, Katrina Humphries, replicates that earthy approach. She told me he would be sitting on my shoulder today.

My children, Jack and Emily, I am so very proud of you. I am so sorry, Emily, I was not there on the weekend. I was attending the Bellingen Show while you got your first three-pointer at the carnival in the Illawarra. Jack, we had an amazing journey at Kokoda, paying tribute to our paternal grandfathers. You inspire me. Now you are a corporal in the cadets, so who knows where you will land. To Warren, we met and fell in love in this place 25 years ago, so I could not have a better confidant and leveller. We decided that my role in politics would never compromise Jack's and Emily's desires or goals. That is why you have been there for them 100 per cent. That is why, in 2013, the North Coast branch of Surf Life Saving New South Wales made you Surf Life Saver of the Year. You contributed hundreds of volunteer hours to Jack's and Emily's club. That is why, in 2011, you did not travel to Government House to receive your award from Governor Marie Bashir for saving the lives of a family from Gulgong who were being dragged out in a dangerous rip. You chose instead to go to the end of year school assembly. That is just the sort of person you are.

The people of Oxley are decent, down to earth, honest, hardworking and genuine. They are the types of people who would call a spade a shovel. I will represent them with the same integrity, candour and honesty. They deserve nothing less. I know together we will help Oxley reach its true potential. I thank the House for its indulgence.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! On behalf of the newly elected member for Prospect, I acknowledge the presence in the gallery today of the former Premier of New South Wales and former member for Toongabbie, the Hon. Nathan Rees; former Senators for New South Wales Michael Forshaw and Graham Richardson; the former member for Fairfield and for Smithfield, Janice Crosio; the former Federal member for Prospect and for Smithfield, the Hon. Carl Scully; local government representatives; and family, friends and supporters of the new member. I welcome you to the Legislative Assembly today. I call the member for Prospect.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) [12.54 p.m.] (Inaugural Speech): Thank you, Mr Deputy-Speaker. First, I acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet, their ancestors past and present, the Gadigal people of the Eora nation. I would also like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land that now forms the electorate of Prospect. They are: the Toogagal people, the Boo-bain-ora people, the Bidjigal people, all peoples of the Eora nation, also the Cabrogal people of the Darug nation. Especially,

I want to recognise and pay my respects to perhaps the greatest leader of the Eora nation, Pemulwuy. I hope that one day we will be able to honour him with the respect he deserves and return his remains to the land he loved in the seat of Prospect.

It is wonderful to stand here as the first member to hold the newly created seat of Prospect. The name "Prospect" was formerly the name of the Federal seat, which covers much of the same area, before the name of "McMahon" was given to the seat. I am so pleased that the former Federal member for Prospect, Janice Crosio, AM, MBE, and her husband, Ivo, could be with us today. The redistribution abolished the seats of Toongabbie and Smithfield and brought them together as the new seat of Prospect. This act created one of the most interesting and diverse electorates in Australia. The north of the electorate, formerly Toongabbie, was ably represented until recently by the member for Toongabbie, Nathan Rees—and I am delighted that Nathan is here with us today. However, the south of the electorate, formerly Smithfield, has suffered greatly over the past four years. It is great to have the former Labor member for Smithfield, Carl Scully, here to celebrate today. Carl, you have been sorely missed in Smithfield since you left.

I turn to the seat of Prospect. Who are we? We are a melting pot of people from across the planet: Tamils, Assyrians, Italians, Lebanese, Indians, Filipinos, Maltese, Eastern Europeans, Irish and Anglo-Celtic Australians, to name but a few of the successful multicultural mix in Prospect. It is great that we are all Aussies, we are all Australians. Prospect has the largest industrial and manufacturing area in New South Wales, if not the country, covering the industrial estates of Smithfield-Wetherill Park, Girraween, Eastern Creek, Huntingwood and Arndell Park, directly employing more than 30, 000 people and indirectly employing more than 5,000.

In almost the centre of the electorate is the Prospect Reservoir, the main source of drinking water for the residents of Western Sydney. Beside the reservoir we have our own beach, which includes nippers and surf lifesavers at Wet'n'Wild. I know the member for Port Stephens thinks her electorate has the best beaches; I am sorry, but she does not. The beaches of Prospect are better—we have the Surf Deck, the Nickelodeon Beach with SpongeBob, Dora and Boots the monkey, and the largest Double SkyCoaster in the world. Surrounding the reservoir and the industrial estates, almost like a horseshoe, are the residential areas of Blacktown, Prospect, Toongabbie, Girraween and Pendle Hill in the north, Greystanes and Pemulwuy in the centre, and Smithfield, Wetherill Park, Prairiewood and Bossley Park in the south.

Multicultural diversity abounds, with large and vibrant Tamil, Indian and Filipino communities in the north, great homemade pastizzi from the Maltese community in the centre, and the Assyrian Christian and Italian communities in the south. More than 122 languages are spoken, with more than half of our community either born overseas or having parents who were. Our religions are intertwined: Catholic, Orthodox, Islamic, Buddhist and Hindu faiths, all living in harmony. Three local government areas make up the seat of Prospect: Blacktown, Holroyd and Fairfield city councils. I look forward to working with the mayors and councillors of these councils to stop the Government's forced amalgamation agenda.

Sadly, but as you would expect from a Liberal Government, our community in Western Sydney has been neglected over the past four years. The Prospect community needs to rebuild around Labor values and local issues to ensure that its voice is heard. I am determined that my work in Parliament as the member for the electorate of Prospect will make our community stronger and that each one of our residents will get a fair go. These are core Labor values—values that I believe in. Things like providing opportunities for those who work hard to achieve their dreams, protecting the vulnerable, creating an environment where people feel safe and secure in their homes and at work, and making sure that our kids have good, secure and safe jobs. Labor values are about respecting people with different views, beliefs and backgrounds. Each of us deserves respect regardless of where we were born. With these values as a basis we will be able to create progressive policy aligned to the values that we share as Australians.

That is why I ran as a candidate in the 2015 State Election and why I am proud to represent the Australian Labor Party and the people of my community as the member for the electorate of Prospect. After leaving school I worked a number of blue-collar, semi-skilled jobs, including as a barman, jackeroo in central Queensland, office clerk and eight years as a soldier, non-commissioned officer [NCO] and officer cadet in the Australian Army Reserve. Like many young men I was not sure of my vocation in life, but what was so important to me, and still is, was my belief in Catholic social teachings. I admired those who did not simply talk about their beliefs, but who put those beliefs into pragmatic action and helped their community. At first I thought the priesthood would be my pathway. I admired the example of so many Jesuits and religious members who did not simply talk the talk but who stood up and were counted to help the vulnerable and fight the oppressors—especially their political opposition to the fascists in Europe.

I moved to Sydney and took up a job with the Catholic Industrial Office within the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney. It was there that I met a man who was to have a profound effect on the path of my career and life, John Ducker. John Ducker, the recently appointed Chairman of the Catholic Industrial Affairs Committee, or "Bruvver" Ducker as he was known to both friend and foe alike, was a former New South Wales Labor Council Secretary and Minister in the Wran Government. Like me, John believed that to be a Catholic, to believe in Catholic social teachings, one must put that belief into action. I will not go into detail about the advice "Bruvver" Ducker gave me over those years, except to say that it was colourful, insightful and, as my standing in the Chamber today bears testament, correct.

John was to introduce me to a man who became my role model, a man who to this day I believe is unsurpassed as a great Labor leader. He was a humble man who did not attempt to take political office but who had a profound effect on our Australian democracy: Laurie Short, the former National Secretary of the Federated Ironworkers Association of Australia [FIA]. Laurie was the man who led the fight against the Stalinist-communist factions that had infiltrated the trade union movement in Australia. His success in winning the FIA ballot in 1951 against enormous vote rigging and violence led to the beginning of the end of communist dominated unions and the growth of social democrats taking control of the Australian Labor movement. Every fortnight for many years Laurie and I would meet for lunch and discuss politics, industrial relations and so much more. I realised that my vocation was to fight for working people by being a member of the Labor movement. I wanted to see people have equality at work and to return safely home to their families after work, to live their lives in peace and with respect.

Thanks to Laurie's advice I began working part time for the Federated Ironworkers Association at their Newcastle Office. I did 4.00 a.m. gate meetings at the steelworks and learnt the trade of union organising. These union members and officials were good men—hardworking Aussies, many Vietnam veterans—and hard as nails. Under the Australian Council of Trade Union's amalgamation program, the Federated Ironworkers Association amalgamated with the Australasian Society of Engineers and, in turn, the Australian Workers Union. During this time I met the newly elected joint secretary of the New South Wales branch of the amalgamated union, Russ Collison. Russ offered me a job and I joined the New South Wales branch, based at Granville in Western Sydney, as a full-time official. I organised manufacturing sites at Wetherill Park-Smithfield, civil construction and workshops on the railways, amongst others.

Russ had worked as a rigger and scaffolder, was an FIA delegate for his workplace at Tooheys brewery, and worked his way up to the position of secretary of the New South Wales branch. Like Laurie Short, Russ joined the union to make life better for working men and women. His leadership rebuilt the Australian Workers Union into the powerhouse it is today. Russ is the only person I have met who equalled the calibre and courage of Laurie Short and the political skills of John Ducker. Russ became, and still is, a role model, confidant and, as a Labor leader, my greatest personal influence. Thank you, Russ. It is because of your example, your belief in me and your unflinching support that I stand in this House today.

With the encouragement of Russ, Laurie and John, while working full-time during the day, I studied law at night at the University of Sydney and the University of Technology, Sydney, completing my bachelors and masters degrees in law. In fact, one of my fellow students, the member for The Entrance, sits with me in the House. So many eminent people helped me to succeed at law school, including my masters supervisor and dean, Professor Ron McCallum; Commissioner Barrie French; College of Law supervisor, Justice Conrad Staff; and I had continuous friendly advice from former Attorney General Jeff Shaw, QC. I was fortunate to do well at law school and was awarded scholarships to complete a PhD in law at King's College, London, at the University of London. I am indebted to my supervisor, Professor Keith Ewing, Professor of Public Law at King's, for his support and guidance over those years.

Going from being an Australian Workers Union organiser in Western Sydney to the hallowed halls of King's College London proved to be one hell of an adjustment. However, I spent almost eight years overseas. At first I studied and did university teaching, then I worked as legal counsel and international adviser to the Law Society of England and Wales, and as a commercial litigator specialising in financial crime, anti-money laundering and anti-corruption practice in a number of offshore jurisdictions. I had moved from being a union official chasing dodgy bosses to a lawyer chasing dodgy white collar criminals. On my return to Australia I accepted a senior position with the Australian Securities and Investments Commission, before being called to the New South Wales bar and to the Inner Temple of the Bar of England and Wales.

I thank Greg Jones of 12th Floor, Garfield Barwick Chambers, Misha Hammond of fourth floor, Wentworth Chambers, and Phillip Boulten, SC, of Forbes Chambers for their support both at the bar and for my

political ambitions. Whilst practising as a barrister I accepted the position of director of financial crime programs and senior lecturer in law enforcement at the Australian Graduate School of Policing and Security, Charles Sturt University. In this role I was honoured to work closely with State, Federal and international law enforcement. I thank my colleagues at the graduate school for their support over the years.

What are my priorities for the seat of Prospect? Having lived in Parramatta through the 1990s, and now in Greystanes with my wife, Bettina, I have seen many changes in Western Sydney over the past 20 years. Those who live along the M4 and M5 cannot all be stereotyped as blue-collar workers living on Struggle Street—no matter what SBS says. We are people who have professional careers; we are executives in listed companies and government agencies, and business owners. We are also successful tradespeople, educators and healthcare providers. We work hard so that we can make choices about the sort of life we want for ourselves and our families. We want to choose whether or not to start a family, whether or not to send our children to a public or private school, and whether or not to holiday in Australia or overseas. We do not expect a free ride, but we do expect the same opportunities as everyone else and to be able to enjoy the rewards of our hard work.

Having come from a modest background, I have taken every opportunity available to me to get an education and work experience that has allowed me to have a successful legal and academic career. I am committed to ensuring Labor policy continues to create these opportunities for others. While these views are not unique to those of us living in Western Sydney, they are central for many of us who have not come from a privileged background but who have worked hard and been successful in our lives. You do not forget where you have come from and those who have helped you, and you make sure that you in turn help others to make a better life.

There are four key priorities I will focus on in representing the people of Prospect as their member of Parliament. The first is building a safer community with less crime. Having worked closely with law enforcement and with victims of crime, I understand the challenges we face in keeping the community safe. The continued shootings in Western Sydney, increasing illegal gun ownership, increases in property crime, and ongoing and significant family violence are challenges that need to be addressed. These problems are only compounded by the backlog of criminal cases before the courts. We need more proactive, evidence- and solution-based policing, tougher gun laws and above all else a Minister who provides leadership. As one of my parliamentary colleagues across the Chamber has already said, we need solutions to focus on deterrence and a criminal justice system that makes the victims of crime the priority. I acknowledge in the gallery today members of the Homicide Victims Support Group. I look forward to working with them and many others to make my words a reality.

One of the challenges we face in this House is restoring integrity to public life. The corruption scandals previously and currently before the Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC] and the courts have eroded the public's belief in this House and us as their representatives. We need to rebuild that trust and to fight corruption in any form—be it at a local government, State or Federal level. Not only those who commit corruption but also those who enable and protect these individuals must be brought to justice. I was pleased that last week the first act of this Parliament was to pass the Independent Commission Against Corruption Amendment (Validation) Bill 2015. Let us hope this continues and the Government does not lose its focus on fighting corruption when ICAC continues with its investigations in the future.

My second priority will be local jobs and building a stronger economy. I know from personal experience that a local job can bring big social and economic benefits to a community. We have to attract more jobs and businesses to Western Sydney. We need industry policy that supports industry to grow and increased opportunities to expand into new markets, both domestically and overseas, thus creating opportunities for local residents in Prospect to have satisfying and rewarding careers and working lives.

I think of Gary from Prospect, a highly skilled electrical technician; Suzanne from Toongabbie, an administrator and receptionist; Anna from Wetherill Park, a teacher's aide; or Lazarus from Blacktown who just wants a job, any job. All are 50-plus years old and cannot find a job because of their age. These hardworking Aussies, who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own but due to redundancy or illness, are attempting to re-enter the workforce and are the growing underclass in our community. We all know of the challenge that youth and young adults have in finding employment, and the Government statistics reflect this fact. But now if you are over 50 years of age and unemployed, you are facing an even greater challenge.

My third priority is more funding for education. Education has provided opportunity for me and for many others. I want more opportunities for our kids to get a good education, with more funding for schools,

more facilities, and a government that is prepared to make schools and our families a priority. At Girraween Public School, despite the Government's promises of funding, there remain 28 demountable classrooms—many without air conditioning and proper equipment. This story is repeated time and time again throughout Prospect and Western Sydney. At Greystanes Public School, which fronts busy Merrylands Road, the principal and the Parents and Citizens Association have been requesting safe fencing for years. Despite promises from this Government and the then local Liberal member, nothing has been done and the children face safety concerns every day not only from traffic but also from intruders entering the school grounds.

We know of the assault by this Government on the TAFE system only too well—the redundancies, the closure of courses and the astronomical increase in fees. But here is a new element. At Wetherill Park TAFE there is a large, well-resourced childcare centre with competent and well-trained staff. It was established for the children of students and staff so they could have convenient and affordable childcare. It was a great Labor initiative. But as the TAFE reforms have bitten into the sector, enrolments have dropped significantly. So now there are more than 25 places per day available for children. But this Government will not let the centre open its enrolments to the children of parents in the community, despite the urgent need for childcare places in Western Sydney. Why is this? It is because the Government wants the childcare centre closed—it wants the staff gone; it wants the TAFE system destroyed in New South Wales. What a disgrace.

My final priority is better health care and quality of life for the people of Prospect. The community of Prospect is serviced by Westmead, Blacktown, Liverpool and Fairfield hospitals. Fairfield Hospital is within the electorate at Prairiewood. A master plan for Fairfield Hospital has been approved but funding has not been allocated. Despite the urgent need of the residents in Western Sydney, the Government has left this hospital languishing towards the bottom of the funding queue. Our community needs a significant increase in the size of the emergency department at Fairfield, with a designated area for children. We need four new operating theatres. A hand clinic has been relocated to Fairfield from Liverpool and set up in demountables. What a disgrace. The hand clinic needs its own dedicated ward. Furthermore, more doctors and consultants are needed for diabetes treatment and education.

It is also a disgrace that kitchens have been closed throughout public hospitals in Western Sydney, including in palliative care wards. Meals are shipped in from the eastern suburbs and are frozen and reheated time and time again until the food is almost unrecognisable. Hospital patients need fresh food and they need it now. People who are sick or in their final stages of life deserve that at the very least. It is unthinkable that the Liberals deny dying people fresh food. I also think of Diana from Bossley Park and how the changes to workers compensation law have devastated her family. The only winners are the insurance companies, which now make greater profits while injured workers suffer. Marlene from Blacktown, who is 71, cares for her disabled son. She has not had a holiday in more than a decade.

Carolyn from Greystanes is the sole carer for her husband, Gary, who is suffering from dementia. After a lifetime together, working hard and raising a family, they are now struggling to cope and to make ends meet. This wonderful woman, whom I met during the election campaign, after many tears asked for only one thing: Could I get someone to mow her lawn because keeping up the beautiful garden she and her husband had created lovingly together was beyond her. I became determined that day that I would work to make sure that this Government provided better services and support for carers of dementia patients. All these issues make me angry, and I will use that anger to fight for better lives and better policy for all these members of my community as their State member.

I have a few people to thank now. There are so many people and organisations that need to be acknowledged and thanked. During my campaign an army of volunteers knocked on more than 25,000 doors and made more than 16,000 phone calls. Thousands of flyers were handed out at train stations and tramways in the mornings and at primary schools in the afternoons. We held more than 240 mobile offices at shopping centres during the campaign. We introduced the Labor message to thousands of residents. These volunteers sacrificed their time to help make our community better.

More than 300 volunteers worked on the Prospect campaign. Time does not permit me to name each and every one of them. But they should know that I am forever indebted to all of them. First, I thank my campaign team. I start with the leaders of my campaign. I thank Todd Pinkerton, my campaign field director. Todd is a local who grew up in Blacktown and went to Mitchell High School. What an incredible campaign he directed. They threw everything at him. There was a late preselection, which meant we realistically had only three months of campaigning time; an incumbent Liberal member; the No Land Tax Party, which I believe spent

more money in Prospect than in any other electorate; and the Christian Democratic Party, which once again reneged on its preference deal—now that was a surprise; an extremely diverse electorate; three pre-poll booths and so the list goes on.

Todd held the reins and pulled the campaign together like a skilled general to attack our opposition. We gained community support and more volunteers every day of the campaign. What an incredible campaign and result—there were significant swings to Labor throughout the electorate, we won the majority of booths, we won pre-poll voting, we won the electronic voting and, despite the Liberals spending heaps of their taxpayer-funded entitlements, we won the postal voting as well. Todd, thank you so very much. I believe next week you are in a ballot of your own to become the future President of Young Labor. Best of luck, mate. Take no prisoners. I look forward to opening a bottle of Irish whisky to toast your victory. To George Barcha, you were there throughout the election campaign and the preselection. You worked tirelessly organising teams to put up corflutes, to make A-frames, to cook the sausages at barbecues and to counter my opponents in any way you could. Thank you. You have proven to be a truly loyal friend and comrade.

To Angela Humphries, the brain behind the media campaign and my long-time friend, you took any crisis in your stride and countered any mud the Tories tried to throw at me. To Leo Nelson, my volunteer campaign coordinator, I thank you for making thousands of calls to volunteers to lock them in for endless doorknocking, phone banking, letterbox drops, et cetera. I think nearly every ALP member and volunteer in Western Sydney has spoken with you at one point. I also thank Nicole Scott, Peter Wicks, Keith Steele, Shaun Nugent, Katrina Diab, Shane Kelley-Resic, and the New South Wales and Victorian Young Labor teams. I thank Ric Sisson from Campaign City, Baden Kirgan from Jefferies Printing and Graham Crawford from AD Industries.

I now thank my family. I thank my mum, Val, who grew up in the Bidura children's home at Glebe and who, with her brothers and sisters, was taken from her parents at six years of age. Each sibling was then placed in supposed "care" and separated, with some never to be seen again. The hardships and abuse she and other children were subjected to are only now being publicly known thanks to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and the formal apology. These Forgotten Australians, these care leavers, are not forgotten by me, the members of this House or their fellow Australians. Mum, I love you. To all other Forgotten Australians I say: We love you and we care.

I especially acknowledge Leonie Sheedy from Care Leavers Australia, or CLAN as it is called. She and other "Clannies" have fought for years for justice and acknowledgement of their appalling treatment. Governments in Queensland, Tasmania and Western Australia have paid limited compensation. New South Wales and Victoria—the biggest States where the most children were abused in institutional care—have paid nothing. It is time that this Government contributed and supported the establishment of a national independent redress scheme.

Mum, despite your early life you forged ahead and built a life for yourself, established a career as an early childhood teacher and successfully raised a family. You brought me up under often very difficult circumstances that only we and those closest to our family know. I thank you for that. I will never forget where I have come from, nor forget those who have helped me to become the man I am today. You were there throughout the preselection and election campaigns, leaving your home on peaceful Bribie Island for months to move in with Bettina and me to look after the children and to provide any support or advice you could. Thank you.

Sadly, my grandparents, my father and my stepfather have passed away. I know they are watching over us here and would be proud. All of them were working people whose values and strength of character I have inherited. Today I especially think of my grandfather, whose name I bear, Hugh McDermott. He was a man who spent his life in the Labor cause as a railwayman and an official with the Locomotive Drivers Union. He was known as an "industrial grouper", part of those Catholic social democrats who did not split but who fought internally and helped rid the union movement and ALP of extremist infiltration while at the same time protecting the working rights and conditions of fellow workers.

I thank my brother James, a member of the Teachers Federation, who teaches English to children in isolated Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory and central Queensland. I also thank my brother David, a workplace Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union delegate, who worked like a machine charming undecided voters to vote for his younger brother on polling day. By the way, we had a swing of 11 per cent at that booth and I put it down to him. I thank my nephew Jack, who, like so many other volunteers, spent from election eve until 6.00 a.m. guarding the polling booths so that my election material would not be destroyed by my opponents.

My uncle Chaz is a family role model and wise counsel. I am going to embarrass him now. Chaz was the youngest Australian and United Nations soldier to fight in the Korean War, spending his sixteenth birthday in the frontline trenches and fighting at the Battle of the Hook. He went on to serve this nation in Vietnam, fighting with Alpha Company at the Battle of Long Tan and winning the Vietnamese citation for gallantry behind enemy lines as a member of the Australian Army Training Team. He was so prized that the communists even put a price on his head. I thank him for his support and strength throughout the years.

I thank my mother-in-law, Libby, who, in conjunction with my mum, looked after her granddaughters and made sure that our home, which had turned into a 24-hour campaign office, worked well. To my father-in-law, Michael, for his wise counsel and his wife, Judith—the granddaughter of Premier Joe Cahill and daughter of Thomas Cahill, the member for Cook's River and Marrickville—I say thank you. The McDermott family left Dundalk in the north of Ireland, fleeing political and religious persecution. They came to this country to build a better life for their children and grandchildren. In this they succeeded. But at no time did they forget that we have an obligation to help our community when it is in need and especially those who are most vulnerable. I am proud to continue that legacy as a member of this House.

I will now briefly thank my friends in the trade union movement. At the Australian Workers Union I thank Russ Collison, Scott McDine, Wendy Chen, Michael Zelinsky, Michael Kerley, Crystal Validakis and Debra Bushell. At Unions NSW I thank Mark Lennon, Mark Morey, Mary Yagger, Paul Doherty and Alison Rahill. I thank the NSW Teachers Federation and especially TAFE Teachers Federation President Phil Chadwick. At the Shop Distributive and Allied Employees Union I thank Bernie Smith and Gerard Dwyer. At the National Union of Workers I thank Derrick Belan and Mark Ptolemy. At the Transport Workers Union I thank Tony Sheldon, Michael Aird, Harish Veleji, Dermot Ryan and Barry Dunning. At the United Services Union I thank Graham Kelley and the delegates and members from Holroyd and Fairfield councils. At the Rail, Bus and Tram Union I thank Alex Classen. At the Electrical Trades Union I thank Steve Butler and Adam Kerslake. Finally, at the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union I thank Tim Ayres and especially Jan Primrose.

I especially acknowledge the phenomenal community champions—the humble, everyday people who serve their communities—for falling in behind me and working hard to support me winning the seat of Prospect. I thank Smithfield Little Athletics. I also thank my fellow volunteer firefighters in the Horsley Park Rural Fire Service Brigade. It is an honour to serve as your brigade president. At the Smithfield RSL Sub-Branch I thank Bill Newell and Secretary Doug Clarke. Doug ran the Fairfield West polling booth with military precision and crushed the Liberals in the process. To Father Arthur Bridge at St Anthony's Parish, Toongabbie, I thank you for your wise counsel and care, for the Rosary beads you had blessed and couriered from the Papal household in Rome and for making the time during the last weeks of the election campaign to organise my youngest daughter, Camille's, christening. God bless you.

To the many from the Tamil Congress who have helped me, especially Reginald Jeganathan, Varuni Bala and Vasse Rajadurai, I thank you for your support. I look forward to working with you to support the Tamil community and reconciliation between all the peoples of Sri Lanka, which must include the establishment by the United Nations Human Rights Commission of an international investigation into wartime violations against the Tamil population during the civil war. At the Assyrian Universal Alliance I thank David David and Hermiz Shahen, and at the Assyrian Resource Centre I thank Carmen Lazar. The Assyrian community is such a key part of the Prospect community and your organisations played an important part in my victory in Prospect. I am committed to assisting the Assyrian people in any way I can as your State member. I look forward to the day when the autonomous Assyrian Province in northern Iraq is established and we can tread the soil of your ancestral homeland together.

I thank Simon Essavian at the Assyrian Cultural and Sports Club. I look forward to working with you and members of your committee to re-establish and rebuild the club after the recent fire. The club is a centre of community, especially to those families fleeing persecution. There are many local ALP branches with so many people who have helped. I will not go through all of the branch members, but the branches are: Smithfield, Greystanes Pemulwuy, Wentworthville, Toongabbie, Prospect, Blacktown, Cabramatta and Fairfield. Thank you all very much for the work you have done.

From ALP head office I thank Jamie Clements, General Secretary, and former General Secretary Sam Dastyari. I particularly thank the Assistant Secretary, Kaila Murnain. Kaila: You are the most innovative campaign strategist that I have had the pleasure to work with. You were the key to my election success and I am indebted to you for your great advice, support and guidance. You are a wonderful friend to me and to my family.

To the State Organiser, Dom Ofner: Your calm, focused direction to me and my team was greatly appreciated. Sometimes I thought that you wanted a win in Prospect even more than I did. I also thank Lewis Hamilton, David Dobson, John Johnson, Kendrick Chea and David Latham.

In the Federal parliamentary party I thank Bill Shorten, the Federal Leader of the Opposition, for his personal support, and also thank the members of his staff, Eamonn Fitzpatrick and Andrew Anson, who gave up their free time to support me. To Michelle Rowland, the member for Greenway: You went out of your way to support me in any way possible during the campaign. Of all our Federal parliamentary colleagues, it is you I have to thank the most for your support during the campaign. I also thank the following members and their staff: Chris Hayes, Jason Clare, Senator Deborah O'Neil, Chris Bowen and former Senator Graham Richardson—Richo, I know you are here. Your strategic advice and steadfast, unwavering support over the past 12 months has been incredibly humbling; thank you. I thank former Senator Michael Forshaw, a long-time friend. I also thank Ed Husic, Senator Sue Lines and her husband, Rory, and Matt Thistlethwaite.

At a State parliamentary party level, I thank former Premier Bob Carr. Over the years, as I worked towards this day, his advice on everything from my diet—which I did not really listen to—to community engagement and public speaking was invaluable. To former Premier Nathan Rees, the State member for Toongabbie: Thank you for your support, especially over the past 12 months. Your advice, endorsement and hard work during the preselection and campaign were of great assistance. I intend to be a worthy inheritor of your legacy.

To Luke Foley, our leader: Time and time again you came to Prospect to support my campaign, even up until election eve. You first earned my respect a number of years ago when you were one of the first to stand up against corruption—before it was popular, and when it could have hurt you and damaged you politically. My respect for you grew even further when, during the election campaign, you had a significant policy discussion with my 10-year-old daughter about the possible breakup of the band One Direction. She is now a committed Labor activist.

Michael Daley is a good friend and confidant of many years. You regularly came to Prospect, meeting with community group after community group. Your integrity, wise counsel and good humour have been greatly appreciated and will not be forgotten. Linda Burney, you were always there when I asked, even well before the preselection. Guy Zangari, my neighbour next door at Fairfield, what a ride it has been! I do not know what was more fun—the clowns of the No Land Tax Party or the botox of the Christian Democratic Party candidate, Edward Royal. Ryan Park, thank you for your advice regarding schools and TAFE on your many visits to the electorate.

Nick Lalich, my neighbour to the south in Cabramatta, thank you for your cheerful guidance and the Vietnamese language lessons. Paul Lynch, thank you for your advice over the past few years. I look forward to working with you on justice and law reform over the term of this Parliament. To John Robertson, neighbour to the north of the electorate, the Libs are still smarting from your actions at the composite pre-poll at Blacktown. I also thank Ron Hoenig and Tania Mihailuk. In the other place, I thank Adam Searle, Walt Secord, Sophie Cotsis, Peter Primrose, Greg Donnelly and Daniel Mookhey, an alumnus of Girraween High School.

Now to my fellow elected Western Sydney members of Parliament who fought the good fight in their own electorates: Jodi McKay is incorruptible, incredible and one hell of a campaigner; Prue Car of Londonderry is a campaign machine—my God, you earned your place in this House; Greg Warren of Campbelltown, a fellow ex-soldier, is quiet and low-key with a will of iron; Edmond Atalla of Mt Druitt, the first Egyptian Coptic member of Parliament, is living proof of the success of a multicultural Australia; and Julia Finn, my neighbour to the east, is a long-time friend.

What a great win it was. Tell me, has Tony Issa actually conceded yet? To Anoulack Chanthivong of Macquarie Fields: You are a worthy successor to Dr Andrew McDonald. Chris Minns of Kogarah, who suggested some four years ago that I would run for the seat of Smithfield, thanks for such a great idea. I also thank Trish Doyle of the Blue Mountains and Jihab Dib of Lakemba, as well as my Labor parliamentary colleagues outside of Western Sydney.

I also thank my wife, Bettina. I love you, and I could not have done this without you. You and our daughters, Olivia, Geneva and Camille, are the reason I wake up every day with a smile on my face. Loving you is easy. You have always stood by me, fought campaign after campaign beside me and never flinched, no matter what the challenge. Over the last days of the campaign you worked so hard that you lost your voice and were

ordered to bed rest—something you simply ignored. We are true believers and I love the fact that you share this journey beside me. I am committed to working hard every day to bring a Labor Government to office that will bring Labor values, social democratic beliefs and public integrity back to Western Sydney and New South Wales. God bless Australia.

COURTS AND CRIMES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2015

Message received from the Legislative Council returning the bill without amendment.

By leave, community recognition statements proceeded with.

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION STATEMENTS

BOTANY AND MASCOT RSL SUB-BRANCH ANZAC DAY DAWN SERVICE

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) [1.37 p.m.]: I acknowledge the very moving Anzac Day dawn service organised by the Botany and Mascot RSL Sub-Branch on Anzac Day. In more than three decades of representing my community, the huge crowd that came to the dawn service was unprecedented—all there to pay their respects to our servicemen and servicewomen, both past and present. It was an honour to lay a wreath at this dawn service, which provided us all with the opportunity to reflect on the ultimate sacrifice paid by so many Australians for our freedom. I also offer my respect and appreciation to our current servicemen and servicewomen who place their lives in danger in so many places around the world to protect the freedom of humanity. I pay tribute to the members of the Botany and Mascot RSL Sub-Branch for their very moving service to commemorate and honour our fallen.

GRACELANDS EARLY EDUCATION CENTRE

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Corrections, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) [1.38 p.m.]: Members will be aware that my electorate is fast becoming a centre of excellence for educational services. With that in mind, I congratulate Joseph and Elizabeth Russo and the Gracelands Early Education Centre on their recent accolades in the Australian Small Business Champion Awards. Gracelands is a family-owned and operated Hills small business. It is obviously succeeding in its aim to provide the highest quality of care in a nurturing and safe environment. The centre sets itself above the rest through its developmental programs designed to stimulate the mind—arming children under its care with an appreciation and thirst for learning from the earliest stages. This type of innovation is typical of enterprising Hills residents.

During the past five years, Elizabeth and Joseph—with a team of dedicated and passionate staff—have re-established Gracelands as an iconic Hills childcare centre and it is going from strength to strength. Gracelands' high-quality service was most recently credited in April with singular recognition for the provision of outstanding childcare services and overall winner of best childcare centre. I commend this small business for its service to the Hills community.

TET FESTIVAL

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) [1.39 p.m.]: On 28 February this year I had the privilege of attending the annual lunar Tet Festival at Fairfield Showground. The Tet Festival, organised by the Vietnamese Community of Australia, is an important celebration of the Vietnamese people. It attracts a large number of residents from my electorate of Cabramatta as well as many others. I have attended the event many times throughout the years. It is wonderful to see the large number of families from various backgrounds that attend the occasion. It is a great example of the harmony and friendship that exists in our multicultural society. I congratulate Dr Thang Ha, President of the Vietnamese Community in Australia, New South Wales Chapter, and also Mr Tri Vo, President of the Vietnamese Community in Australia, on their ongoing support and strong contribution to the community.

GRAFTON LIGHT HORSE RE-ENACTMENT RIDE

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence—Parliamentary Secretary) [1.40 p.m.]: I offer my congratulations to everyone involved in the Light Horse re-enactment ride, which was undertaken as part of the

Anzac Centenary in Grafton. When the call went out for volunteers to fight in World War I, men from the upper reaches of the Clarence Valley answered the nation's call, riding their horses across rivers and through the bush to sign up at the Copmanhurst Hotel before riding 30 kilometres to Grafton and heading off to battle.

Federal Member for Page, Kevin Hogan, presented the Grafton RSL Sub-Branch with an Anzac Centenary grant for a number of events, including the re-enactment of the famous Light Horse recruitment drive, which saw 150 horse men and women ride from Copmanhurst into Grafton and then participate in the Anzac Day services within the Clarence Valley. It was a sight to behold and will live long in our memories. Well done to the participants and organisers.

FAIRFIELD CITY CENTRE LIFETIME BUSINESS AWARDS

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [1.41 p.m.]: On 25 February 2015 I attended the Fairfield City Centre Lifetime Business Awards at Fairfield RSL. The Lifetime Business Awards is a Fairfield City Council initiative to honour businesses that have stood the test of time and have been trading in the local area for more than 25 years. I acknowledge and congratulate the recipients of the 2015 Fairfield City Centre Lifetime Business Awards: Fairfield Colour Tech, Ivan's Butchery, Chic Skin and Laser Clinic, Filpure Water Filtration Systems, Elias Pharmacy, La Torre Cake Shop, Baci Hair, Go Vita Fairfield, Paula Continental Cakes, Ambassador Coffee, Hot Burek, Dr Domenico Di Francesco, Baalbek Bakeries Fairfield, Marando Real Estate, Sam's Orthopaedic and Surgical Footwear, Barone Pharmacy, St Johns Park Real Estate and Bing Lee. These businesses have been in Fairfield for between 25 and 58 years, making vast contributions to our local community. I am sure we will see all of them around for many more years to come.

SYDNEY ROYAL EASTER SHOW WHIP CRACKING CHAMPIONS

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) [1.42 p.m.]: I recognise the Pitman children of Moree—Georgia and Henry—who were crowned best whip crackers in Australia at this year's Sydney Royal Easter Show. Their older brother, Charles, finished fifth in the men's championship. Georgia, who is 15, and Henry, who is 12, performed their routines in front of a sold-out amphitheatre and they were judged the best in the country for their age group. This is the second time the pair has been national champions. In 2011 Henry was Australian Pee Wee whip cracking champion and Georgia was juvenile champion in 2012. The Pitman's success at Sydney was part of a dominant performance by competitors from the north-west of New South Wales after Gunnedah's Wicks family took out all of the senior categories. It is interesting to note that the Wicks family taught Georgia and Henry Pitman how to crack whips and have been regulars at the Moree show. I congratulate the Pitman family on their wonderful achievement and obvious commitment to their sport.

NEWTOWN ELECTORATE NEPAL EARTHQUAKE FUNDRAISING EVENTS

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) [1.43 p.m.]: I draw the attention of the House to the work of the Asian Australian Alliance Women's Forum, members of the Nepalese community and BloodWood Restaurant and Bar in Newtown in fundraising efforts this week to support recovery efforts following the earthquakes in Nepal. Two fundraising dinners were held in Newtown on Monday night. I commend the Asian Australian Alliance Women's Forum and the Nepalese community for their fundraising dinner at Kammadhenu on north King Street, supporting Women for Human Rights and the Single Women (widows) Group in Nepal. I particularly acknowledge the hard work of Anjana Kingsley and Shamim Anwar, a representative of the Nepalese community, who spoke at the event. I also acknowledge Claire Mitchell and her team, who held a fundraiser at BloodWood Restaurant and Bar on south King Street on the same night. I commend their activity in raising money for the G2 Boys Community Club in Nepal.

GREATER HUME SHIRE EMERGENCY RESPONSE SERVICES

CLUBS AND COMMUNITY AWARDS

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) [1.44 p.m.]: Emergency response resources in Greater Hume Shire have been boosted with the launch of two new NSW Ambulance community first responder units. Congratulations go to the first volunteers and graduates who are members of the Henty and Culcairn Fire Brigades and also to the Ambulance Service of NSW educators. The graduates from Culcairn are Barry Fisher, Ian Forrest, Paul Jenkins, Donna Simmons, Liam Forrest, Rochelle Eramiha and Frederick Kelsh. From Henty the graduates are Phillip Takle, Brenten Meyer, Robert Kilo, Nathan Scholz, Raymond Wilson, Russell Davies, David Weston, Jason Morey and Callum Dumesny. I thank them for undertaking the course and for their commitment to their community.

Congratulations go to the Howlong Country Golf Club and the Oaklands RSL and Bowling Club on being finalists at the Clubs and Community Awards held by Clubs NSW at the Royal Hall of Industries, Moore Park, on Friday 8 May. I thank them for their outstanding social contribution to their local communities. It was a pleasure to join the Secretary-Manager of Howlong Country Golf Club, Chris Rebecchi, and his wife, Cindy, at this great awards function.

MOUNT DRUITT AND AREA COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRE WEBSITE

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) [1.45 p.m.]: I congratulate the Mount Druitt and Area Community Legal Centre on its new website launched on 28 April. The centre services the area from St Marys to Blacktown. Many members of our community who are having difficulty with access to legal services will find this website very useful. It is designed to make access to legal information and services more readily available. For many members of our community the cost of obtaining a private solicitor is simply impossible. This website will go a long way to ensuring that members of the Mount Druitt community have a foot in the door when it comes to finding out about legal information and services.

Unfortunately, the centre lost funding from the Abbott Government, but I am delighted to say that after this funding was reinstated—thanks to the hard work of a community campaign led by the Federal member for Chifley, Ed Husic—the centre is thriving. I thank the centre for the fantastic work it does in ensuring that members of our community can get legal information and help when they need it, and I thank Merlene Milson for the invitation to attend the launch.

FRESH FODDER

Mr ANDREW GEE (Orange—Parliamentary Secretary) [1.46 p.m.]: I draw the attention of members to a local Orange business that is making waves right across Australia—Fresh Fodder. Fresh Fodder was established in 2008 by Max and Fiona Schofield. They are purveyors of handmade fresh produce, which includes antipasto, 10 varieties of salads, 16 dips and tapenades—all created locally in Orange. In fact, Fresh Fodder goes so far as to boast that it produces the best taramosalata outside of Greece.

Today the business employs 20 full time and 10 casual employees, and produces more than 23,000 dips and salads each week, which are stocked by independently owned retailers in New South Wales, Victoria, Western Australia and Queensland. Max is a third generation foodie and has more than 25 years experience in the food game. He eats, sleeps and breathes every aspect of Fresh Fodder. Fiona, who is also a milliner extraordinaire, is the marketing manager. I also make mention of Business Development Manager, Sarah Gillogly, Customer Relations Manager, Samantha Hockley, Accounts Manager, Jenny Iffland, and the entire team at Fresh Fodder.

TRIBUTE TO RON JENNINGS

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) [1.47 p.m.]: I recognise my constituent Ron Jennings for his contribution to Millers Point, Dawes Point and The Rocks over 47 years. The local community has known Ron as the unofficial mayor of Millers Point because of his service, advocacy, fundraising and community spirit. Ron lived there from 1968 when he first came to Sydney until the Government's cruel decision to sell social housing and relocate tenants. For the past 14 years Ron lived in the purpose-built Sirius building and he describes the day he found out about the program to move tenants as the saddest day of his life. Ron has volunteered and raised funds for the KGV Community Centre for 47 years and served 16 years as the board-elected precinct representative of the Millers Point Estate Advisory Board. The Pyrmont community has welcomed Ron into his new home. I applaud his community spirit and his lifetime of service and giving to the community.

DEATH OF TONY HALL

DEATH OF MARY ARMSTRONG

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson—Parliamentary Secretary) [1.48 p.m.]: I acknowledge the passing of two notable citizens from the Davidson electorate. Tony Hall represented St Ives Ward on Ku-ring-gai Council between 1987 and 2012 and was mayor from 1999 to 2000. He received the Local Government Outstanding Award and Gold Medal in 2010. He was never far from controversy and fought passionately for what he believed in. Tony also made a substantial contribution through the Liberal Party. I delivered a tribute to Tony in this place following his retirement from council.

Mary Armstrong was a former principal of The Forest High School and Hornsby Girls High School, a life member of the Australian Council for Educational Leaders, founding co-editor of Teaching History and an early chairperson of the History Teachers' Association of NSW. She was President of the Belrose Rural Community Association and was actively involved in a number of Landcare groups. Mary was a committee member of the Friends of Narrabeen Lagoon Catchment, Garigal Landcare Group and the Community Advisory Committee for the Belrose Waste and Recycling Centre. On behalf of the community I again recognise the contributions of both Tony Hall and Mary Armstrong, and offer my condolences to their family and close friends.

CHARLESTOWN CARING GROUP

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) [1.49 p.m.]: I bring to the attention of members of this House that the Charlestown Caring Group is a community-based organisation committed to providing efficient and responsive support services to many of my constituents, including frail older people, young people with disabilities and their carers. The staff of the Charlestown Caring Group are supported by a dedicated, caring team of volunteers who gladly give up their time to provide a range of services to people in need. This includes transport to medical appointments, home visits, in-home respite, assistance with shopping, group activities such as craft, games and concerts, bus outings and advocacy services. The volunteers at the Charlestown Caring Group include students, retirees, unemployed people and those with a few spare hours each week. The Charlestown Caring Group has been operating in the area for more than 40 years. I certainly want to see them remain as a viable organisation providing a valuable community service to the people of my electorate.

Community recognition statements concluded.

[Acting-Speaker (Mr Lee Evans) left the chair at 1.50 p.m. The House resumed at 2.15 p.m.]

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I welcome all of our guests to the gallery this afternoon. In particular, I welcome, firstly, Pauline McAllister and Jen Cowley from Dubbo, who are guests of the Deputy Premier and member for Dubbo. I also welcome Karen Howard, who is a business leader from the Hunter and a guest of the Minister for Trade, Tourism and Major Events, and Minister for Sport, and member for Penrith. I also welcome to the gallery the Hon. David Oldfield.

I also welcome Marie Patricia Lyndon, who is celebrating her ninety-first birthday. This is an interesting story. Marie is accompanied by members of her family. Marie is the daughter of William Henry Lamb, who was the Speaker of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly from 28 May 1947 to 20 April 1959. He held that position for 11 years and 10 months. I welcome Marie, who is a guest of the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation and member for Ryde.

I also welcome to the gallery 70 students and their teachers from the Riverina Anglican College, Wagga Wagga. I am led to understand from the member for Wagga Wagga that one of the 70 students is Gareth Veitch, the son of Hon. Mick Veitch, MLC. The students and teachers are guests of the Parliamentary Secretary for Veterans and the Centenary of ANZAC and member for Wagga Wagga.

I also acknowledge Ken Levy and Paula Turnbull of Albion Park, who are guests of the Parliamentary Secretary for the Illawarra and South Coast and member for Kiama.

REPRESENTATION OF MINISTER ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I inform the House that the Minister for Health will answer questions today in the absence of the Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Medical Research, Assistant Minister for Health, Minister for Women, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Notices of Motions to be Accorded Priority

[During the giving of notices of motions]

The SPEAKER: Order! There should be no interjections during members giving notices of motions.

QUESTION TIME

[*Question time commenced at 2.22 p.m.*]

FEDERAL BUDGET

Mr LUKE FOLEY: My question is directed to the Premier. Given that the Federal budget last night confirmed \$25 billion worth of cuts to New South Wales hospitals and schools, what plans is the Government making ahead of the State budget to ensure that waiting lists for elective surgery will not further increase and that more children do not end up studying in demountable classrooms?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: It is crazy in this House. History was made yesterday when we had two members for Newcastle; we now have three members for Newcastle in the Chamber. We have the two current members and the third one up in the gallery. The Leader of the Opposition asks an interesting question and my hope for this leader is that he will be a leader who reads the Budget, because we have not had that for a while in this place. The shadow Treasurer does not read the Budget. I will explain. I understand the concerns the Leader of the Opposition is raising. They are concerns that I have raised and that the Government has raised. The issue is not resolved. The Government is not standing by and accepting reductions over the longer term that were outlined in last year's Budget.

At the recent Council of Australian Governments [COAG] I had a commitment from the Prime Minister—as did the other premiers—that we would discuss this issue as part of the Federation white paper. That is exactly what we do and we will do the right thing by the people of this State. We will do the right thing to ensure that we get the amount of money we need to provide the hospitals and health care that we require and the education that our schools continue to provide to world-class standards. I note in relation to the Budget that early in the morning yesterday the Federal Leader of the Opposition said that he was opposed to the Budget but then someone pointed out to him that it had not yet been delivered.

Ms Linda Burney: Point of order: My point of order is relevance under Standing Order 129. The question was not about what other politicians in other places said; it is about what plan this Government has to make up that enormous shortfall.

The SPEAKER: Order! The question included references to politicians in other places. There is no point of order.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: It reminded me a little of events we had seen with our own shadow Treasurer because in the past few months there have been a few highlights but one of my favourite moments was the leadership challenge that went on on the other side of the House—we all enjoyed that. We all have sympathy for the member for Maroubra. He thought he was on the cusp of something—

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order: My point of order is under two standing orders. Under Standing Order 129, the Premier is now canvassing what he claims to be leadership issues within the Labor Party—whatever that might be. That is not related to the question he was asked. Secondly, it sounds very much as though he is about to impute improper motives. That can only be done by way of substantive motion under Standing Order 73.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is not point of order.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: It is entirely relevant—it is about the shadow Treasurer and numbers. I thought, "This is a great moment, we have hope, he is going to do it." The shadow Treasurer said, "I will not be pulling out of this contest under any circumstances".

Ms Linda Burney: Point of order: The question relates to a serious issue and clearly the Premier is going to refuse to answer it. I ask you to draw him back to the leave of the question.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: We were all saying, "Yes, he is going to do it" but 24 hours later, so all the other members know, he got a phone installed in his office connected to the head office and Sussex Street unions for a joint conference call.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 129. The Premier may not be refusing to answer the question but he is certainly avoiding the question. This is about schools and hospitals.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The phone rang and they said, "Sorry, you are going to have to pull out" and what did our hero do? Did he stay in it? He did not stay in it; he pulled out. The thing is that, as shadow Treasurer, he had the numbers—but he just could not add up.

FEDERAL BUDGET

Mr ADAM CROUCH: My question is addressed to the Premier. What will be the impact of the Federal budget on New South Wales?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: It is a good question. I congratulate the member for his question and his great victory in the seat of Terrigal. What members opposite might have missed yesterday is that the Federal Government recognised the drivers of the economy. It is important that we drive the economy forward by investing in infrastructure, providing incentive to small business, and ensuring that we do everything possible to provide as many jobs as possible across this great nation, including New South Wales.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I have raised our concerns about health and education, and I will get to those topics. It is important to understand that the Federal Government is helping infrastructure investment in this State. We were proud to see a \$405 million investment in the NorthConnex project. We were also proud to receive a \$3.5 billion investment, including \$2 billion going to the WestConnex project, which will make a difference on the M4 and M5 in Western Sydney. There was \$2.9 billion invested in roads around Badgerys Creek in addition to our investment of \$600 million.

Finally, under the leadership of the Federal Government, \$5.6 billion has been allocated to complete the duplication of the Pacific Highway. I note that \$2 billion from asset recycling will make up a significant part of \$20 billion to rebuild New South Wales. It is unprecedented infrastructure investment. I must note that those opposite have said they do not want \$2 billion to go into our schools, roads, transport and hospitals. We are happy to say that we want it. It will help to build the facilities that we need across this State, and we are proud to receive it.

I note also that it is great news for small businesses across this great State because 96 per cent of businesses have a turnover of less than \$2 million. This investment will provide a 1.5 per cent tax cut. Tax cuts are in our DNA. Tax cuts drive economic growth. Small businesses will receive a \$20,000 deduction for investing in equipment. As soon as they invest, they will receive a tax benefit, which will drive the economy. That situation is in stark contrast to what we saw from members opposite, particularly during the election campaign. The shadow Treasurer proudly stated, "We will tax every business in this State \$7,500." Shame. They love taxing businesses.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I did not hear the debate, but it was reported to me—and I hope everyone in the Opposition understands—that they are opposing the Jobs Action Plan. What does the Opposition have against driving business in this State? Why do members opposite want to stop businesses employing people? Under the Jobs Action Plan businesses will employ people and we will take away the payroll tax. We want more people to be employed in this State.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: For some reason the Opposition is opposing the Jobs Action Plan. They are opposing the creation of jobs in this State, and only they can explain why. That is the most bizarre thing I have heard. Under the Opposition, economically we were rated eight out of eight. That was a spectacular performance for a long time. Under this Government we are no longer eighth. We are leading the nation.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Bankstown and the member for Strathfield will cease interjecting.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Here is a tip: if it is more competitive to do business, more jobs are created and the economy grows. It is not complicated. For some reason the members opposite have learnt nothing. They want to see jobs taken away from this State, which we do not support. I have raised the issues of health and education funding in the budget and will pursue it through the federation white paper. We want to ensure that hospitals have the funding that is needed to provide world-class services and that our kids are given every opportunity to succeed in life. The Federal Government got it right: it wants to drive the economy.

Pursuant to standing order additional information provided.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The difference is that members on this side understand the drivers of the economy; members on the other side want to hold this economy back. We will do everything to ensure that the New South Wales economy continues to grow and that as many jobs as possible are created. The Federal Government understands that this nation needs drivers such as infrastructure and small business. It will provide a great benefit to New South Wales.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr LUKE FOLEY: My question is directed to the Premier. Will the Premier guarantee that he will not sign up to an increase to the rate of the goods and services tax to address the funding shortfall created by the Federal budget?

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister for Family and Community Services will come to order.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I have said that I will play a constructive role in the tax discussion we are about to have. The Federal Government has ruled out an increase in the goods and services tax. I have put forward the solution to share income tax. If we share income tax we have a capacity to reduce stamp duty. That is what we need. Income tax is the highest growth tax. The highest growing expense is health. Aligning growth taxes with the highest expenditure makes sense. I look forward to playing a constructive role in that debate. At the same time, it requires leadership. We are determined to do right by this State. Reflecting on leadership, I must finish what I said about the leadership contender. Let us go through it.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The member for Maroubra had the numbers, so he was going to win. He then asked the member for Bankstown to count them and she got them wrong.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Is the member's point of order relevance?

Ms Jodi McKay: Yes.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The member for Maroubra had the numbers and was told by the unions and those in Sussex Street that he could not run.

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order—

Mr MIKE BAIRD: No, it was not him.

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind members that the Premier has answered the question.

Mr Paul Lynch: Under Standing Order 73 he is now imputing the improper motives I apprehended he would a little while ago.

The SPEAKER: Order! I am not sure he is imputing improper motives to anybody at this stage.

Mr Paul Lynch: He is now suggesting that members are behaving in a way not in accordance with their duties. That is clearly imputing improper motives.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The member for Liverpool will resume his seat.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Unfortunately, the member for Maroubra goes down in history as being the only member for the right involved in two leadership contests who, despite having the numbers, handed the leadership to the left, which is an incredible performance.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Canterbury will come to order. Members will come to order.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: In respect of economic reform, members on this side of the House will continue doing everything sensible and responsible. We have done everything we can to make business in this State more competitive, unlike those opposite. We saw that members opposite are keen to put taxes on businesses, which slows down economic growth. If they do that, they will consign New South Wales to number eight again. The good news is that we are back in office for four years and businesses will have a chance. This Government will support businesses and drive the economy.

Ms Linda Burney: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Is the point of order relevance? The Premier had just got back to the question.

Ms Linda Burney: Just mention three letters—GST.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Canterbury will resume her seat. I call the member for Canterbury to order for the second time.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I was going to finish there but the Deputy Leader of the Opposition reminded me of another favourite moment in my campaign. She was asked where funding was coming from for this policy but it was all too complicated. That is funding.

The SPEAKER: Order! This is not the opportunity for the member for Canterbury to argue. The member for Canterbury will resume her seat. I call the member for Canterbury to order for the third time.

FEDERAL BUDGET

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: Madam Speaker—

[Interruption]

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: I apologise for asking the question while the member for Canterbury was interjecting, Madam Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Apology accepted. The member will ask his question.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: I address my question to the Treasurer. How will the Federal budget help with the creation of new jobs in New South Wales?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I thank the member for Castle Hill, who is such a strong advocate for jobs in his community, for this valuable and important question. We know the budget handed down last night by the Federal Government creates jobs and supports small business—values that we in New South Wales share. It also concerns critical infrastructure funding for projects like WestConnex and the Pacific Highway. The New South Wales Government looks forward to the \$2 billion it will receive for asset recycling—all positive things for this Government.

But, as stated by the Premier, we remain concerned about the Commonwealth decision last year to cut growth funding in forward estimates for Education and Health, and we will continue to argue those issues with the Federal Government. As the Premier has foreshadowed, he and the Prime Minister and his counterparts in other States will be engaging in those discussions in July—because that is how we on this side of the House do things. We want to work constructively to further the interests of the people of New South Wales—which we have always done, and will continue to do.

Without bragging too much, I remind all members that after four years New South Wales is in a very strong economic position. That is because of the tough decisions that we made and the work we have done in

strengthening the economy and strengthening our budget position. I am very proud to say that we are leading the nation on job creation, and that is good for families and good for communities. I note that all members who made inaugural speeches talked about how important jobs are to their communities. Whether they were new members on this side of the House or on the other side of the House, I was very interested to hear every one of them say how important jobs are for families, individuals, communities and for the future of this State. That is why I was very shocked, disappointed and embarrassed for the shadow Treasurer when he stood in this place this morning and said he was opposing a bill to support business in creating more jobs for New South Wales.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The day after the Federal budget was delivered, in which the Federal Government sent a very strong message to every person in this country that the priority is to create jobs and reduce the burden on small business—

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: —we presented in this place a bill that extends the Jobs Action Plan for another four years, providing small business with more incentives to create more jobs.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Though every Labor member who now takes a seat in this Chamber stood up and talked about that in their inaugural speeches, what did the shadow Treasurer do? He said he will oppose more jobs in New South Wales. The question is: Did he check that position with the Leader of the Opposition? Did he check it with the member for Kogarah?

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Not even the member for Blacktown would have opposed that bill.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: That is because the member for Blacktown, like every other member in this place, knows that governments need to do everything they can to create jobs. Not only is this Government providing incentives for business to hire more people; we are also building things. We know that infrastructure creates jobs.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. If members do not come to order or they will find themselves outside this Chamber. I call the member for Fairfield to order for the first time.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We cannot remember the last time Labor actually built something. They do not know what it is like to create jobs through infrastructure. That is why we were pleased last night to learn that the Federal Government confirmed funding for major projects across the State—again creating jobs—such as the Pacific Highway and WestConnex, and of course funding for roads around the future Western Sydney airport. These are important projects, and they are projects that we are very pleased to continue delivering. Yesterday's Federal budget was about jobs, infrastructure and creating opportunities. We will continue to fight for what is right in New South Wales in terms of Education and Health into the future. But we say to the Labor Party: Stop getting in the way of creating jobs. The people of this State want job security, jobs for their children and future generations, so get on board, or get out.

FEDERAL BUDGET AND EDUCATION

Ms LINDA BURNEY: My question is directed to the Treasurer. Last night Tony Abbott and Joe Hockey locked in \$10 billion worth of cuts to New South Wales schools by not funding needs-based Gonski reforms.

Mr Adrian Piccoli: Why not ask me the question?

The SPEAKER: Order! I cannot hear the question.

Ms LINDA BURNEY: I will start again. Last night Tony Abbott and Joe Hockey locked in \$10 billion worth of cuts to New South Wales schools by not funding needs-based Gonski reforms. How will the Government ensure these cuts are not felt in every classroom across the State?

Mr Adrian Piccoli: Ask me, and you will know.

Ms Linda Burney: I'm getting to you.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister should not feel threatened.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I welcome the question on the budget, because which side of the House actually signed off on the Gonski reforms?

The SPEAKER: Order! I advise members not to shout in the Chamber.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The Labor Party would not have been able to sign off on the Gonski reforms because their budget would have been in a hopeless situation. It is because of good government that this Government has been able to contribute to those important areas of funding on which the good people of New South Wales rely. We have already stated in Question Time, I think on at least 10 occasions, that we will continue to argue the case for growth funding in the Health and Education forward estimates. The Premier and every member of this House have said that, and we will continue to hold that position.

As the Deputy Leader of the Labor Party has asked a question about the Federal budget, it is important to contrast the kinds of budgets that Liberal governments deliver versus the kinds of budgets that Labor governments deliver. I think it is fair to say that anyone who heard or read anything about last night's Federal budget would know it was all about jobs, all about supporting small business and families, and all about infrastructure. That is in stark contrast to the announcements in the Victorian Government budget last week. I raise this matter because we know that Daniel Andrews and Luke Foley are very close friends, and that during the election campaign—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Strathfield will cease shouting.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The member for Strathfield interjects. That is very interesting, because Daniel Andrews came to help the member for Auburn campaign in Strathfield during the election.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: My point is taken under Standing Order 129. The question was not about Canterbury, or Strathfield, or the last election; it was about—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Strathfield should not interject during the Treasurer's answer. The member will resume his seat.

Mr Michael Daley: It is about Gonski funding and what the Treasurer is going to do about funding cuts.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member will resume his seat.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: You should hang your head in shame after what you said in Parliament this morning. You are the shadow Treasurer, and you should support jobs.

Mr David Harris: Point of order: The very experienced Minister should know that she should address all her comments through the Chair and not directly to members on the other side of the Chamber.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: As I was saying, the shadow Treasurer should be embarrassed by the comments he made this morning on jobs. But I digress; I was talking about the Victorian Labor Government's budget. It is very interesting that last week that Government banked \$2 billion for the dumped East West Link Road. The Victorian Government cancelled the project—but kept the \$2 billion that the Federal Government had given for it—knowing full well that that money would be taken away; and that is exactly what happened.

Mr Guy Zangari: Point of order: My point is taken under Standing Order 129. The question was clearly about Gonski funding in New South Wales—not about what is happening with infrastructure in Victoria.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Treasurer's answer has been relevant.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: That must have rung a bell for those opposite. In 2010 the New South Wales Labor Government had to hand back money it had for the West metro because it never got its act together and delivered that project. That was off the back of the half billion dollars it wasted on the Roselle metro. That is what Labor budgets do. In Victoria Labor also wiped more than \$4 billion off future surpluses forecast by the Liberal Government. Labor only announced \$1 billion of an \$11 billion rail line and it cut infrastructure spending by more than \$2 billion. And this is the clincher: What did it do with the money? Labor put it towards salary increases of more than 7 per cent for its union mates. Tim Pallas said it was in line with modern Labor values and we agree—it was.

The SPEAKER: Order! I direct the member for Canterbury to remove herself from the Chamber until the conclusion of question time.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Canterbury left the Chamber at 2.50 p.m.]

FEDERAL BUDGET AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr ADAM MARSHALL: I address my question to the Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business. How will the Federal budget support regional development and small business in New South Wales?

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I thank the member for Townsend, a grassroots local member who understands his community and, most importantly, is a great advocate for many small businesses in the Northern Tablelands.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I have been aware of many of those little gems of businesses in my recent visits to the area. This is a very good question. Last night's Federal budget was big news for small business not only across Australia but also in New South Wales. The Federal budget will turbocharge our 680,000 small businesses in New South Wales and support jobs growth in our regions. The \$5.5 billion small business package will put the hardworking individuals, mums and dads who have the courage to take the risk of starting a new business front and centre of the economy.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: We welcome the 1.5 per cent tax cut for small business and the company tax cuts, as well as the asset write-offs. This will mean more money in the hands of small business owners. As the Federal Treasurer said last night, this is about giving small businesses some of their own money back. This is about giving small businesses the confidence they need to invest in their businesses, provide better services for their customers and free up capital to invest. Those on this side of the House understand that cashflow is the lifeblood of small businesses and regional communities. If we leave money in the hands of small businesses they invest back into their businesses and they create jobs.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I also welcome the Federal Government's \$1 billion commitment to the National Stronger Regions Fund, supporting the critical infrastructure that our communities need to develop a strong economic base. The \$333 million drought relief package will see additional investment in regional infrastructure and regional job creation, as well as much needed relief for our farmers and regional communities. Those on this side of the House recognise that regional New South Wales extends beyond the sandstone curtain. In fact, we do more than recognise it; we know where regional New South Wales is. Sadly, the member for Auburn, while campaigning down my way for second-chance Steve, did not know where regional New South Wales was. While slogging it out on the campaign trail the Leader of the Opposition and member for Auburn thought he was visiting the Monaro when he stopped for a press conference at an electricity depot at Oaks Estate.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. If the Minister wants to have a debate with the Leader of the Opposition about his appearance in the Monaro he should do so by way of substantive motion. It is a personal reflection—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister did not impute any improper motives; it was a statement of fact.

Mr Michael Daley: I did not mention improper motives. The standing order also refers to personal reflections and that is what the member's comments were.

The SPEAKER: Order! It was not a personal reflection.

Mr Michael Daley: Then what was it?

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra has been here long enough to know what goes on in this Chamber. There is no point of order.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: The question was about regional development and regional New South Wales.

Ms Noreen Hay: Point of order: Whilst the member for Maroubra was taking his point of order the Minister failed to resume his seat.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister should resume his seat during the taking of points of order. There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: The Leader of the Opposition and the member for Auburn thought he was visiting the Monaro when he held a press conference at an Essential Energy depot at Oaks Estate—unfortunately, he was 300 metres short of the New South Wales border. Oaks Estate is part of the Australian Capital Territory. Perhaps that was a deliberate ploy by the Leader of the Opposition because he is probably the last person in this House who wanted to see Steve Whan re-elected, but he has plenty of other leadership challenges on his hands, in particular by the member for Kogarah. Regional communities that have placed their trust in my colleagues such as the member for Northern Tablelands can rest easy knowing that we can read a map and we know exactly where regional New South Wales is. This Government has made it clear that regional infrastructure is a priority. In fact, in our first term we delivered \$13 billion of infrastructure in regional New South Wales.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: We are really working hard for the people of regional New South Wales. Only two weeks ago I was in Uralla with the member for Northern Tablelands to announce a \$25 million program to eliminate mobile phone blackspots in this State. This is the first time a New South Wales Government has contributed to improving mobile phone coverage in the bush.

Pursuant to standing order additional information provided.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Unfortunately those opposite do not care about regional New South Wales. They do not want to give communities in regional New South Wales the same equity and fairness in services as they are given by this Government.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Four weeks in and this Government is already rolling out its \$25 million election promise. We are using our \$25 million to leverage against the Federal \$100 million Mobile Black Spot Program and also attracting \$35 million in private investment from the telcos, which will give this State the largest number of tower rollouts over the next four years.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members who are not interested in regional issues can leave the Chamber.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: It is likely that the telcos not only will kick in that \$35 million but also will continue to partner with State and Federal governments in the future. This is a true partnership between the

Federal and State governments and the private sector. This funding potentially will provide services to communities such as Drake in the electorate of Lismore, Goolma in the electorate of Dubbo, Ellerslie in the electorate of Murray, Barraba in the electorate of Tamworth, Pilliga in the electorate of Barwon, and Dalgety in the electorate of Monaro that have gone without basic mobile phone reception. This is an important area not only for small business but also for tourism. Those opposite look confused because they do not know where regional New South Wales is, nor do they care about regional New South Wales.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will come to order.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: The regional members on this side of the House will continue to fight for regional communities to receive their fair share of services and infrastructure.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: They will continue to fight for regional communities to get what they deserve right across New South Wales. At the next opportunity I will table a map of regional New South Wales to help those opposite gain an understanding of where regional New South Wales is.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order. All members placed on one or two calls to order are now deemed to be on three calls to order.

FEDERAL BUDGET AND CENTRAL COAST ELECTIVE SURGERY

Ms KATHY SMITH: I direct my question to the Minister for Health. With waiting lists for elective surgery at Gosford and Wyong hospitals among the highest in the country, will people on the Central Coast be forced to wait even longer for surgery as a result of Federal Government budget cuts?

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: I have worked with the member for Gosford on the wonderful cancer centre at Gosford Hospital and the amount of money we are allocating to run that service. It is proving a tremendous success and a great improvement in services for the people of the Central Coast. I know that all my colleagues are interested in what we are doing in places like Gosford and others. I can tell members that there will be no cuts to any services as a result of the Federal budget. There will be an increase in capacity to treat patients. In regard to elective surgery waiting lists, we are meeting benchmarks better than any other State or Territory in the country, and we have done so for some time. We are also doing so in regard to emergency department access. So not only are we meeting increasing demand but also we have reduced the waiting time people have to endure for elective treatment. In regard to new services such as the cancer services on the Central Coast and elsewhere they are second to none and will not be affected by the Federal budget.

FEDERAL BUDGET AND HEALTH SERVICES

Mr MATT KEAN: My question is addressed to the Minister for Health. What impacts will the Federal budget have on New South Wales health services?

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: The member for Hornsby is a fantastic advocate for his constituents and another member who is thrilled with the investment this Government has made into not only stage one of the Hornsby hospital upgrade but also stage two, which we have committed to completing during the term of this Government.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will come to order. Some Opposition members are being rude. The member for Fairfield will come to order.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: The first question asked today by the Leader of the Opposition was about the impact of this year's Federal budget on health services in New South Wales. This year's Federal budget for health provided additional funding. There was a growth in funding this year of \$96 million. It goes up to \$5.2 billion. As has been indicated by the Treasurer and the Premier, the problem is in the forward estimates. As the Treasurer, the Premier and I have said, the important thing to acknowledge is that we want to be involved in constructive and negotiated outcomes. That is a discussion for July between the Premier and other State leaders to establish how it will pan out beyond 2017-18. Last year we got an increase in funding from the Federal budget as well.

Mr Michael Daley: Last year it was a kick in the guts.

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Maroubra that he is already on three calls to order.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: The member for Maroubra claims to be the shadow Treasurer. But there was no cut to the health budget last year. It is in the forward estimates.

The SPEAKER: Order! I direct the member for Maroubra to remove himself from the Chamber until the conclusion of question time.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Maroubra left the Chamber at 3.02 p.m.]

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: Those opposite do not know how to read the budget papers—that is their problem. As I said, this year the budget has gone up so we get an increased allocation from the Federal Government through our activity-based funding. We will be able to treat more patients through the greater activity we are doing. We never hear about the budget highlights but they include \$485 million over four years to continue the operation of the e-health system. This is a really important element not just in New South Wales but also right across the country. The e-health clinical applications help doctors, nurses, allied health clinicians and others to provide safe, quality care and enable patients to control their own health care.

The SPEAKER: Order! There are too many audible conversations in the Chamber. Members will come to order.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: It was a total failure when it was being administered by the Federal Labor Government. We are committed to this in New South Wales. We have invested in Health eNet to provide New South Wales clinicians with access to a consolidated view of a patient's information right across our New South Wales health system. The missing link is a patient's Personally Controlled eHealth Record [PCEHR]. To date Health eNet in New South Wales has made 940,000 cross-local health district hospital discharge summaries available in the New South Wales clinical portal. Most people do not realise this; it is already happening. We have 1.85 million community health event summaries across our system and many more things inside.

I return to this year's Federal budget. It allocates \$161 million over five years for new and amended listings under the National Immunisation Program. This is something very dear to my heart and dear to the heart of every parent in this State, and it should be. It provides additional funding for diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis [DTP] vaccination for the prevention of diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough for children aged 18 months from 1 January next year. It will extend free vaccinations against the shingles virus to older Australians aged 70 to 79 years via the National Immunisation Program. New South Wales has led the way in new legislation relating to the enrolment of children in child care without the provision of documentation proving that children are fully vaccinated for their age, have a medical reason not to be vaccinated or have parents who have a conscientious objection to vaccination.

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

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: I am pleased to see that the Federal Government intends to make further reforms to the parenting payment relating to vaccinations.

The SPEAKER: Order! There are too many audible conversations in the Chamber. Members should leave the Chamber if they wish to carry on private conversations, and I refer particularly to some of the members at the back of the Chamber.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: I am fascinated that members opposite say they are concerned about health services but they are not interested in listening to my answer.

Mr Ryan Park: They are your members.

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

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: The member for Keira is interrupting. There will be new incentives for doctors to identify children and ensure that they catch up with their vaccinations. There are many more good things besides this. If those opposite are interesting in learning what is happening, and it is really good, they should read the budget papers.

PETROLEUM EXPLORATION LICENCES

Ms TAMARA SMITH: My question is directed to the Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy. Can the Minister inform the House whether the sale and transfer of petroleum exploration licence [PEL] 445 to Lucas Energy has been finalised? Can the Minister clarify the status of the Government's pledge to buy back this exploration licence?

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will come to order. Many of them are already on three calls to order. Most of the members of the front bench are on three calls to order. If Opposition members do not contain themselves they will be removed from the Chamber.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I thank the member for Ballina for her question and I take this opportunity to welcome her to this House. As I am sure she is aware, it is an immense privilege to serve the community of Ballina as an elected representative. Her predecessor, the Hon. Don Page, represented the people of Ballina and this great State with distinction for 27 years. I take this opportunity to pay tribute to him for his service to this Parliament and the people of New South Wales.

In line with the commitment made during the election, the Baird Government will not approve the transfer of any titles until it has exhausted potential buyback negotiations with the existing and/or proposed titleholder. With respect to PEL 445, on 10 March 2015 Lucas Energy announced it had reached an agreement with Dart Energy to acquire the title. The acquisition was contingent on approval of the transfer of title from the Division of Resources and Energy.

As the member would be aware, the Government has been implementing measures to undo the great damage inflicted on this State by the Labor Government when it issued petroleum exploration licences for next to nothing. Let me make it very clear: Labor issued every coal seam gas licence that is in place over the northern rivers region. In contrast, through the New South Wales Gas Plan, this Government has successfully bought back 12 licences. We have cancelled a further three licences through compliance and enforcement action. We have not issued a single new licence since coming to office.

The first phase of the New South Wales Government PEL Buyback Scheme ended on Thursday 5 March 2015. A commitment has been given to extend the scheme to 30 June 2015. PEL 445 is captured under this scheme and the Government will be engaging with the licence holder to seek a buyback. The Government has a proud record of taking strong action to bring this industry back under control whilst also supporting its safe and sustainable development. Under the New South Wales Gas Plan, this Government is committed to implementing a robust regulatory system that is world's best practice. This gas plan provides landholders and communities with the protections they need, and the opportunity they want to participate in the financial benefits of natural gas development. This is a plan that promotes economic growth through the development of a New South Wales gas industry in a safe and sustainable way. This plan improves security, affordability and diversity of gas supplies for New South Wales households and businesses.

As we are unfortunately well aware, members opposite did nothing of the sort for more than 16 years. Their record on this issue is dismal—a complete failure. They blanketed this great State in exploration licences with zero regard for the impact on the surrounding environment. The stench of sanctimonious hypocrisy coming from members opposite is staggering. Their confected outrage during the election campaign was beyond belief and, of course, it came from a party with zero credibility on the development and protection of our environment.

In contrast, I make clear to members once again that this Government will continue to take a responsible approach to the natural gas industry that is based on science and fact. We will continue to act in the best interests of the people of this State and will do so in an open, transparent and sustainable manner. I can assure the member that as soon as news of PEL 445 comes to light we will share that with her, other members of this House and the community.

FEDERAL BUDGET AND EDUCATION

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: My question is addressed to the Minister for Education. What impact will the Federal budget have on New South Wales schools?

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: I congratulate the member for Oxley, my good friend Melinda Pavey, on her inaugural speech today. It is nice to see her transition from the upper House to where the real action happens in the lower House of the Parliament of New South Wales. I welcome and congratulate her. I also congratulate her family and friends who were here with her this morning.

Last night's budget confirmed what we already knew: at this stage the Federal Government is not committing to the fifth and sixth years of the National Education Reform Agreement [NERA], which will have a \$1.3 billion impact on New South Wales schools. We are very disappointed about that. However, we continue to be optimistic that the Commonwealth Government will change its mind following the meeting between the Prime Minister and State leaders in July to further discuss matters of education and ongoing health funding in particular.

It is indeed disappointing, given that New South Wales was the first State to sign up to Gonski. We have made our six-year contribution and introduced reforms to go with the money. It is not just about money; it is also about the reforms that are implemented with the money. We have been very proud to have done that in this State. As I said before, we are proud to be the first New South Wales Government to ensure that every Aboriginal public school student in this State receives funding. It is the first time it has happened in New South Wales.

I point to the fact that the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government has been the only Government in Australia to have truly committed to the Gonski agreement and the NERA reforms. The Coalition Government in Victoria signed up to the NERA prior to that State's election but since then the Labor Government in Victoria has failed to commit to the fifth and sixth years of Gonski. That State Labor Government failed to make the commitment and said it was not quite sure what it would do in the fifth and sixth years. That happened only a few weeks before the New South Wales election, but was any word of it spoken by the Leader of the Opposition, the shadow spokesman for education or anyone else? Not a word. There is a Labor Government in Victoria starting to weasel its way out of funding the fifth and sixth years, but people will not see anything like that from the New South Wales Government. We are 100 per cent committed to our six years.

I place on record that the Oxley electorate will receive more than \$4 million in additional school funding across last year and this year—the first two years of Gonski—because we signed up. To provide information to members I say objectively about yesterday's budget that without the Commonwealth's contribution Australia's share of gross domestic product [GDP] spent on education will almost halve by 2054. That is the kind of impact it will have. If the Commonwealth committed to its fifth and sixth years of Gonski we would rank third on our education spend per student. We are currently seventh, given that we are only two years into it. In 2011 we were twelfth and by 2019 we would be third. That shows how we are rising through the ranks in our spending on education because we were able to sign up to Gonski.

Whenever we hear New South Wales Opposition members say that they support Gonski and that the Government should be advocating to its Federal colleagues we must remember that Labor opposed every savings measure that we proposed to fund Gonski. As the Treasurer said earlier, they cannot have both. They cannot oppose every savings measure and then say that we should put the money in because they would have put money in. They cannot do that. It is voodoo economics for Labor members to say that they will not support any of the savings measures but they would have put the money in. They never would have had the money.

Yes, the Liberals and Nationals are in government in Canberra and we will keep working on them. We will keep arguing the case and putting the facts in front of them, but there is one person who has been very silent about Gonski in Canberra. That is Bouncing Bill Shorten. He has not given a single word of commitment to Gonski if he ever were to become Prime Minister, God forbid it ever occurs.

Question time concluded at 3.15 p.m.

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON COMPANION ANIMAL BREEDING PRACTICES IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Membership

The Clerk announced the receipt, pursuant to the resolution of 13 May 2015, of correspondence nominating Ms Julia Finn as the Opposition member on the Joint Select Committee on Companion Animal Breeding Practices in New South Wales.

Message sent to the Legislative Council advising it of the appointment.

PETITIONS

The Clerk announced that the following petitions signed by fewer than 500 persons were lodged for presentation:

Sydney Electorate Public High School

Petition requesting the establishment of a public high school in the Sydney electorate, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Elizabeth Bay Marina

Petition calling for an open and transparent public tender process for development of the Elizabeth Bay Marina, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Harris Street Walkway

Petition requesting the reinstatement of the Harris Street walkway connection to the central business district and the upgrade of lighting on Darling Harbour walkways, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Coal Seam Gas Exploration

Petition opposing the exploration for and extraction of coal seam gas and other unconventional gas in the Northern Rivers region, received from **Mr Thomas George**.

Inner-city Social Housing

Petition requesting the retention and proper maintenance of inner-city public housing stock, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Same-sex Marriage

Petition supporting same-sex marriage, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Pet Shops

Petition opposing the sale of animals in pet shops, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Duck Hunting

Petition requesting retention of the longstanding ban on duck hunting, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Slaughterhouse Monitoring

Petition requesting mandatory closed-circuit television for all New South Wales slaughterhouses, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Pig-dog Hunting Ban

Petition requesting the banning of pig-dog hunting in New South Wales, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Container Deposit Levy

Petition requesting the Government introduce a container deposit levy to reduce litter and increase recycling rates of drink containers, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO BE ACCORDED PRIORITY**Federal Budget**

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) [3.18 p.m.]: The motion that I seek to be accorded priority states that this House: welcomes the Federal Government's tax relief for small business, which will support the creation of jobs in New South Wales; acknowledges the Federal Government's continuing support for major infrastructure projects in New South Wales; supports the New South Wales Government continuing to fight for its fair share of funding in vital areas of health and education; and recognises that it takes Liberal-Nationals governments to clean up the fiscal mess created by New South Wales and Federal Labor governments.

My motion deserves to be accorded priority because it is important to recognise that last night's Federal budget will bring jobs and infrastructure and will help fix up the mess left by Labor. New South Wales remains the economic leader in Australia and last night's Federal budget will only help to maintain our strong financial position. The Liberals and The Nationals understand that small businesses are the backbone of a healthy economy and it is essential that governments do all they can to assist and support them. Investing in the small business sector has been a cornerstone of the Coalition's time in this place. The Federal Government has shown it also thinks that is important.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members who wish to continue their conversations should do so outside the Chamber. The member for Holsworthy has the call and will be heard in silence.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS: This motion deserves priority because, while the Labor Opposition talks about the need for jobs, only the Liberals and The Nationals are dedicated to growing employment by 150,000 jobs over the next four years. This Government welcomes tax relief for small business, which will in turn support the creation of jobs. The Federal Government's new \$5.5 billion Growing Jobs and Small Business package will help small businesses to invest more, grow more and employ more.

The Government is pleased to see that funding has been maintained in the Federal budget for infrastructure in New South Wales, including major projects such as WestConnex and NorthConnex. They are just two projects that would not be possible without the support of Commonwealth funding. As preliminary works begin on the projects, we welcome the \$1.5 billion package for WestConnex alongside a concessional loan of \$2 billion, with a massive \$450 million provided in 2015-16. This funding will help to ease congestion for motorists across all of Sydney. The long-awaited second airport at Badgerys Creek will be further supported by \$2.87 billion as part of the Western Sydney airport roads package to get construction underway. What a massive difference that will make.

The New South Wales Government remains deeply concerned about the Commonwealth's decision last year to cut the State's health and education funding over the forward estimates. It is important to engage in discussion and fight for Gonski and the National Health Reform Agreement—two programs that the New South Wales Government truly believes in. Our schools and hospitals deserve the very best we can offer. I know that New South Wales people will not rest until we get them just that. Finally, I remind the House of the mess that Labor left behind in 2011. My motion deserves priority so we can mention that again in the House. New South Wales deserves priority, which this Government has managed to return to it over the past four years.

Federal Budget

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn—Leader of the Opposition) [3.21 p.m.]: Both motions before the House deal with last night's Federal budget. One goes to the heart of the matter—\$25 billion worth of cuts to New South Wales schools and hospitals in last night's Federal budget—and the other builds on the answers given by the Premier and his Ministers during question time that deliver a hymn of praise to Tony Abbott for his unfair budget. I want our Premier to succeed at the Council of Australian Governments [COAG] leaders retreat in July. I want him to succeed in restoring a fair funding deal for New South Wales. But how on earth does the Premier increase his bargaining position when today he and his Ministers praise the budget that ripped \$25 billion out of our hospitals and schools? The best thing that we could do for the New South Wales Premier is agree to debate and pass my motion today so that he will go to the leaders retreat armed with a resolution from the Legislative Assembly in New South Wales demanding a fair share for our schools and hospitals.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will cease interjecting. The Leader of the Opposition does not require their assistance.

Mr LUKE FOLEY: I ask members to imagine the scene in the Prime Minister's office today, where the Prime Minister and the Treasurer are looking at the reaction from the State Premiers regarding the cuts—\$80 billion—to State health and education budgets. Imagine the Prime Minister tuning in to the New South Wales Parliament while the Premier and his Ministers are praising Tony Abbott for all those cuts.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Treasurer will come to order. I point out to the member for Strathfield that she has wandered into the Chamber while her leader is on his feet. The member for Strathfield will cease interjecting across the Chamber. That is just bad manners. The Leader of the Opposition has the call.

Mr LUKE FOLEY: The Prime Minister knows that the Premier of New South Wales is letting him off the hook. Why would the Prime Minister make a concession and back down in July when the Premier is doing what he did last year—except that last year the Premier was at least angry for a day. By day two, he had folded when he was next to the Prime Minister. In the Baird Government's first budget the schools capital budget was cut by 40 per cent, from \$630 million to \$360 million, a year. More than \$1 billion has been cut from our schools capital budget and those opposite say they will put back \$1 billion over four years. We have already lost \$1 billion in four years, and the Federal budget will make the situation worse. My motion deserves priority for that reason alone. [*Time expired.*]

Question—That the motion of the member for Holsworthy be accorded priority—put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 50

Mr Anderson	Ms Gibbons	Mr Piccoli
Mr Aplin	Mr Grant	Mr Provest
Mr Ayres	Mr Gulaptis	Mr Roberts
Mr Baird	Mr Hazzard	Mr Sidoti
Mr Barilaro	Mr Henskens	Mrs Skinner
Ms Berejikian	Ms Hodgkinson	Mr Speakman
Mr Brookes	Mr Humphries	Mr Stokes
Mr Conolly	Mr Johnsen	Mr Taylor
Mr Constance	Mr Kean	Mr Toole
Mr Coure	Dr Lee	Mr Tudehope
Mr Crouch	Mr Maguire	Ms Upton
Mrs Davies	Mr Marshall	Mr Ward
Mr Dominello	Mr Notley-Smith	Mr Williams
Mr Elliott	Mr O'Dea	Mrs Williams
Mr Evans	Mrs Pavey	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Fraser	Mr Perrottet	Mr Bromhead
Mr Gee	Ms Petinos	Mr Patterson

Noes, 37

Ms Aitchison	Mr Greenwich	Mr Parker
Mr Atalla	Mr Harris	Mr Piper
Mr Barr	Ms Harrison	Mr Robertson
Ms Burney	Ms Haylen	Ms K. Smith
Ms Car	Mr Hoenig	Ms T. F. Smith
Ms Catley	Mr Kamper	Mr Warren
Mr Chanthivong	Ms Leong	Ms Washington
Mr Crakanthorp	Mr Lynch	Ms Watson
Mr Daley	Dr McDermott	Mr Zangari
Mr Dib	Ms McKay	<i>Tellers,</i>
Ms Doyle	Mr Mehan	Ms Hay
Ms Finn	Ms Mihailuk	Mr Lalich
Mr Foley	Mr Park	

Pairs

Ms Goward	Ms Hornery
Mr Rowell	Mr Minns

Question resolved in the affirmative.

FEDERAL BUDGET**Motion Accorded Priority**

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) [3.33 p.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) Welcomes the Federal Government's tax relief for small business, which will support the creation of jobs in New South Wales.
- (2) Acknowledges the Federal Government's continuing support for major infrastructure projects in New South Wales.
- (3) Supports the New South Wales Government in continuing to fight for its fair share of funding in vital areas of health and education.
- (4) Recognises that it takes Liberal and Nationals governments to clean up the fiscal mess created by New South Wales and Federal Labor governments.

When we came to government, the state of affairs was less than inspiring and before the 2011 election the future did not look very bright. I remind the House of the mess left behind by Labor in 2011. There was an undisclosed \$5.2 billion hole in the budget forward estimates and the State was on track to lose its triple-A credit rating due to out-of-control expenses growth. In the last four years of Labor, its poorly executed wages policy from 2007 cost the budget an extra \$900 million. The State was left with a \$30 billion infrastructure backlog. In the last 10 years of Labor, New South Wales had the slowest economic growth of any major State and the lowest growth of any mainland State. In the last five years of Labor, New South Wales had the lowest business confidence of any mainland State government. Labor presided over the lowest housing growth in the nation and the lowest average annual rate of any State for retail trade. That is not a legacy I would be proud of, and so I am surprised that Labor sought to return to government at the last election.

Last night's Federal budget made a commitment to the small business sector and jobs growth across the country. The Growing Jobs and Small Business package will help employers create jobs and assist Australia's unemployed—particularly unemployed youth—to build the skills they need to get into work. The member for Maroubra spoke this morning about unemployed youth. Yet he opposes the Jobs Action Plan. I am surprised at that because we have already seen the benefits of the rebates available to employers through the Jobs Action Plan, the new Small Business Employment Incentive and the Jobs of Tomorrow Scholarship Fund. The Jobs Action Plan has already created more than 2,000 jobs in the Liverpool central business district alone. That is huge. We see what a government can achieve when instead of simply talking about lowering unemployment it does something about it. The Government is investing in our booming regions, including south-west Sydney. I joined Ministers there to announce that 3,000 public service jobs will be relocated to various services across Western Sydney. That will make a massive difference to the region.

The Federal budget will work in well with our plans and will make a true difference to the State. Last night's Federal budget shows strong support for our infrastructure schedule. This Federal budget clearly recognises the importance of investing in key infrastructure projects that will carry us well into the future of our growing State. The Government has secured \$1.5 billion for WestConnex, together with a concessional loan of \$2 billion to help ease congestion for motorists across Sydney. Some \$405 million has been obtained for the NorthConnex project, with \$143 million provided in 2015-16. A total of \$2.87 billion has been allocated to the Western Sydney airport roads package. At last we will see some action on the ground for the second Sydney airport, which the people of Liverpool need badly. The Government has secured \$3.5 billion for the Pacific Highway upgrade; \$195 million for the M1 Productivity Package, to deliver capacity improvements along the M1; and \$61.35 million for the Newell Highway project. Some \$100.9 million has been allocated to the critical Northern Sydney Freight Corridor Program, to separate freight and passenger rail along parts of the northern line, together with \$38 million for the Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Programme, and \$3.25 million for the Bridges Renewal Programme.

New South Wales faces plenty of challenges as we try to rectify the foreshadowed Commonwealth cuts to vital health and education funding commitments. We will continue to engage in discussion with our State colleagues and to fight for programs—for Gonski and for the National Health Reform Agreement—that we truly believe in. New South Wales has been returned to a strong fiscal position thanks to the direction and vision of our Premier and former Treasurer, the Hon. Mike Baird. By maintaining the State's triple-A credit rating, we have upgraded New South Wales to a stable outlook. That is a clear endorsement of the strong and stable fiscal

management of the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government. This Government has got the budget under control and instilled discipline across government while investing in those areas where it is needed most. We have risen to the challenge of fixing the fiscal mess left to us by Labor—and we are succeeding. I commend this motion to the House.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) [3.38 p.m.]: The member for Holsworthy should visit whoever slipped those lines to her and say to them, "Thanks for the sucker punch, and for giving me the same, tired, four-year-old lines about the \$5.2 billion budget black hole." They fell flat then, they were untrue then and they are untrue now. This motion tries to make a sow's ear into a silk purse. The salient point about this motion is what is missing from it. It concentrates on tax relief for small business—and small business will love that; everyone loves a handout. But Joe Hockey's \$100,000 university fees from last year's budget are still on the table.

The \$80 billion in cuts nationwide, including cuts of \$25 billion to health and education, are well and truly alive this year. Joe Hockey insulted us all in this place when he said he is not shedding a tear for the States. He should be shedding a tear for those people who rely on health and education services because when this slow-moving steamroller arrives in two years, the \$25 billion in cuts will wreak havoc on our health system. Amy Corderoy wrote a terrific article for the *Sydney Morning Herald* entitled "Federal budget 2015: Health groups kept in the dark on funding cuts". She stated:

Health groups have been left scrambling after the federal budget revealed plans to cut nearly \$2 billion from the health system but gave little detail about which programs would be cut.

That is another \$2 billion. It is already cutting \$15 billion from the health system on top of Mike Baird's \$3 billion. She further stated:

Public Health Association of Australia president Michael Moore said the budget was a "bloodbath"—

that is hardly a ringing endorsement for the cuts inherent in this budget—

with up to \$500 million taken from the funds but no clear outline of how this would be achieved.

Joe Hockey is taking a leaf out of the Premier's book when he hides the details, refuses to disclose and ditches transparency. We do not trust Joe Hockey, Tony Abbott, Mike Baird or Gladys Berejiklian. More money is being cut from the health system. There is more debt and a greater deficit. The surplus is further away. The rudder has fallen off the document that contains the narrative about the Federal budget. Last year the debt and the deficit were an emergency; now they are not. Last year the age of entitlement was over; now it is well and truly alive. The general practitioner co-payment was ditched, but prescriptions will rise by \$5. Picture this: People who go to the doctor will now walk out the door with a \$5 increase on every prescription. How does that help families? How does it help mothers who stay at home and no longer receive benefits? Joe Hockey has ditched Tony Abbott's signature paid parental leave policy. Net debt has blown out to 18 per cent of gross domestic product [GDP]. There is \$10 billion in new taxes.

This budget is about jobs: It is about saving Tony Abbott's job and Joe Hockey's job. Austerity and responsible government decision-making intended to get the budget back into surplus has gone. We are entitled to ask what this Government stands for. Taxation is now 24 per cent of GDP, which is 2 per cent higher than the average under Kevin Rudd and Julia Gillard. As the commentators said last night, this is now a big-spending, big-taxing Government—an apparent contradiction to everything the Liberal Party believes in. The past two Federal budgets were the diametric opposite. The Federal Government is in political retreat. The Leader of the Opposition made an excellent point. What would Tony Abbott and Joe Hockey have thought if they had tuned in to the New South Wales Parliament today? All they would have heard, and all they are still hearing—

Mr Ryan Park: Backslapping.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: Indeed. They would have heard a great deal of backslapping from the New South Wales Liberal Party. We do not want backslapping; we want the Premier to fight for every cent of the \$25 billion that should come our way. But he will not do that. Last year it was a slap in the face. This year he and Tony Abbott are mates again. [*Time expired.*]

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! I remind the member for Keira that he is on three calls to order.

Mr Michael Daley: They interjected the whole time.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Keira was interjecting while the member for Maroubra was speaking. I remind the member for Maroubra that he is also on three calls to order.

Mr Jonathan O'Dea: He wants your job; he wants to be shadow Treasurer.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The Parliamentary Secretary will direct his comments through the Chair. Before I call the member for Upper Hunter, I welcome Jeremy Travers to the public gallery. It is great to see a supporter of this Parliament.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) [3.44 p.m.]: It is with great pleasure that I speak in support of this motion. Small business provides approximately 70 per cent of all jobs and its contribution to the economic and social value of our great State, in particular my electorate of the Upper Hunter, cannot be overestimated. The New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government is focused on investing in infrastructure to attract investment and the jobs it creates. The Upper Hunter is suffering significantly from the downturn in the mining industry, and small businesses are feeling the pinch. They are struggling to pay wages that will keep their loyal employees in work. Small business incentives are welcome. Unlike those opposite, we know what it is like to go home after a long day's work and not be able to sleep while wondering how to retain employees. We know that their families also depend on us.

Major infrastructure investment is critical in building regional New South Wales and ensuring equity of services that help build our communities and provide the secure future that we seek. In fact, by building better infrastructure in regional New South Wales we take the pressure off the major population areas and open up opportunities all over the State. I remind members not to forget certain aspects of Labor's record. It is worth mentioning them so the shadow Treasurer gets it right. As the member for Heathcote mentioned, in the last 10 years of Labor, New South Wales had the slowest economic growth of any major State; it had the slowest jobs growth of any mainland State.

Mr Stephen Bromhead: It was shameful.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN: Absolutely. In the last five years of Labor, New South Wales had the lowest business confidence of any mainland State Government; it had the lowest housing growth in the nation. It also had the lowest average annual rate of any State for retail trade. This Liberal-Nationals Government is focused on making sure that it builds this State as well as its regions. As the member for Upper Hunter, that is important to me. It is also important that those opposite remember that the Premier made it clear in question time today that New South Wales will continue to lobby the Federal Government to receive our fair share for health and education. I reiterate that this Liberal-Nationals Government strongly supports this motion and welcomes the opportunity to continue its growth plans for this great State.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) [3.47 p.m.]: Mr Deputy-Speaker—

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Keira has not even started his contribution and the Deputy Government Whip is interjecting. He will come to order.

Mr RYAN PARK: For the benefit of those in the gallery, it is telling when Government members do not want to debate a motion. The Government benches would be crowded if they passionately believed in what their colleagues were saying.

Mr Mark Coure: There are only two people over there.

Mr RYAN PARK: It is not our motion.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Keira will return to the leave of the motion.

Mr RYAN PARK: The member for Upper Hunter has been asked to defend \$20 billion in cuts to health and education, which were confirmed last night. This Government must be the only State Government in the country whose members say, "Thanks, Tony. Give it to us again next time." I cannot believe that, less than 24 hours after the Federal Government handed down a budget that made cuts to two of the biggest capital and recurrent expenditures, those in Health and Education, the New South Wales Government is defending \$25 million in cuts.

Mr Stephen Bromhead: Point of order: The member for Keira is misleading the House. There were no cuts in last night's budget relating to Health and Education; there were actually increases in that budget.

Mr RYAN PARK: I understand, in some ways, why the Liberals have banned The Nationals from expenditure review and budget committees. We just heard a comment from a member of The Nationals that the Federal budget did not make cuts to Health and Education. I cannot believe that a member of The Nationals—those strong country socialists—would say in this House today that the Federal budget, delivered less than 24 hours ago, did not make cuts to schools and hospitals funding. That is a major concern, and it will be a major concern for the member's community. He demonstrated a real lack of empathy and understanding about two important services delivered by State governments.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) [3.47 p.m.], in reply: I also welcome Jeremy Travers to the gallery today. He is someone who cares about jobs, someone who actively campaigns for the betterment of our community and someone who helps people out. I know that he will be a fine asset to New South Wales very, very soon. No-one is defending any cuts; we have not heard the word "defend" from this side of the Chamber about any kind of cut. What members have heard is that we will meet with the Federal Government and tell that Government that this is not acceptable for our community; that we need to maintain our world-class health and education standards. That is what we intend to do. The Premier and the Treasurer have already said that they will meet with the Prime Minister and Federal Treasurer to discuss the budget, to discuss Health and Education funding, and to make sure that New South Wales citizens have the best opportunities that they can possibly have.

Without proper resourcing, we cannot give our citizens the best opportunities to succeed in life; and we need to offer them those opportunities. It is perhaps what makes New South Wales great. It is sad that we are still teaching Labor how to make New South Wales great. I would have thought they would have seen how that is done over the past four years; but they are still not quite getting it. We are not standing idly by; we have raised the issues already, and we will continue to raise them and continue to fight for New South Wales. We will continue to do the right thing by the people. It is important to realise that the Federal Government recognised through the budget it delivered last night what are the drivers of the economy.

The Federal Government recognised that it is about jobs, small business and infrastructure. Without getting those things right, without getting the parameters right for the State, we will not end up with much else. If we get those right, we are on a great, great track. Recently we talked about jobs and the Jobs Action Plan. We talked about the 2,000 jobs in the Liverpool local government area alone that the Jobs Action Plan has helped create. That is huge for my local area. I am so proud of that, and I want it to continue. We must have the right parameters for small business, because then small business can employ more people. The more people who work closer to their homes, the more time they will have with their families and the better will be the opportunities they will have for good health and a good education.

Getting the infrastructure right includes building the roads to get to the second airport. There is not much point having a second airport if we cannot get to it. We need that infrastructure, and we need that funding to get the parameters right. We so look forward to the jobs that come from that second airport at Badgerys Creek. We look forward to roads upgrades. The WestConnex will make such a difference. Having the M5 and the M4 working together makes for a smooth trip to the city. This is about getting the budget right for the people of New South Wales. I am proud of the New South Wales Government's track record, and I look forward to working with the Federal Government.

Question—That the motion be agreed to—put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 50

Mr Anderson	Ms Gibbons	Mr Piper
Mr Aplin	Mr Gulaptis	Mr Provest
Mr Ayres	Mr Hazzard	Mr Roberts
Mr Baird	Mr Henskens	Mr Sidoti
Mr Barilaro	Ms Hodgkinson	Mrs Skinner
Ms Berejiklian	Mr Humphries	Mr Speakman
Mr Brookes	Mr Johnsen	Mr Stokes
Mr Conolly	Mr Kean	Mr Taylor
Mr Constance	Dr Lee	Mr Toole
Mr Coure	Mr Maguire	Mr Tudehope
Mr Crouch	Mr Marshall	Ms Upton
Mrs Davies	Mr Notley-Smith	Mr Ward
Mr Dominello	Mr O'Dea	Mr Williams
Mr Elliott	Mrs Pavey	Mrs Williams
Mr Evans	Mr Perrottet	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Fraser	Ms Petinos	Mr Bromhead
Mr Gee	Mr Piccoli	Mr Patterson

Noes, 34

Ms Aitchison	Mr Greenwich	Mr Parker
Mr Atalla	Mr Harris	Mr Robertson
Mr Barr	Ms Harrison	Ms K. Smith
Ms Burney	Ms Haylen	Ms T. F. Smith
Ms Car	Mr Hoenig	Mr Warren
Ms Catley	Ms Leong	Ms Washington
Mr Chanthivong	Mr Lynch	Ms Watson
Mr Crakanthorp	Dr McDermott	Mr Zangari
Mr Daley	Ms McKay	
Mr Dib	Mr Mehan	<i>Tellers,</i>
Ms Doyle	Ms Mihailuk	Ms Hay
Ms Finn	Mr Park	Mr Lalich

Pairs

Ms Goward	Mr Foley
Mr Grant	Ms Hornery
Mr Rowell	Mr Minns

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Order of Business**

Motion by Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS agreed to:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended on Thursday 14 May 2015 to permit:

- (1) General business to take precedence of the Address-in-Reply until 1.00 p.m.
- (2) Consideration of the Address-in-Reply during the period in the routine of business set aside for consideration of committee reports.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Order of Business****Motion by Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS agreed to:**

That standing and sessional orders be suspended at this sitting to provide for the following routine of business after the conclusion of the motion accorded priority:

- (1) Government business, interrupted at 4.30 p.m. for inaugural speeches and resumption of the Address-in-Reply.
- (2) Private members' statements.
- (3) Matter of public importance.
- (4) The House to adjourn without motion moved at the conclusion of the matter of public importance.

Pursuant to sessional order government business proceeded with.**PUBLIC HEALTH (TOBACCO) AMENDMENT (E-CIGARETTES) BILL 2015****Second Reading****Debate resumed from 6 May 2015.**

Ms LINDA BURNEY (Canterbury) [4.04 p.m.]: I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Public Health (Tobacco) Amendment (E-cigarettes) Bill 2015. The second reading speech delivered by the Minister for Health on this bill was one of the shortest I have ever heard. I state at the outset that the Opposition will not oppose the bill in this House, but we reserve the right to move amendments in the other place. In the recent election campaign Labor released a comprehensive policy on e-cigarette regulation, and the amendments the Hon. Walt Secord will move in the other place are based on that policy. The bill proposes to amend the Public Health (Tobacco) Act to prohibit the sale of e-cigarettes and e-cigarette accessories to minors in the same way as tobacco products cannot be sold to those under the age of 18.

The Opposition wholeheartedly supports that component of the bill, but I will briefly outline some other points. The health and safety risks posed to those who use e-cigarettes are not well understood. This bill is a pre-emptive strike, but it does not go far enough. In the absence of any high-quality research into the long-term effects of using these products, Labor supports strong action to protect children and young people. We acknowledge that restricting the sale of e-cigarettes and e-cigarette accessories to minors will go some way to doing that. It is our understanding, and the Minister commented on it in her second reading speech, that e-cigarettes are becoming increasingly popular—for example, e-cigarettes and e-cigarette accessories are now available in many places, including service stations.

E-cigarettes come in two forms: with or without nicotine. Some are sweetened with confectionary flavours. Members on both sides of the Chamber are concerned that this will make them attractive to children and young people. I am aware that e-cigarettes come in watermelon and apple flavours, but I am unaware of any other flavours. There is no conclusive argument as to whether e-cigarettes make smoking more attractive to children and young people or whether e-cigarettes can be a useful tool in reducing tobacco smoking and the harmful effects of nicotine consumption. The jury is still out. This bill is important because of the increasing popularity and use of e-cigarettes and their unregulated availability.

Some public health experts have raised concerns that these products are essentially a gateway to regular tobacco smoking. Indeed, the risk posed by e-cigarettes of potentially increasing the number of young people who will take up tobacco smoking goes to the heart of this bill. Statistics show that the rate of tobacco smoking has reduced in Australia, and the Minister has attributed that to actions by those on her side of Parliament. It is more generous to say that reduction is the result of action by all State and Federal parliaments, as well as many health organisations such as the Cancer Council and the Heart Foundation running campaigns over many years about the dangers of tobacco smoking. We are all very aware of the terrible statistics on the effect of tobacco for not only people's health and wellbeing but also the public health system and therefore the taxpayers of New South Wales.

The other important point is that, at the end of the day, this legislation should be seen as part of a suite of measures to reduce the incidence of cancer and the capacity of young people to take up cigarette smoking. Of

course there has been much effort invested by previous governments of all persuasions, not least being the point of sale legislation introduced by the previous Labor Government and the previous Baird Government. I think particularly of the very good work done in the area of plain packaging by Nicola Roxon, the former Labor Federal Minister for Health and Ageing. Whilst I appreciate that the Minister's second reading speech was very short, I think it is much more generous to recognise the efforts to reduce tobacco smoking and cigarette smoking in New South Wales and across the country undertaken by many governments and non-government organisations over a very long time.

Labor accepts that an outright ban on e-cigarettes would not be realistic or practical, and that is certainly not what it is advocating. The sale of nicotine liquid for e-cigarettes and vaporisers is currently illegal. Large volumes of e-cigarettes containing nicotine are currently imported from Asia and the United States. I think that is a very important point to make in terms of dealing with this legislation. Labor went to the last election with a strong policy on this issue. I am happy to see the Government following the lead of the Labor Party, but I would prefer the Government take much stronger action. In many ways this seems to be a wasted opportunity to go further.

In that context, and as I said at the beginning my speech, the Labor Party will move amendments to this bill in the other place. I am sure there is room for negotiation and discussion with the Government in relation to these amendments. The first amendment will restrict the use of e-cigarettes and vaping in enclosed spaces to more closely align with the regulations covering cigarette and tobacco smoking. The second amendment will restrict the advertising and promotion of these products at retail outlets, in much the same way as current laws govern tobacco sales. We will support what the Minister has proposed, and then look at where e-cigarettes can be consumed, and the advertising and promotion of these products in retail outlets. Queensland has already passed legislation to limit the sale and use of these products. I understand that former Premier Campbell Newman brought in that legislation earlier this year.

Regulating e-cigarettes is imperative. Smoking is still the most common preventable cause of death in New South Wales. It is responsible for 5,200 deaths per year and 44,000 hospitalisations. I know that the importance of these facts will not be lost on the Minister for Health. Even if e-cigarettes do not contain some of the chemicals present in tobacco smoke they usually include nicotine, which is addictive and has a range of adverse impacts on health. Most public health groups support action on this issue. The Heart Foundation has called on the Government to protect smoke-free places across the State. In conclusion, it seems odd that a product that can be inhaled is being used in public places—I know it is vapour, but it looks like cigarette smoke—when cigarettes cannot be smoked in public places. I hope the Minister will consider that in finalising this legislation. The Opposition supports the bill in this House, but it will move the two amendments in the other place that I have foreshadowed.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [4.15 p.m.]: I support the Public Health (Tobacco) Amendment (E-cigarettes) Bill 2015. The bill proposes to amend the Public Health (Tobacco) Act in order to ban the sale of e-cigarettes and e-cigarette accessories to minors—that is, persons under the age of 18 years. On 8 February 2015 the Baird Liberal Party announced it would introduce a bill into Parliament to ban the sale of e-cigarettes to minors if it was re-elected. This legislation means the Liberal-Nationals Government is already delivering on its election campaign promise. It is fantastic to have a Government that delivers straightaway on promises made during the election campaign.

The history of this Government over the past four years has been to make a promise and then deliver on it. An example is the hospital upgrade in the Lismore electorate. In the Myall Lakes electorate the Government promised to deliver stage one of the hospital upgrade and it will do just that. The Government promised it would ban e-cigarettes and in the first week of the new Parliament it introduced legislation to ban e-cigarettes. As the Minister for Health said in February:

We want to guard against the re-normalisation of smoking among the young, as it has the potential to undermine decades of successful anti-smoking efforts in NSW.

It is unbelievable that companies think they can introduce a product like e-cigarettes—after decades of those companies saying that cigarettes did nothing to adversely affect people's health, lying, cheating and refusing to produce documents when under subpoena and refusing to produce documents when under discovery. Those companies consorted and colluded with each other to cheat the people of Australia and other nations. It is great to see that they have been exposed for what they have done over decades by ruining the health of so many individuals. Yet those companies are now bringing out new products like e-cigarettes. It is great to see that this Government is doing something about it.

The bill makes it an offence to sell an e-cigarette or an e-cigarette accessory to a person who is under 18 years unless it is an approved product. An approved product is defined as a device or accessory that is a registered therapeutic good within the meaning of the Commonwealth Therapeutic Goods Act 1989 or a device or accessory that is supplied under licence or authority under the Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 1966. This will ensure that genuine therapeutic goods, such as proven stop smoking aids, are not affected by the ban on e-cigarettes.

The bill contains a broad definition of e-cigarettes to capture devices that are designed to generate or release an aerosol or vapour by electronic means for inhalation in a similar manner to the inhalation of smoke from a tobacco product. There is a regulation-making power to include and exclude devices. An e-cigarette accessory is defined under the bill to include cartridges, capsules or other containers designed to contain liquid or aerosol used in e-cigarettes, heating elements or other prescribed components of an e-cigarette. The penalty for selling an e-cigarette or an e-cigarette accessory to a person under the age of 18 is the same as that for selling a tobacco product to a minor—that is, a maximum penalty of \$11,000 for an individual and \$55,000 for a corporation for a first offence, and \$55,000 and \$110,000 for second and subsequent offences. As I said, I think we can all agree that e-cigarettes should not be in the hands of minors.

While there is no data as yet on the use of e-cigarettes by young people in Australia and New South Wales, there are anecdotal reports that New South Wales school students are buying and using e-cigarettes. There is also emerging evidence to suggest that young people who use e-cigarettes are more likely to use or intend to use tobacco cigarettes. In 2013, 43.9 per cent of middle and high school students in the United States surveyed through the National Youth Tobacco Survey who used e-cigarettes said that they had intentions to smoke conventional cigarettes within the next year, compared with 21.5 per cent of those who had never used e-cigarettes.

In New South Wales we have made great progress in reducing smoking rates and preventing the uptake of smoking by young people. The smoking rate among secondary school students in 2012 was at an all-time low of 7.5 per cent. We need to regulate the sale of e-cigarettes to minors to protect these gains and to protect children and young people from the harms posed by e-cigarettes. There are some broader concerns in relation to e-cigarettes and calls by some members of the public health community to regulate e-cigarettes in the same way as tobacco products. However, not all the evidence is in and we want to make sure that any future regulation gets the balance right.

We also want to make sure that any future regulation gets the balance right between the risk and any benefits. To that end the Ministry of Health is monitoring the evidence about the harms and benefits of e-cigarettes to inform future regulatory options. It is pleasing that the move to ban e-cigarette sales to minors is supported by organisations including the Heart Foundation NSW, Cancer Council NSW and Australian Medical Association. The World Health Organization has also called on governments to ban the sale of electronic cigarettes to minors. After the introduction of the bill last week Australian Medical Association NSW President Dr Saxon Smith said:

I'm also very happy that the NSW Government is continuing its good run on public health initiatives and is working on enacting this ban already.

Australia has had great success in reducing smoking rates but we need to continue working on ways to ensure they stay low.

Keeping e-cigarettes out of the hands of children is a good way to go about that.

I look forward to this ban getting through Parliament quickly and becoming law as soon as possible.

It is important that the public is aware of these risks. NSW Health has produced online fact sheets that caution people about the potential risks associated with e-cigarettes. Adults can use this information to make an informed decision about whether or not to use e-cigarettes. Making informed decisions is much more difficult for children and young people and it is appropriate for this Government to protect children and young people from the risks associated with e-cigarettes. I am pleased, therefore, that the Public Health (Tobacco) Amendment (E-cigarettes) Bill has been introduced. The bill will ban the sale of e-cigarettes to minors and help protect the most vulnerable group in our society. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) [4.22 p.m.]: The Public Health (Tobacco) Amendment (E-cigarettes) Bill 2015 proposes to amend the Public Health (Tobacco) Act to ban the sale of e-cigarettes and e-cigarette accessories to persons under the age of 18 years. I am aware that the popularity of e-cigarettes has dramatically risen in the past few years especially amongst our youth. In my electorate of Cabramatta smoking

is widespread in the older generation. It is most upsetting to see young children taking up smoking, whether it be through e-cigarettes or tobacco smoking. It is important that we try to deter minors and do everything in our capacity to reduce smoking rates and prevent young people from taking up the habit. In New South Wales smoking is the lead cause of preventable deaths. Figures show it accounts for about 5,300 deaths and 44,000 hospitalisations a year.

The bill before us will penalise individuals or corporations who are caught selling e-cigarettes or e-cigarette accessories to minors, unless it is an authorised product. The penalty for an individual will be 100 penalty units—currently \$11,000—for a first offence or 500 penalty units—currently \$55,000—for a second or subsequent offence. Corporations will be penalised with 500 penalty units—currently \$55,000—for a first offence or 1,000 penalty units—currently \$110,000—for a second or subsequent offence. During the recent State election the Opposition was in favour of tougher measures to reduce the number of smoking-related deaths. The Opposition proposed tough restrictions on e-cigarettes to restrict the use of e-cigarettes in enclosed spaces, similar to the current laws applying to tobacco in restaurants, hotels, public transport and other non-smoking areas. The Opposition advocated for restrictions on advertising, promoting and displaying at retail outlets aiming flavoured e-cigarettes at a younger audience. These restrictions would be similar to the current laws that are in place for tobacco products.

During the course of the last State election I took part in an interview on a range of issues with the local Cancer Council. The member for Fairfield and I acknowledged the problem and advocated for a tough stance on smoking, whether it be e-cigarettes or tobacco smoking. The Cancer Council admitted that in Asian and Arabic communities such as I have in my electorate smoking is a cultural problem. Smoking is rampant in those communities and seems to be a habit that some people have had all their lives and cannot break. It is a cultural issue, but we have to break through that problem. Whether through legislation or education, we have to get people off cigarettes. I have never smoked so if they banned cigarettes tomorrow it would not make any difference to me, but I know a lot of people would be affected. I think we will eventually need to ban cigarette smoking altogether over time for the good of the country and the health of our nation.

Testing undertaken by NSW Health in 2013 revealed that 70 per cent of e-cigarette liquids sampled contained nicotine, which is highly addictive. E-cigarettes are advertised as a deterrent to tobacco smoking, but misuse of the product by minors could eventually influence them to take up tobacco smoking. We understand that a total ban on e-cigarettes and vaporisers is not a realistic goal. However, moving these amendments will restricts the sale of e-cigarettes to minors. There is no doubt that both sides of politics want to reduce smoking-related deaths and the sale of e-cigarettes to minors. I am certain that everyone in the community wants to ensure that minors are not exposed to smoking, which can have a devastating effect on their health in the long term. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned on motion by Ms Melanie Gibbons and set down as an order of the day for a future day.

Pursuant to resolution inaugural speeches proceeded with.

INAUGURAL SPEECHES

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! On behalf of the newly elected member for Macquarie Fields, I acknowledge the presence in the gallery today of former members for Macquarie Fields, the Hon. Craig Knowles and Dr Andrew McDonald, a former member of the Legislative Council, John Ryan, and family, friends and supporters of the new member. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly this afternoon.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) [4.29 p.m.] (Inaugural Speech): Thank you, Mr Deputy-Speaker. Family, friends, and fellow parliamentarians, politics and public life are about service. We are here to serve our fellow citizens and to open up opportunities for their aspirations, helping them to build a better future. I stand here today in Australia's first and oldest Parliament as the fifth member for Macquarie Fields, representing an area named after the fifth and most significant Governor of New South Wales, Lachlan Macquarie, speaking in a precinct which bears his name and surrounded by his legacy—the Sydney Mint, the Barracks, the Sydney Hospital, Hyde Park, the Domain, and of course this very building.

If politics is about serving the public interest and the common good, who in New South Wales history better epitomises those ideals? Governor Macquarie transformed a penal settlement into a major economy with hospitals, roads and public institutions. However, his greatest examples of public service, where the common

good was placed in front of personal gain, can be seen in his values and his vision for New South Wales and the nation. He ended the Rum Rebellion. He believed in total equality under the law, regardless of rank in society. He believed in a fair go and enacted the emancipist policy which reflected his values of a meritocracy and justice. He greatly valued an individual's societal contribution and valued very little of his or her social class. And he had a strong social conscience, as shown in his desire to improve the living conditions of Aborigines. It is a privilege for me to be the member for Macquarie Fields, an electorate that bears the name of a true gentleman and a giant of New South Wales history.

There are very few places in the world where my story or my journey to our Parliament is actually possible—not as a visitor or a stranger but as a member. My parents, Bounmy and Somboun, who are seated in the gallery, started our family's journey in Laos, a country where instability and conflict had caused them and other people they knew to leave their country of birth. It was an unstable environment, not of their own making but one which caused them to seek refuge in another country and to find a different future from the one that was unfolding before them. In making their journey they left behind their families, their friends, and the very little that they owned for an unknown destination and an unknown future. But it was a journey they were determined to make and they followed a destiny they could not control. They had nothing of monetary value and they carried nothing of material worth, but they had the most important and valuable possession that mattered most, not just to them but to all of us—they carried with them hope. It was all that they had, but it was all that they needed.

Upon arriving in Australia with their four young sons, including me, the second youngest, they encountered many obstacles and felt many fears. They were in a land they did not know. They had to learn a language they could not speak. They saw signs they could not read, and they heard conversations they did not understand. They may have started cleaning dishes in restaurants and moved onto the factory floor, assembling glass, plastic and aluminium products, but they had high hopes for their family and for their sons because they believed in something special about this new place. They believed in the Australian idea. This idea promoted equal access to opportunity, to choice and to fairness that would be available to all those who seek it and not be denied to anyone who required it. This idea could release your talents and you would be rewarded for your effort, determination and ability. In this idea you could aspire to all that you wanted for yourself and for your family because in this nation, built on the simplest of ideas and based on the strongest of values, everybody is entitled to have their chance in life, regardless of where they were born, who they were born to, where they live and what their parents do for a living.

This story—and my journey to the Parliament—is not about my parents or our family, or about my election; it is about the strength of our common values of fairness and equal opportunity. It is about the openness and depth of our democracy and it is about the power of the Australian idea of hope and aspiration. These are Labor ideals—hope, opportunity and aspiration, a better life for all. That is why I joined the Australian Labor Party. Our work in the Parliament is never finished, with former Prime Minister Keating saying that the reward for public life is public progress. But how would we measure it? Is it the number of political promises and press releases? Most certainly not. What about how highly we rank against other States in Australia and other nations across the OECD? Maybe. Or is it the number of programs funded and projects finalised? Possibly. The measures are much simpler and more substantial.

It is my view that we strive to measure our public progress through the tone of our parliamentary debates, the depth of our public discourse, the role of science, statistics, reason and rationale in policy-making and, for me personally, measuring whether there is just enough space on the ballot paper and whether there is one more seat in our democratic institution for a skinny kid with two long, funny names, who had to learn English as a six-year-old to one day represent his community in our Parliament. These are true measures of public progress because they reinforce the nature of our egalitarian state, the openness of our community, the level of cultural riches and the diversity of our society. If I were to have said the same things when I was a six year old, it would have been as follows [Laotian words spoken and translated]:

Nothing is impossible.

This Legislative Assembly of ours, with its Westminster traditions, can be an institution for great change and can help to meet the challenges of a modern New South Wales for generations to come. However, at times we fail to live up to our communities' expectations. A number of residents spoke to me about what they think of politicians of all parties. It was not positive. A softly spoken and well-informed gentleman spoke to me as he made his way from the polling booth at the Robert Townson Public School. He and his son had just voted informal because they were disenchanted by the negativity, personal attacks and substandard debate. His

feelings though, I suspect, are reflective of many who have felt disappointed when they see personality power put in front of public debate and political partisanship put ahead of the public interest.

We need to do everything we can to raise the standard of our parliamentary debates and public discussion to meet our people's expectations. Consideration should be given to changing the rules of parliamentary debate, question time and parliamentary schedules, perhaps along the lines of the British model to encourage reasoned debate rather than sloganeering, showmanship and rehearsed lines. However, changes in institutional rules alone cannot elevate the perception of our profession in the eyes of the people. It will take a prolonged effort and a long time, but we should make a start. Our public resources are limited, but the public demands on them are not. There needs to be a balance between economics and fairness. Our solutions should be driven by our collective interest, not by political ideology. They should be built on our values, not based on the needs of vested interests. Bipartisanship is not a sign of failure, because vested interests always will win and policy outcomes are always weaker when bipartisanship goes missing.

Government cannot solve every issue on its own and nor should it. We need the combined will of our community and we need to take it with us. Society works best when there is shared responsibility between government, the people it serves and the organisations it helps. Labor's way of "We are in this together" is more productive than you are on your own. Education is an equaliser but it is also a vehicle for social and economic elevation. Your family's bank balance should never determine how much your mind is worth or put a value limit on your ability. In a prosperous New South Wales there should always be enough public credit for all of us, especially those of modest means, to withdraw from and invest in our own aspirations to advance our society.

Public education is fundamental to a fairer and more prosperous New South Wales. I know this because I have lived it. Without society's investment in my public education—and that of other students—at Robert Townson Public School and Robert Townson High School, I would not have been able to attend the best universities and learn from the brightest minds. It is in Labor's DNA to ensure that our schools are well funded, our teachers are well trained and our students are well supported with all the tools that they need to learn and to live up to their own educational aspirations. When governments underinvest in our education or training systems or seek to commercialise what is a valuable common good, it not only takes away classrooms that should have been built or books that should have been bought but also takes away the hopes of a sharp mind and a strong will wanting a better life. We deny people the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

Labor will never be part of this outcome. My time at the London School of Economics further reinforced to me why New South Wales needs to be a continually outward and international looking State. In my small class there were students from all around the world coming to learn from each other and to share their ideas and experiences. They came from a variety of professional and academic backgrounds, most were bilingual, others were multilingual, but all were clever. I knew that those students, once graduated, would go back to their countries thinking of ways to make innovative products we might want to buy and to deliver the services we would have to pay to use. In New South Wales we must not only compete with other States within Australia but also against other nations. Our education curriculum and vocational courses should always be open to new ideas, different subjects and improved teaching methods, and we must ready our workforce for the jobs of the future—jobs in science, technology and innovation; jobs in climate science and renewable energy; jobs in culture and creativity; and jobs in value manufacturing and professional services.

In a connected and internationalised world, the race for the brightest minds to create the jobs of the future is intense. Competition has moved beyond nation states and is now between international cities. It is not just about attracting financial capital but also about attracting human capital. Would it not be good if we could add to our society and attract hardworking, highly skilled, well-educated and creative people to Sydney, Western Sydney or New South Wales? These people will grow our economy, they will add to the richness of our society and social fabric, they will come with new ideas to begin new businesses and create new jobs—and yet, they were trained elsewhere, using someone else's money. We need to find better strategies to attract these people and to encourage them to stay. It will not be enough simply to rely on harbour views, sunny days and sandy beaches.

The people of Macquarie Fields have given me the greatest privilege in allowing me to serve them as their local member. I recognise the trust and faith that they have placed in me to represent their interests and to advocate on their behalf in the New South Wales Parliament. The people of Macquarie Fields—an aspirational area full of people who want to build a better life—go about their daily lives making an honest living, helping others in our community and they always do so with hope for a better future. They are a genuine and generous

hardworking people who ask for very little but who I know deserve so much. Our local community is further enriched by its cultural and social diversity, with more than 56 per cent having at least one parent born overseas. Their different life experiences, culture, language and ideas enhance the social and multicultural fabric of our society and add a few more pages to Australia's storybook. I am delighted to be able to represent so many people from so many different backgrounds that have chosen Macquarie Fields to be their home.

I have seen many changes in the area. Our original family home was one of the first to be built on the street when about a third of Raby was still to be developed. Since then, newer suburbs have been added with a few more on the way. Despite this, the Georges River Nature Reserve and Scenic Hills are defining local environmental landmarks which remain untouched by major development. These areas provide the open space and rural landscape that protect us from encroaching development. This environmental buffer is important to my community and together we will continue to oppose any major development which cuts into its rural character.

It is unacceptable to me that in modern New South Wales in 2015 Macquarie Fields railway station does not have an easy access lift and is a station where some trains do not stop. There are too many stories of mums with prams and bags, silently struggling to get up and down the stairs or of pensioners stopping multiple times to take a rest, just to get to the other side of the station. This is not good enough for the people of Macquarie Fields. This is not just an issue of infrastructure but also an issue of inequity and exclusion.

Named after Governor Macquarie, our area has historical significance but to me, as a proud Labor MP, Macquarie Fields has another special claim: It is the political home of Edward Gough Whitlam, located in the heart of the Federal seat of Werriwa. Macquarie Fields is not just any electorate; it is Labor heartland. For decades, Labor—and only Labor—has provided strong and effective representation, bringing the hopes and aspirations of every street in the Macquarie Fields electorate to Macquarie Street.

Politics is a tough job where no-one achieves anything on his or her own and people are only as good as those around them. I have been fortunate to be surrounded and supported by so many genuine people. Their only want was for my electoral success and their only wish was for me to make our community a better place, through hard work and dedication, as the member for Macquarie Fields. I pay tribute them and record how much their effort and encouragement has meant to me. To my campaign team, led by Dave and Mitch, the Australian Labor Party [ALP] organisation, along with my friends Paul and Alison—a great team effort. To the many volunteers who made phone calls, letterboxed many streets, put up signs in front yards, set up street stalls and knocked on doors, I thank each and every one of you. With gratitude and respect, I thank the rank and file membership of the local Labor Party which endorsed me as their candidate. Our Labor Party can only get stronger and our Labor parliamentarians can only be better if ALP members are given more say in our party and get a chance to select their candidates.

I thank George, Meg, Rudi and Wal—my council caucus colleagues—for the opportunity they have given me to lead local Labor over the past five years. I also extend my appreciation to some of my non-Labor council colleagues with whom I have worked cooperatively, including my good friend Fred Borg. I also take this opportunity to recognise somebody of special quality—the late Brenton Banfield. Brenton was a decent and caring man who taught me much. While he may no longer be with us, it is still my hope to make him proud. My home city of Campbelltown, which covers most of the electorate of Macquarie Fields, is a better community because of the dedicated employees of Campbelltown City Council under Paul Tosi's leadership. Paul is a top-rate public administrator but, more importantly, he is an honourable and decent man.

To previous members who have represented Macquarie Fields over multiple terms—original member Stan Knowles, the Hon. Craig Knowles, and my immediate predecessor, Dr Andrew McDonald—I am indebted to them and thank them not only for their company and their counsel but also for showing me the way to serve our community with distinction and dedication. I also extend my appreciation to my local Federal members of Parliament, Laurie Ferguson and Chris Hayes. I am also pleased to enter the Legislative Assembly with the newly elected member for Campbelltown. Greg and I were strangers all those years ago when we met at my parents' grocery shop and now we are fellow members in this House. All those who know Greg are proud of his achievement.

To my personal friends—some of them are here tonight—even though I cannot name them all, they know who they are and I want them to know how much their friendship means to me. These are the friends who are always willing to give up their time when I ask for it and they are the friends who were gracious with their advice when I needed it. I am grateful for their friendship. There are two sets of families who have given me unqualified love and acceptance. To the Rule family—Mollie, Julie and Aaron—our Australian family histories

could not be more different. They are descendants of the First Fleet and my family are first-generation Australian migrants, but their love, affection and acceptance of me are no different than if I was one of their own. To Aaron, any success that I have had or ever will have is owed to his sacrifice and dedication. He is a dear friend and I am a better person and a better public representative because of him.

To my parents, my three brothers and their partners, my niece and nephews—including Tristan, who is here tonight wondering how much longer before PlayStation 4 time—you bring much joy and happiness to my life. My parents in particular have imbedded in me the values of hard work, determination, optimism and the need to look out for others who are less fortunate and less able. Like any parent, they are proud to see their son in Parliament but I am even prouder just to be their son. They say that politics is a lonely profession. My life inside and outside politics would be very much the lonelier without my partner, Anna. Her love and understanding have made me a better man. Our journey in life has many more years ahead and I very much look forward to sharing those years with her.

All these people I have mentioned, through their different strengths, wisdom and generous spirit, have made me all that I am and all that I will ever be. My determination and aspiration is that we as a Parliament do all we can to make a better life for the people of this great State, just as Governor Macquarie did all those years ago. In all areas of public debate, New South Wales can lead the nation; we should and we must. We must. I thank the Legislative Assembly.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! On behalf of the newly elected member for Summer Hill, I acknowledge the presence in the gallery this afternoon of former Senator for New South Wales Bruce Childs, the former member for Marrickville, Carmel Tebbutt, local government representatives, family, friends and supporters of the new member. I welcome you this afternoon to the gallery. I now call the newly elected member for Summer Hill.

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) [5.01 p.m.] (Inaugural Speech): I am honoured today to come into this House as the first member for Summer Hill. Our area in the inner west is part of a vibrant, modern city brimming with a wealth drawn from many cultures—both newly arrived and more than 60,000 years old. What we now call Summer Hill was the Eora nation and home to the Gadigal and Wangal people, before it was stolen. I wish to acknowledge their elders past and present. And I take this opportunity, in my first speech in Parliament, to join others who support the recognition of Australia's Indigenous people in the Constitution, and an end to discrimination against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

It is often said that if you are not a socialist when you are 20, you don't have a heart; and if you are not a conservative when you are 40, you don't have a head. I do not know where people come up with these things! Having worked for Anthony Albanese and Julia Gillard throughout my twenties, I assure this Parliament and the community of Summer Hill that I come to this place with a firm understanding and belief that the values we hold dear need not and should not become world weary at any age. Indeed, I look to Labor elders, like Gough Whitlam and Tom Uren, who have recently passed, as examples of people who never let setbacks tire their commitment to fighting disadvantage and injustice. And, anyway, I am still a long way off turning 40!

I want to say a few things about who I am and how I plan to represent the residents of Summer Hill in this, Australia's oldest Parliament. When I was growing up my mother, Lyndall, taught at public high schools and my father, Peter, practised law. They instilled in me two things above all else: the importance of education and a sense of civic responsibility. I am a proud product of our public education system. It was at my local schools, Artarmon Public and later Willoughby Girls High School, that I made friends from many varied backgrounds. I still believe in a public system not only where all children have the same quality of education, but where children who live in the same areas learn in the same schools and are not separated because of their families' incomes or for any other reason. I think schooling is preparation for life in every sense. If an inclusive society is important to us, schools should strive to be inclusive as much as they strive to be excellent academically.

I have a lot to thank my parents for. They made sure that education for my sister, Phoebe, and I continued outside school. Our parents were dedicated in their efforts to ensure that we grew up with a sense of the wider world, and our extra-classroom education took on many forms. There were weekend trips to museums and art galleries; there were bushwalks and camping trips; and the overseas holidays that they saved for always had an educational focus. Perhaps the most structured part of my parent-led tuition was our weekly Friday night ritual of pizza and *Burke's Backyard*. I assure you that I sent many stamped, self-addressed envelopes to Channel 9 requesting the latest fact sheets on acid rain, worm farming and the results of the recent dog road test.

Through our many adventures I learnt about different people's ways of life, the precious beauty of our natural environment, of art and culture and history; and through this I came to understand that I could not take for granted my good fortune at growing up in a comfortable family home, surrounded by love, support and opportunity. My education about the world took on a very practical purpose: finding ways to change it for the better. In high school I began testing out this civic responsibility. My causes were varied and my enthusiasm was, well, youthful. I could not believe people wanted to kill creatures as beautiful and as intelligent as whales. I still cannot.

At 15, I heard Pauline Hanson's first speech to Parliament. What I heard was an attack on the multicultural country I love. She claimed that this great strength of our country was in fact our weakness; that the only way forward was to go back to the bad old days of white Australia; that a nation built by a mix of immigrants, convicts and Indigenous people should be scared of being swamped by foreigners. She said this even as the world looked to us as a model of a modern, thriving society, more cosmopolitan than anywhere in Europe and perfectly at home in Asia. Soon after her speech, I organised my school friends to go to a rally in the city against the silly idea that Australia needed one culture to be one nation.

Multiculturalism is a great Australian story, and its rich rewards are evident everywhere in the streets and suburbs of the electorate of Summer Hill. I love that on any given day you are spoilt for choice about what to eat—some sticky baklava in Dulwich Hill, the wafting smells of wood-fired pizza across Haberfield, or queuing for the famous Vietnamese pork roll in Marrickville. I love the meandering candlelit Greek Easter parade through the streets of Marrickville, and the colour and the firecrackers of Chinese New Year in Ashfield. But it is more than this. Our communities celebrate together and we look out for each other. Our differences do not divide us—they unite us.

It follows that a successful, multicultural nation should be able to continue to accept new immigrants from all countries and backgrounds. And we usually do. But somehow, for as long as I have been an adult, Australia's political leaders have made a cruel exception for people who come here to seek asylum. The demonisation of people who seek asylum, over the 14 years since the *Tampa*, will not be easy to undo. But I ask Australians who have watched as politicians try to out-muscle each other on this issue to think about the people involved. Who are these people who come to seek asylum in Australia? These are people with enough courage to risk everything they know for a better life for their family—with enough pluck and determination to escape their persecutors, to cross borders with their life savings, to persevere as they make their way through places unknown, to take a journey they know will either bring a new beginning or an end.

Are they really that different from our ancestors, who made new lives after penal sentences brought them to New South Wales around 200 years ago, or those who left post-war Europe 60 years ago? Are they really that different from the Chinese migrants who were welcomed by Prime Minister Hawke, many of whom now call Ashfield home, or the Vietnamese boat people who were welcomed by Prime Minister Fraser, many of whom now call Marrickville home? Australia has always attracted immigrants because of our boundless plains; our beauties, rich and rare. Australians do want fairness; but the idea that there is an orderly queue to enter our country, and that those who seek asylum are somehow jumping that queue, is absurd. Taking a risk, seeking a fair go and asking for the opportunity to work hard in a free country—these qualities are as Australian as it gets.

If we can look past the crimes that people like Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran committed, and see them for the wonderful people they became inside a Bali prison, how hard can it be to look at a family of asylum seekers who have committed no crime and fled persecution and see people equally deserving of compassion and equally willing to contribute to our society? We have gone down the path of being cruel and discovered that we will never be able to be cruel enough. If we think it is acceptable to have a Federal Minister decide to send a sick, innocent child in his care back to an overseas prison because he is worried about the "push factors" that letting her stay in hospital may create, then we have completely lost our way. I do not pretend to have the answers for the world's immigration problems—nor is it the business of this Parliament to debate or enact legislation in this area—but I do know that we need better political leadership that does not abandon human decency when faced with a complex problem.

Climate change is another difficult issue where better leadership is needed. Like the refreshing bipartisan position in this place on the science and undeniable public health benefits of immunisation, we need to come together and end old debates about the science of climate change. We must make the move away from coal-fired power and invest now in renewable energy. All sides need to have an open mind and come to the table willing to listen and do what it takes to make progress. Policy purity should not again mean that an opportunity is lost to put a price on carbon, to reduce pollution and increase renewable energy. These are the crucial issues

of our time. As someone representing part of a global city like Sydney, I know these are the issues that our constituents rightly expect us to weigh in on. Moreover, there are lessons here for all parliamentarians about the importance of upholding our principles when making policy.

Seven months ago my son, Archie, was born at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital at Camperdown. While he really is the happiest and easiest of babies, his arrival into this world was somewhat dramatic. As my labour progressed Archie's heartbeat continued to drop and when tests confirmed he was in distress the midwife pressed the big, red button on the wall of the labour ward. A dozen or more medical staff came running into the room and then raced me down the corridor to the operating theatre for an emergency caesarean. Later that night, when our little family was reunited, we gave thanks that we have world-class hospitals like Royal Prince Alfred in New South Wales. The highly trained, professional staff in our public hospitals ensure that there is happiness and joy where there would otherwise be tragedy. We were wonderfully cared for and left the hospital confident that we knew how to look after the new addition to our family.

When we did leave the hospital our only duty was to thank the amazing midwives, doctors and other staff who provided us with the highest standard of care, and we had no bill to pay—not a cent. Archie and I, and all Australians, benefit from our public health system. As the member for Summer Hill, I will fight to ensure that our public hospitals continue to provide people with world-class care. I will always defend the right of people to see a family doctor without having to pay. I will always fight to keep our hospitals in public hands, which is where they belong. I will take the advice of doctors, nurses, midwives and other health professionals over political ideologues with economic theories. It should be clear enough that the flu or indeed the cure for cancer will not respond to a price signal.

I want my child and everyone's children to grow up knowing that if something goes wrong they will be in safe hands. I never want anyone in New South Wales to worry that they will not be able to afford the care they need. We can never take our public health system for granted. We all need to care for this precious community resource. To the people of Summer Hill, I commit to always work hard for you, to always treat you with respect and to be a faithful and fearless advocate for our community and on the issues that matter to us all. I will never abuse the trust you have put in me. I will conduct myself ethically and openly. I respect the traditions of the Parliament but I will not let tradition hamper the passion with which I discharge my obligations as your elected representative.

I make these commitments and I ask something of you in return: that you remain actively engaged in our community and continue to raise issues and ask questions with the same lively spirit as you have until today. I ask this of you because I know there never has been, and there never will be, substantial social change implemented by government without a social movement campaigning for it. Too often, people believe or hope that Parliament will change something in society by simply enacting legislation. Parliament is only ever part of the solution. We will not end discrimination or solve climate change simply by passing a law. Society is transformed only when people and communities stand up for what they believe in and form movements for change.

The greatest and most enduring movement for social change and justice has been the trade union movement, of which I will always be a proud member. I stand here today because hundreds of thousands of women have organised and struggled to overcome the prejudice and self-interest that has kept us out of places like Parliament. I am extremely proud to be a member of a party that is on the cusp of equal representation in this Parliament. Another movement that it on the cusp of victory has convinced the community that all love is equal and that marriage equality should be enacted in law. I am impatient for our Federal Government to catch up to the mainstream view on this issue. I also mention the work of the student movement—something that was formative for me.

At university I made friends for life with people like Daniel Kyriacou, Rose Jackson, Anna York, Tim Chapman, Felix Eldridge and many others, and together we campaigned against cuts that would lower the quality of education and make it more exclusive. The student movement continues to have a vital role to play, persuading policymakers, and pushing boundaries and barriers to a vision for a better world. I say to students: We need your radicalism because, as history has shown us time and again, today's radical idea is often mainstream policy a generation later. I also say to you: The most effective and proven vehicle for reform has been, and continues to be, the Australian Labor Party.

I come to this Parliament ready to serve alongside all the women, men, students, union members and others who have fought for justice. The role of the Labor Party is to be a parliamentary expression of these great

social movements. Campaigns are won by teams, and in Summer Hill I had one hell of a team. There are too many individuals to mention today but I thank from the bottom of my heart each and every person who made it possible for me to be standing here and, most importantly, made Summer Hill Labor. The branches in my electorate are full of hardworking Labor loyalists, but they are also equally engaged in their communities—they are the parents and citizens fundraisers, the cricket coaches, bush regeneration volunteers, Meals on Wheels drivers, faith leaders, the beekeepers and the cake makers. I am so thankful to have true community activists to work with and keep me real. I pledge to keep working hard with you to engage our community and together grow our progressive movement across the inner west.

I do need to thank three Labor locals though. The first two are my campaign directors and excellent friends, Chris Gambian and Phoebe Drake. I am sure that I was not an easy candidate to manage—former campaign directors never are. Things may have been made worse by the occasional bout of morning sickness and then persistent new mother guilt. But you two are campaigning champions and true progressives. Whatever paths you may choose, or which choose you, I will be with you all the way. Thank you.

The third Labor local I give special thanks to is the first female Deputy Premier of New South Wales, the Hon. Carmel Tebbutt, the former member for Marrickville. Carmel is a smart, savvy woman with impeccable integrity. I will be forever thankful for her support and straight-up advice. She has trodden a path in this place so that women like me can freely stroll down the corridors. I will not forget that, Carmel, and I thank you. My final thanks must go to my two biggest fans: my husband, Garth, and my son, Archie. Home is the only place I am happy not to have the numbers. Garth knew long before I was willing to acknowledge it that I wanted to serve the community as a member of Parliament. I am forever grateful for his support and love. Archie, I hope that one day you are proud to say that your mum represents the place where you grew up, that she stands up for what we believe in and that she never misses your school fete. I hope to do you all proud.

[Business interrupted.]

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON COMPANION ANIMAL BREEDING PRACTICES IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Establishment

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): I report the receipt of the following message from the Legislative Council:

Madam SPEAKER

The Legislative Council desires to inform the Legislative Assembly that it has this day agreed to the following resolution:

- (1) That this House agrees to the resolution in the Legislative Assembly's message of Wednesday 13 May 2015 relating to the appointment of a Joint Select Committee on Companion Animal Breeding Practices in New South Wales.
- (2) That the representatives of the Legislative Council on the Joint Select Committee on Companion Animal Breeding Practices in New South Wales be Mr MacDonald, Mr Pearson, Mrs Taylor and Mr Veitch.
- (3) That the time and place for the first meeting be Thursday 14 May 2015 at 9.00 a.m. in the Macquarie Room.

Legislative Council
13 May 2015

DON HARWIN
President

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH: ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Second Day's Debate

[Business resumed.]

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): On behalf of the newly elected member for Strathfield, I acknowledge the presence in the gallery this afternoon of her friends, family and husband, Stephen. I welcome them to the Legislative Assembly.

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) [5.25 p.m.]: Mr Deputy-Speaker, I am so pleased that you are in the chair for my address—not just because Stephen wanted you in the chair, but because you have been a friend and wise counsel to me since my very first day in this House. I thank you for that. I speak today with the rather unique privilege of being someone who has been given a second chance to make a difference in this great State.

Not since the earliest days of this Parliament has someone generally had the opportunity of representing more than one geographically separate electorate, although Henry Parkes, the longest-serving Premier of New South Wales, will take some beating. In his 40-year membership of this House he served as member for Sydney, Cumberland, East Sydney, Kiama, Mudgee, Canterbury, St Leonards, Argyle and Tenterfield. I guess that gave Henry a perspective few could match. Do not worry; his record is not one I intend on challenging.

I speak today as the member for Strathfield in this the Fifty-sixth Parliament, and as the former member for Newcastle in the Fifty-fourth Parliament. For those reading this speech in years to come, I also refer you to my inaugural address in 2007. It is an important prologue to this address. In modern times, the idea of representing two geographically separate electorates is unique. But my story is unique, and I will come to later. First, I want to talk about my community—a diverse and dynamic place in the inner west of Sydney and an area much celebrated for its multiculturalism. Strathfield in many ways is a microcosm of Sydney and a snapshot of our future. Nearly half the community was born in non-English speaking countries, and more than 10 per cent of my electorate is not fluent in English.

While my area is home to many cultures, we particularly recognise those in our community with Chinese, Indian, Korean, and Sri Lankan backgrounds. It is also a young electorate. Along with our fine schools, both public and private, we have one of the highest proportions of 15- to 24-year-olds in New South Wales. Strathfield's many faces, its youth, the rich tapestry of cultures, its peoples and their history, make it a fantastic place to live, work, study and play. You only have to walk down Burwood Road, stroll through Strathfield town centre or wander around Homebush West to get a sense of the buzz, the excitement and the wonderful diversity of my electorate. More and more people want to live in our area and, as such, we face growing pains. The Homebush and North Strathfield areas, in particular, will experience significant growth over the next 15 to 20 years. Unless that growth is planned with supporting infrastructure and public transport then there will be an unfair burden borne by communities in my electorate.

We need to ensure that population growth is fairly spread across metropolitan Sydney and that there are the schools, hospitals, playgrounds and parks to support any increase in population. The urban renewal of Parramatta road will change my community. This is the most significant urban renewal project in the inner west in the past 100 years, but to date there has been little consultation with my community. The Government wants us to take almost half of the 60,000 extra dwellings proposed, yet it has not asked us what we think. One of the key principles that has driven me as a member of Parliament past and present and will drive me into the future is the need to face people and talk to them. There will be difficult conversations. Politics and policy are never easy. But I believe society prospers when we have conversations because they are the building blocks of our community.

Labor won the electorate of Strathfield because we had those conversations. We doorknocked 14,000 houses and made more than 30,000 phone calls into the electorate in just four months. We asked people what was important to them, and they told us. Like others in this place, I heard loud and clear the great disillusionment people have with politics in this State. What has wracked New South Wales politics over the past eight years or more has been symbolised in the rash of Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC] inquiries into the affairs of this State—a veritable conga line of politicians and their hangers-on have been paraded before the community. And they have done the community a great disservice.

It is a collective betrayal not just of the community but also of the rule of law and of democracy itself. And for that both sides of the political fence were to blame—Labor for allowing a cancerous growth that saw power as an ends rather than the means and parts of the Coalition for arrogantly presuming that they were beyond certain laws. The fact that my story of standing up and saying no resonated is a reflection of the state in which New South Wales politics has found itself. I have been lauded as someone who actually did the right thing, yet an overwhelming number of members of this place—past and current—have done and continue to do the right thing.

I believe we need to bond around that common sense of the common good. We may disagree with the means and we may argue over the ends, but ultimately we should all be here to do our best to improve public life and work tirelessly for the community. In that spirit, I acknowledge the presence of Government and crossbench members, and I thank the Premier. He and I entered this House in 2007 and we became friends with a bond to clean up politics in New South Wales. Of course at that stage we were referring to the behaviour in the House. We had no idea what lay before both of us. As I was discovering the treachery and wilful misconduct that occurred in Newcastle, the same inquiries were elevating him to Premier. The irony of that is not lost on

me. But I will not forget that he was one of the first people to call me when I lost that terrible election. However, I am back and I am now part of a great team led by Luke Foley. So to the Premier, who I know is listening—I can see him at the door—it's game on.

That brings me to why I am here. I have lived in Ashfield for four years and my husband has lived there for 16 years. I moved there after losing the 2011 election; an election I now know was manipulated. In my inaugural address in this place in 2007 I spoke of the Newcastle campaign as the most difficult electoral battle in living memory in the Labor Party. Of course, I had no idea what awaited me in 2011. What happened in the lead-up to that election has been well documented by the Independent Commission Against Corruption and the media. I do not intend to go into the details of Operation Spicer and its aftermath. What I will say is that, even in the lead-up to my second appearance in August, in my mind I was still very much a former politician—albeit one now faced with the terrible truth of what happened at the end of her term.

At that stage there was no suggestion or inclination in my mind that I would ever return to politics. My poor husband was even making plans and booking hotels for our perpetually postponed honeymoon for early 2015. I promise we will go on that honeymoon eventually. But something happened when I walked out of that second hearing and for the first time I knew I could not sit back and make comment on what was wrong; I really did have to give it another go. My feelings are best summed up in a quote from the ponderous Dr Seuss in the *Lorax*, as everyone on my team knows, which says:

Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot,
nothing is going to get better. It's not.

Why do I always cry over Dr Seuss? My desire to play a role in restoring trust in New South Wales politics, of having another opportunity to represent and defend the weakest in our community, of putting into practice my principles of social justice and to contribute to Labor forming government convinced me to again seek the support of my community to represent them in the New South Wales Parliament. As someone who has seen the worst of politics, I really do want to try to bring out the best of politics' potential, and work with others to restore faith and confidence in the political system. That is why one of my key priorities is to work with the local community, reach out to those who are normally overlooked or ignored and try to foster a positive, cooperative spirit in all that I do. There are many challenges facing us—in the bush, the regions and the cities—but without engaging the people we are doomed from the start. I believe this engagement should begin by respecting the views of young people.

One of the biggest disappointments during the campaign was the general disinterest and lack of engagement of young women in their 20s. Yet if you peruse social media platforms they are ablaze with ideas, views and commentary. Young people, male and female, have the largest stake in the future of the community, and many of my youngest volunteers think and feel that way. I had a number of young people who were still at school helping out on my campaign. They had that spark of social justice and they wanted to help the Labor cause. The one thing they could not do, of course, was vote.

I think that is a failing of our system. That is why I will be seeking to have this Parliament lead debate on changing the legal age of voting in New South Wales to 16 years of age. The idea is not new, but we have never had a real conversation with the community nor young people on this issue in New South Wales. I believe we should. I see allowing 16- and 17-year-olds the opportunity to have a say is simply the ongoing extension of democracy in our community. If we want them engaged then let us see what they have to say.

In the mid-nineteenth century it was enfranchisement for all white men—wresting political power away from the landed gentry. At the turn of the century it was the hard-fought campaign for women. And it is a national tragedy that it took until the 1960s to finally allow Aboriginal people to vote. Finally, in 1973 the Whitlam Government lowered the voting age from 21 to 18 years. These young people I speak about—Rose Cox, Ibrahim Taha, Sarah-Jane Yagky, Anna Keaney and Emma Ross—are here this evening. They gave their all during the campaign. They doorknocked, leaflet dropped and made phone calls. Each of them had a personal motivation for their involvement, yet we have a law that prevents them from having a say in the outcome of an election.

I would like to tell Rose's story. Rose is a year 10 student at Strathfield Girls High School who, along with Sarah, approached me at Strathfield station to sign her petition for a new school hall. Her argument was strong and her passion palpable and, of course, in the lead-up to the election Labor committed \$4 million to upgrade the hall. One of my tasks will be to make sure we get the same commitment from the Government. I know Rose and Sarah will make sure of that. Rose is the primary carer for her mum, Carolyn, who has

multiple sclerosis. She is on the NSW Carers Advisory Council, she is a young care leader for Young Carers NSW, the Sydney Inner West Volunteer of the Year and the first youth ambassador for the Australian Kookaburra Kids Foundation.

One of the first official letters I received in my new role was from Rose, asking that she undertake work experience in my office in November. Rose is intelligent and informed, yet she does not have the right to choose who represents her in government. The fact that these young people are unable to have an immediate say on the future of education and TAFE, the environment, health services and public transport does us a disservice and so I will seek in the first instance to have the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters consider lowering the voting age, even on a voluntary basis, to 16 years. I see the committee leading engagement with the community, especially young people.

Four years ago Labor was wiped off the electoral map and Strathfield suffered one of the largest swings in the State. The idea that Labor could regain that electorate after a redistribution that favoured the Liberals was, to many, inconceivable. But I was fortunate to have an army of true believers who worked indefatigably to ensure our return. Some were members of the Labor Party and some were not. Some had never voted Labor before. What we had in common was a belief that politics could and should be better. Many of them are here this evening.

What buoyed my spirits daily was the involvement of young people like Jennifer Light, who is my campaign manager, James Hammerton, Sarah Enderby, Sravya Abennini, Jason Cranson, Michael Murdocca, Lachlan Forster, Georgia Valis, Monica Tanika, Keiran Ash, Jessica Darke, Fahad Ali, Yang Yu, Tracey Tang, Thomas Hore, Tom Morrison, Leo Solomon and Gavin Sellars. I had a lot of Young Labor help. I also pay tribute to one of the most incisive and clever young men I have ever met—my campaign director, Dom Ofner. Dom is a wonderful asset for the party, and someone who unites head office with a genuine love and passion for the Labor cause—not just winning elections. We really did win, Dom. I could not convince him that we had actually won. I had to say, "Yes, we did win!" I also recognise Jamie Clements, who directed that difficult 2011 Newcastle campaign. I thank Jamie for allowing me to make this right. I cried during my first speech!

I thank the branch members, many of whom are here today, who accepted me and supported me. I will not name you all, but I know that I know who you are, and that you know who you are. I do want to thank the old timers—and that does not mean you are old—who stuck with Labor through the bad times, and there have been some bad times. In particular, I thank Bill Thompson, Clyde Livingston, Jon Breen, Vel Maverica, Mike Ryan and Mr Lam. I also thank former Federal member Mary Easson. You are definitely not an old timer, but you are the unofficial matriarch of Labor in Strathfield.

I thank my branch, the Ashfield branch—one of the best branches one could ever hope for. It is a welcoming, engaging branch whose members initially gave me the hope and courage to stand for Strathfield. In particular, I thank Mark Drury, Jo Carlisle, and Rory O'Connell for their support over the past six months. I also thank the Subcontinent friends of Labor, in particular Aruna Chandrala and her ever-patient and supportive husband, Vishi, as well as the newly formed Korean Friends of Labor. I also acknowledge Elagupillai Vijayaratham, known by all us as "Vijay", a gentle and kind man who has long supported the Labor cause and continues to be a strong advocate for the Tamil community. I also bring to the attention of this House a group of volunteer diehards—"Jodi tragics" some have called them—who had faith in me and what I was about: Jill Biddington, Kym Railey, Corrine Gaston, Kate McLearn, Jacqui Thorburn and Kevin Bolton.

This campaign reinvigorated the Labor Party in our area and our ranks are swelling. Repaying their trust and their faith in what we are trying to do will continue to strengthen my arm and steady my resolve as I carry out my duties over the coming years. It became clear over the course of the campaign that the last thing the Liberals wanted was me back in this Chamber. I think Strathfield was robo-called to the point of surrender: "Hello, I'm Mike Baird"; "Hello, this is John Howard." I am surprised they did not try to summon the spirit of Billy McMahon! I genuinely thought that I was fighting the heroes of the Liberal Party, past and present, rather than the local Liberal candidate. Yet for all the Liberals' automated bombardments, we had real people, real locals, talking and arguing for our vision for Strathfield and the State.

For the many who volunteered their time, I am forever grateful. I thank two people in particular, the Fenns of Ashfield. I thank my husband, Stephen. He is the smartest person I know and he supports me not just by accepting that I will never ever, ever cook a meal, but also by putting me first each and every day. He likes to fight Tories and he sees them as a pernicious force in society. I like to make peace and I try to see the best in every person. Together we make a great team. He is pretty good at high views as well. Importantly, I want to

thank Madeleine, my 14-year-old stepdaughter. Since Madeleine was small, politics has been a part of her life, but my arrival simply put that into overdrive. One of the rays of sunshine during my four years out of politics was that we were able to bond and truly get to know one another. Madeleine is a remarkable young lady—patient and giving—and I am so fortunate to have her in my life.

It is an honour to speak this evening as the newly elected member for Strathfield. It is a privilege to represent people in any forum, but no more so than in Parliament. We should all dwell on that each day. A vote is a precious part of our democratic life. Blind to wealth, privilege or situation, it is a right built on freedom, strengthened by equality, and a symbol of our common purpose in defending and enriching our democratic nation. The vote reflects the battles of ages past. It is an arbiter of our present state of play as well as a reflection of our hopes and our ambitions. It is a contract between Parliament and the people that should never be weakened, attacked or abrogated. I am someone who has seen the best and the very worst of politics—and someone who has been given a second chance. Have I cried more than anyone else?

Mr John Robertson: Yes.

Mr Luke Foley: Steve Kamper hasn't made his speech yet.

Ms JODI McKAY: We still have Kamper to go. I have been given a second chance to play a positive role in the oldest Parliament in our nation. Today I commit myself to seeking to ensure that we do our best to lift our game and strengthen our collective resolve in making politics, and politicians, more worthy and respectable in the eyes of the people. This requires courage, boldness and a practical honesty with the people in having the conversations that need to be had when we face the many challenges confronting this State, the first State, in the twenty-first century. I sincerely thank the people of Strathfield for giving me that opportunity.

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) [5.51 p.m.]: Mr Deputy-Speaker, I was another of those members you mentored from the early days. I remember some good cups of coffee in Newcastle discussing what goes on in this place and how I could do better. I congratulate you on your victory; I was quietly cheering you on in the background. I respectfully acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora nation, the traditional custodians of the land on which this building stands. I also acknowledge the Darkinjung and Garingai people, the traditional custodians of the lands encompassed by the Wyong electorate. I pay my respect to and acknowledge Aboriginal elders past and present and I acknowledge those Aboriginal people who may be present today. As an educator I acknowledge the important responsibility we have to the elders of the future—our young people. I acknowledge the deep feelings of attachment of Aboriginal people to country and the cultural beliefs that are still important to them today. Underneath the asphalt and the concrete this land was, is and will always be Aboriginal land.

It is an incredible honour to be elected to the New South Wales Legislative Assembly. To be elected by one's community to represent them and to battle for their interests and hopes is the ultimate honour and responsibility. No person who enters these doors should be under any illusion as to the importance and the duty that goes with being a member of the Legislative Assembly. I understand that better than most as I have been given a second opportunity to represent my electorate in this Chamber. Tonight I will not repeat my inaugural speech as people can refer to it at their leisure if they wish. I humbly stand in this Chamber not claiming to be a great wordsmith. I am a person of action; I get stuck into things but I am not so good with words. I congratulate everyone on their inaugural speeches. I have truly been moved and honoured to have witnessed them.

Tonight I will attempt to articulate some observations of the past, make an assessment of where we are now and offer some brief thoughts about the future. I have been deliberately low key about my speech. I have not sought to fill the gallery but I acknowledge my staff members from Point Clare who are in attendance this evening. I have not wanted to engage in election victory grandstanding; rather, I have wanted to get into this Chamber, roll up my sleeves and get stuck into unfinished business. I was pleased that the majority of my branch members came last Thursday night to celebrate the great Central Coast victories for David Mehan and Kathy Smith.

Michael Daley suggested that I start my speech tonight with, "Now where was I before I was rudely interrupted?" I admit that that had some appeal but, more appropriately, I have had four years within which to contemplate my first term in Parliament, assess my performance and, importantly, understand more fully my responsibility to my community upon my return. I have to make up for four years of lost time and I will not be wasting any more time. Over the past eight years I have seen the best and worst of Labor. I have also observed the best and worst of the conservative side of politics. In this important position of trust we, as members of

Parliament, must have a strong moral compass. We must understand that leadership comes with responsibility. The ethical challenges we face as a society are increasingly complex and we need a strong moral foundation to guide us through them.

We can think about it as being principle centred, possessing strong character, demonstrating integrity, or following an ethical compass. No matter what we call it, we need a strong moral foundation in all our decision-making. In politics it is appropriate that political parties can argue the how and why, determine different priorities but, fundamentally, act at all times with moral fibre and resist the temptation to give in to self-interest. We must always put the interests of the community first. The past few years have resulted in lessons for both sides of politics that must be heeded. There has been a deceitful tendency to write New South Wales Labor off as having done nothing in 16 years of government. This glib assessment clearly is a fallacy perpetuated by those on the conservative side of politics and their friends in the media.

I speak proudly of the work in the Wyong electorate during my four years in Parliament, which included \$270 million worth of infrastructure. Everywhere one travelled in the electorate there were construction sites. This was true also across the Central Coast. Over four years Labor delivered Warnervale Public School, Wyong police station, Casuarina Grove Disability Care Centre, major upgrades to Wyong Hospital, the Tuggerah railway station interchange, upgrades to Wyong railway station, Tuggerah Straight, Hamlyn Terrace fire station, and the upgrade of the Pacific Highway at Blue Haven, amongst many other projects. This is the high standard to which I again commit myself.

Why do I find myself back in this Chamber again? Before closely examining that journey I acknowledge the good people of my electorate from Toukley, Norah Head, Blue Haven and Charmhaven, Wyong, Tuggerawong, Gorokan, Kanwal, Tacoma, Mardi, Chittaway, Berkeley Vale and the rural valleys in the west. We have a special community in which people back one another in the hard times—whether it be floods, storms or tragic accidents.

I encapsulate this community spirit by relating the story of Craig Middleton, a tradie and surfer, born and bred in Wyong. His children are members of the Soldiers Beach Surf Life Saving Club. Craig tragically injured himself in a freak accident. He displaced and fractured the C4 and C5 vertebrae in his neck and subsequently had to have the C5 removed and replaced with supportive rods. Craig is now permanently confined to a wheelchair. The Wyong community got together and supported Craig, his wife, Jo, and their two children. "Midido", as he is affectionately known, is now back home and the community continues to rally around him and to offer support.

Craig's story is one of many which reveal the way in which the people of Wyong support one another. I am proud to live and work in the area and to be able to call that community home. It is because of the people of Wyong that I am so passionate about the area I represent. I feel privileged to have been re-elected to the Wyong electorate. Since leaving Parliament in 2011 I have not been standing still. At the end of 2012 I was appointed principal of Point Clare Public School. The past three years have been the most rewarding in my educational career, which spans 22 years, and 17 years as a principal. Working with such a positive, enthusiastic team to enhance the lives of young people, both socially and educationally, created a massive dilemma for me. I thank every student, every parent and every staff member for the way in which they welcomed me. I hope that I made a positive difference to the lives of that community.

I asked everyone at Point Clare every day just to do their best—as I said many times to the kids at assembly—and to live by the mantra of the You Can Do It! Education program and its five keys to success: confidence, organisation, persistence, resilience and getting along. I try to live by that mantra all the time. If we give kids those values, they will do well as citizens in our society. Those fantastic young students, who certainly rejuvenated me, the supportive and professional staff and parents that I now proudly call friends made the decision to re-enter politics so difficult. In fact, 18 months ago I faltered and decided not to recontest the election, a decision I later reconsidered. Hopefully I made the right decision.

During the past four years I also became president of the Soldiers Beach Surf Life Saving Club, a voluntary director of the local Bendigo Community Bank and president of the Central Coast Men of Football charity. I love giving back to our community. That brings me to how and why I think I am standing in this place for a second time. Some have suggested—hopefully in a friendly manner—that madness played a part, but I believe it is more about a deep sense of duty to my community. I spoke earlier in my oration about the need for a strong moral compass. I found that people do not expect you to do everything, but they expect you to stay true to your word. The community of Wyong felt that they had no support from the former member for Wyong so

they came to me for help over and over again on numerous issues from social housing to fighting against development. I knew I had to get back here to fight for them again. It was a huge decision but, as my wife told me, "It's in your blood."

Clearly the results of the 2015 election on the Central Coast—where we had consistent above 12 per cent swings—demonstrated that our community rejected the policies and credibility of the New South Wales Liberal Party and The Nationals. Here are some of the reasons. I fought hard and for a long time against the Wallarah 2 Coal Project. The Liberal Party went to the 2011 election with a clear and unambiguous promise to stop mining under the Wyong Valley's water catchment—no ifs and no buts. It went further, promising to introduce legislation to protect the water catchment, if necessary. Every Liberal candidate stood with Barry O'Farrell and Chris Hartcher in bright red "Water Not Coal" T-shirts and promised to end this issue for good. Shamefully it was a promise they broke.

Then there are the election funding laws. I have always thought that you abide by the rule of the day. You do not decide whether it is a good or bad rule; you just follow it. If you do not like it, you try to change it. The law is the law, so that is what you do. I will be careful, but the fact is that four out of five Central Coast Liberal members of Parliament were forced to resign from the parliamentary Liberal Party. The Central Coast was effectively without representation for almost two years and whilst the Hunter got an apology from the Premier, the Central Coast never did. Those are clear examples of a broken moral compass.

One of the other big issues in our area at the last election was the leasing of our electricity network—leasing in name only because we know a 99-year lease means a sale. The northern Central Coast was built on the back of the power industry. Many families used to work, still work or know someone who does work in the electricity industry. For us on the Central Coast the argument was simple: it was about protecting jobs. The Liberal Party failed to recognise that there is a dire social cost to asset recycling, which particularly reverberates in areas that already have high unemployment. As I travelled around I found there was an inherent dislike, particularly in the older generations, for privatising public assets. These people feel that they have paid for the assets. They own them, not the Government. They have not seen a single case where they are better off after giving their assets to the private sector. I support that view.

One of the biggest issues at the last election was not about State issues; it was what I called the Wyong Shire Council factor. As Marcellus said to Horatio in Hamlet, "Something is rotten in the state of Denmark." Our community has a deep distrust of the conservative control of Wyong Shire Council. This topic deserves a speech of its own, which I will make. But this evening it would be remiss of me if I did not at least acknowledge that this was a major election issue. In fact, as I doorknocked around the community, I found that Mike was reasonably popular, Tony was terribly unpopular, but the mayor of Wyong was deeply unpopular.

The community is angry about special rate rises because the council cried poor and then we saw millions spent on potential projects that do not seem to be in the ratepayers' interests. Further, the council actively fights applications for information about projects such as the mysterious airport, denying proper public scrutiny of its intentions. At the same time, we saw the jobs of our lifeguards and water and sewerage workers threatened. We saw bullying in council, preschools close and the massive sale of public land, followed by a large number of spot rezonings, which the local community had to fight one by one.

This is a state of affairs that requires close investigation, but no government body seems equipped or has the desire to take it on. The public record of Operation Spicer states there is evidence that shows correlations between political donations and some of those dubious zonings. I made a commitment to the staff of Wyong Shire Council and the community at a mass meeting to pursue these issues with vigour and I will do so. In the fullness of time, those issues need to be fully investigated and, at the very least, any suggestion of wrongdoing must be cleared up. I think we will find that it is a lot worse.

As others have done, I make the point loudly that our social infrastructure is just as important, if not more important, than physical infrastructure. I am deeply concerned that the practice of competitive tendering will destroy the social fabric of many community organisations that support the most vulnerable. This is another issue I will pursue in Parliament. As many other new members have stated, you do not get to stand in this Parliament without the help and support of others. In 2007 John Robertson supported my election with a visit of the Your Rights at Work campaign. He stood with me at the railway station in Wyong and at a gathering at the Grand Hotel. He did very well on that night; there were a few people who had had a few sherbets and who were very excited. John Robertson was also the Minister for the Central Coast when I was the Parliamentary

Secretary. We achieved some great things for the Central Coast. So when I was trying to make up my mind whether to stay in education or to come back to politics, I consulted John in his office before deciding to again run for Parliament. I respect his counsel and I value his opinion. Thank you, John.

To Kaila Murnain, my good friend and go-to person, thank you for believing that I could get back here again and thank you for being persistent and for chasing me to ensure that I followed through. To Jamie Clements, Senator Deborah O'Neill, Jill Hall, member of Parliament, and the member for Shortland, your encouragement, support and belief were unfailing for four years. What can I say about Greg Donnelly, Sophie Cotsis and Linda Burney? You all kept the torch burning and did the hard yards through four tough years, inspiring me to continue to work hard—even though I was working full-time doing other things—to support the Central Coast community and to stick up for the most vulnerable people in our community. I thank you and appreciate you all for that.

To my branch members—I sent a message to them, and they were here last week, but I hope this will get to them—I extend my thanks for their hard work and dedication and for their confidence in me. I said to them on election night 2011 that I had let them down; but they never doubted me and supported my return to this place. I will appreciate that eternally and will repay their support as best I can. There are particular people who go above and beyond the call of duty.

I thank Narelle Rich, Tony Grant, Neil Rose, John Leonard, Cheryl Greenwald, Richard Field, Darcy Waller, Bill Smith, Paul and Sue Day, Tony Booth, Daniel Turner, Ruth Punch, Daniel Greenwald, Salim Barber and Michelle and Colin Cashman for their hard work during the campaign. We have a good group of young people on the coast, Peter Duggan, Zach Harrison, Shane Gillard, Richard Mehrtens, and I thank them for their invaluable assistance. I thank also my good friends Lynn and Allen Thompson, who stuck by me that terrible night in the pouring rain when we had our non-victory celebration. They were there again when I made it known that I wanted to run this time.

Michael Buckland, you deserve a medal. Michael coordinated our Central Coast campaign and was on the end of my abrasive, demanding phone calls on a daily basis. I can be demanding, particularly when it comes to getting resources for our local area. Michael delivered for us in bucketloads, and I thank him for that. To Unions NSW, Central Coast Community Union and union members more widely, thank you for your hard work in the campaign. I thank the three Labor councillors on Wyong Shire Council, Lisa Matthews, Doug Vincent and Ken Greenwald for their support and contributions during the campaign—particularly Doug Vincent, who stood aside so that I could run again. I am eternally grateful to Doug for that.

I would like to acknowledge Grant McBride, the former member for The Entrance. As members would know, Grant unfortunately now suffers from dementia. I certainly appreciate the support of Grant and his family during the campaign. I always thank Michael Lee for his mentorship and friendship over the years. Our great Central Coast team, Kathy Smith, Yasmin Catley, David Mehan and the indomitable Jeff Sundstrom fought hard and deserve the result that we got. I truly believe we had a team built around years of community advocacy; and the people saw this and knew we stood for them. The results reflect this fact.

Our leader Luke Foley has impressed me with his deep knowledge, strategic thinking and consultative approach—and I am a fairly hard critic, as those who know me would attest. I particularly thank him for appointing me to his shadow Cabinet. I pledge to work day in and day out to repay that confidence; I will be working hard to hold this Government to account. To my new parliamentary colleagues in the Labor caucus: what a truly amazing group you are. We are blessed to have so much new and significant talent in the State parliamentary Labor Party. Your enthusiasm, friendship and dedication to your communities and the Labor cause are inspiring. Congratulations to every one of you as you forge ahead and make your presence felt in this place on behalf of your communities.

To the Wyong community—especially the Save Mascord Park crew, the Water Not Coal group, John Asquith at CEN, Kevin Armstrong, Warnervale Family and Community Service, Toukley Neighbourhood Centre, the gang at Soldiers Beach Surf Club, Central Coast Men of Football as well as many others—thank you for your help, understanding and support. Jake Allen, my campaign director, is a dynamo. Jake organised the whole show, ensuring we returned to this place with a much higher margin than when we left. I was still working full time through most of the campaign, and Jake stepped up to the plate and helped to achieve a 13.8 per cent swing and a victory on first preferences. Proudly, we won many Liberal booths for the first time, and by significant margins. Jake has a bright future, and I thank his family for lending him to my campaign for such a significant amount of time. I look forward to continuing to work with him in his new role on my staff.

I would like to acknowledge and thank my former colleagues in this place whose counsel and opinion I continue to actively seek. There are so many who contributed and I acknowledge every person who assisted our campaign, particularly Colleen and Anne, my former staff. The victory in 2015 was as much for them as for anyone else. They love our community, they work their hearts out, and I am pleased that Colleen is back with me, and Anne is part time serving the community again.

I would like to pay particular tribute to Dayle Walker. Dayle, my friend and speechwriter, tragically passed away from ovarian cancer just a couple of years ago. I said on election night, "This is for Dayle." Dayle was always about the community. I am so sorry she is not here to share our return to this place. I am also very pleased to be back with my great friend the member for Strathfield. That is certainly a pleasure. To my wider family, my mum and dad, my sisters and their families and to my grandfather, who is 93 and now confined to a nursing home: your support is invaluable and treasured.

To my daughters Rachael and Jessica: What do you say to the shining lights of your life? They endured my first term in Parliament, being away so much and missing so much of their lives as they grew from small children to fine young ladies. I am so proud of both of you. You could not have turned out any better; I know that your mother has done an incredible job. And, finally, to my wife, Sherelle: we are a team. You never complain, even though you take so much on your shoulders, and I love you dearly. We are good mates and I thank you for being one of the few people who truly understands me, indulges my passions and always provides a shoulder for me, in good times and in bad. Wyong and the Central Coast need so much care and attention, and I commit myself in this my second term to representing the people, to do my best every day and to work to repay the confidence of my community which has honoured me with a second term. Thank you all.

Debate interrupted and set down as an order of the day for a future day.

Pursuant to resolution private members' statements proceeded with.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

WESTCONNEX AND ST PETERS ROAD INTERCHANGE

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) [6.20 p.m.]: I again bring to the attention of the House my greatest concern about the proposed St Peters Road interchange that will be part of the WestConnex Motorway. From as far back as 2012, when Nick Greiner, as chairman of Infrastructure NSW, and former Premier Barry O'Farrell first announced WestConnex, I have been critical and vocal about the proposal for a variety of reasons—namely, it is not part of an integrated solution, nor is it planned, designed or costed. It was proposed to solve the congestion problems of the M5, Port Botany and Sydney Airport. The proposed road goes nowhere near Port Botany and provides no access to Sydney Airport and, although it is a line on a map, is to be an aboveground road that will take in Tempe Recreational Reserve and Tempe Wetlands.

Whilst I understood the WestConnex label was part of some political narrative, I was concerned that the Government was about to embark upon the largest road construction process that was not part of an integrated solution. Towards the end of last year the Prime Minister and Premier Baird announced a road interchange at St Peters. That is the worst possible location for an interchange. The M5 East was originally designed to come out in Canal Road, St Peters. I led the protest through the Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils for it to come out at General Holmes Drive. I again warn the Government that this serious error will result in a catastrophe in the inner city. Tens of thousands of vehicles will be forced into St Peters, Tempe, Mascot, Kensington and Kingsford, and those landlocked communities will be destroyed.

I have expressed my views in meetings with the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight and his senior officials in an effort to convince them to reconsider that part of the process. I acknowledge that the M5 East duplication needs to proceed. Former roads Ministers have told me that the M5 East duplication has been designed and costed with various funding models, although I do not believe a toll should be attached to it. The Government needs to free up freight movements from Port Botany and movement from Sydney Airport, but the St Peters interchange is some thought bubble that was created in the lead-up to the last election. It will be nothing short of a disaster to try to link the M4 and M5 at that location and then stick an interchange in the middle. It was also announced that houses in Campbell Street and adjacent streets would be purchased to allow the roads to be widened. The residents affected live in morbid fear of what may result.

I have seen the response from the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight to comments by The Greens and other protest groups in the inner city—he called them nimbys, anti-road et cetera. Such comments

are not helpful because those people are genuinely concerned about this proposal. I will continue to hold discussions with the Minister and his officials in an effort to achieve a common-sense approach but, in the words of Sir Humphrey Appleby to Minister Hacker, I say to the Government: "If you're going to do this damn silly thing, don't do it in this damn silly way."

MONA VALE HOSPITAL

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning) [6.24 p.m.]: Tonight I again speak in this House about Mona Vale Hospital. This week we celebrated International Nurses Day and it is appropriate to place on record my appreciation of the hardworking nurses and midwives at Mona Vale Hospital, who have served my community compassionately and faithfully for many years. When we came to office in 2011 the future of Mona Vale Hospital was under a very dark cloud. Indeed, about five years before that the Hon. Gordon Moyes, a former member in the other place, said that Labor was engaging in demolition by neglect of Mona Vale Hospital. In 2010 the then Government—which said originally the maternity ward was being closed for renovation but said later that the move was permanent—required the perimeter of the hospital to be fenced because of the risk of windows falling from its upper levels. Such was its deteriorating condition that if visitors to the hospital dared walk around its perimeter they may well have ended up as patients.

This Government has a very clear plan for the future of Mona Vale Hospital. The hospital was opened in February 1964. Last year we celebrated its 50 years of service and thanked everyone who had been involved in agitating for the hospital, as well as recognising those who had supported and worked at the hospital over that time. It was also an opportunity to look at what the role of the hospital will be over the next 50 years. The Government has been getting on with the job of injecting the necessary funding to bring the vision for Mona Vale Hospital to reality. For example, in the past four years there has been an injection of more than \$50 million in capital expenditure. It was great to join the Hon. Jillian Skinner, Minister for Health, and see the foundations laid at Mona Vale Hospital for the \$30 million community health centre. This followed the opening last year by the Minister for Health of the \$12 million, 26-bed beachside rehabilitation unit at the hospital.

The new community health centre will deliver a comprehensive range of health services, such as adult and paediatric oral health, including dental surgery; adult and paediatric occupational therapy; paediatric speech pathology; chronic disease and cardiac rehabilitation; musculoskeletal physiotherapy; child and family health; community nursing and acute and post-acute care; and community rehabilitation and aged care. These critical subacute and allied health services are vital for the growing and ageing community on Sydney's northern beaches. It is terrific that the Government is getting on with the job of providing this significant 4,100 square metre building, which will engage more than 100 staff in future years.

We have also seen a number of big improvements at Mona Vale Hospital. These include an increase of more than 16 per cent in its annual recurrent budget over the past few years; a 27 per cent increase in nursing staff numbers since 2011; and construction of a new palliative care service building. My community is very passionate about ensuring not only that the palliative care clinic at the hospital and its great outpatient service continues but also that inpatient palliative care services are located at Mona Vale Hospital. It would be difficult to imagine a more perfect site, looking out across the Tasman Sea, in which to locate both rehabilitation and palliative care services. Once again, I thank all those excellent people who have worked so hard to ensure that Mona Vale Hospital continues to provide quality health services, including the Save Mona Vale Hospital Committee led by Eunice Raymond, and emeritus mayor Harvey Rose.

ROTARY CLUB OF PORT MACQUARIE

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie—Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education) [6.29 p.m.]: As we know, this week is National Volunteer Week. It recognises the wonderful contribution that volunteers make to all local communities. This evening I pay tribute to a group of volunteers who do some outstanding work not only in the Port Macquarie and Camden Haven areas but also in the South Pacific paradise of Vanuatu. I say "paradise" but, because of the force of Mother Nature, it was anything but paradise when the volunteers arrived there.

I am speaking of course about the members of the Rotary Club of Port Macquarie. In 2004 they came to the rescue of the people of Tanna, which was devastated by Cyclone Ivy. The local Rotary District 9650 has been involved in what is known as Project Tafea—the name is derived from the first letter of each of the five southernmost islands of Vanuatu. But the project has focused on the main island of the group: Tanna. Initially the focus of the Rotarians was on repairing Lenakel Hospital on Tanna, which was significantly damaged by the

cyclone. As well as the hospital, a large amount of work was carried out on the cottages used by hospital staff and on a number of outlying aid stations. Once the main repairs to the hospital had been finished, efforts concentrated on schools, which were also badly damaged. Amazingly, work has continued over the past 11 years.

A number of schools have been extensively reconstructed and several new schools have been built. In a number of cases, water tanks have been provided to increase the benefits to the community. Several community facilities have been rebuilt—some of them substantially. A new building in the hospital grounds called "The Skill Centre" has just been completed. This building will provide a facility for women from outlying villages to attend classes, mainly in sewing. When they have completed their courses, they will return to their village with a manual sewing machine and a supply of materials. These efforts have been carried out by Rotarians and their families, who each pay about \$2,700 to go to Tanna for two weeks of work. This fee covers their transport, lodging and meals. To date, some 240 people—mostly from the Rotary Club of Port Macquarie but also some members of my local Rotary Club of Laurieton—have been involved in more than 40 teams. This is a considerable effort and it has made a vast contribution to the wellbeing of the residents of Tanna.

In addition to the supply of labour, more than \$500,000 in material has been provided. The principle adopted is that materials are sourced locally if at all possible. Another facet of the program is called "Donations in Kind". This is material supplied by donations in Australia. It consists of a wide range of materials such as hospital beds; school desks; kits for kids, which contain materials for a group of school kids including pencils, paper et cetera; kits for newborn babies; clothing; and mattresses and blankets. The list is endless. To date, more than 15 20-foot shipping containers have been sent to Tanna. Rotary is keen to make this project sustainable. One way this is achieved is by reaching a contract with a village for Rotary to supply material that is not locally available on the island, such as roofing iron and water tanks, while the villagers will supply local material and as much labour as is needed.

Tragically, in March this year Cyclone Pam did even more damage to the island of Tanna—more than to other parts of Vanuatu. Rapid response teams, mainly from the Australian Army, carried out a significant amount of repair work to Lenakel Hospital. However, much remains to be done. Under the leadership of Ray White from Port Macquarie, a team of three Rotarians—Ray, Russell Holland and Gareth Owen—spent a few weeks on Tanna surveying the damage to the hospital and schools. They prepared a very detailed analysis of materials required and costs involved. Thirty-four schools were surveyed, and the Tafea team has prioritised five schools to be worked on first. To give some idea of the immensity of the work required, the first five schools alone will require more than \$160,000 in materials to bring them up to an acceptable standard. The total cost will be in the millions of dollars and the time required will span many years.

The Tafea project team is currently preparing the first two teams to visit Tanna to begin this work. Some further work will be required on the hospital, and a school in the main area of Lenakel town will also be worked on. Project Tafea is an outstanding example of the work of Rotary. It does this work with no contribution from government. In fact, in past years teams were able to claim their contributions as a tax deduction but, unfortunately, this is no longer the case. Finally, I thank Debbie Loveday, President of the Rotary Club of Port Macquarie, for bringing these details to my attention and for giving me an opportunity to acknowledge the wonderful Rotarians and the work they have done on Tanna.

MEDICINAL CANNABIS

Mr ANDREW FRASER (Coffs Harbour—The Assistant-Speaker) [6.34 p.m.]: This evening I speak about a very sad subject. I refer members to a speech that I made in this House on 16 October 2014, when I spoke about Deisha Stevens, a young lady in my electorate whose father and mother had been obtaining—some would say illegally—medicinal cannabis basically in order to save her life. This young lady suffers from a rare disease that can be treated only with steroids, which have devastating side-effects and would have led to her death within two years. Deisha has a genetic syndrome called Rubinstein-Taybi syndrome, which is a very nasty form of epilepsy. Her father and mother, after much deliberation, decided they would look for alternative medical options. They found that medicinal cannabis, with less than 1 per cent tetrahydrocannabinol [THC], stopped her fits and gave her life a degree of normalcy—even if it may not be what you or I would regard as normal. Even though she has severe disabilities, Deisha is able to play with her siblings and others.

At the time of my private member's statement last October her father, David—who was named Coffs Harbour Citizen of the Year—had been diagnosed with oesophageal cancer. This is a man who has worked so hard not only for his family but also for the community. He had to cop this diagnosis on top of all the tragedy

his family has been through. David is now in the Coffs Harbour Health Campus, and it is a matter of how long he has left to live. I thank the Premier of New South Wales for visiting David this morning, having travelled to Coffs Harbour last night. The Premier assured David that the New South Wales Government will continue its trials into medicinal cannabis for patients such as Deisha and the police officer from Tamworth who has since passed away to ensure that pain and suffering can be minimised if not eliminated by utilising this drug. We all know that this drug is extremely dangerous when used recreationally but when it is broken down properly it can be developed into a medicine that helps people, including young children like Deisha.

I cannot explain how it tears my heart out to see this man who has fought so hard to look after his family now facing a death sentence. I assure the Parliament, the people of Coffs Harbour and the people of New South Wales that I will continue David's fight to ensure that medicinal cannabis oil is made available to the people who need it. I have seen it work. When David went public to say that his daughter was being treated with it, Department of Family and Community Services officers were the first people on his doorstep. He rang me to tell me they were coming and I got there before they did. They came to see whether he had breached any laws in giving this substance to a minor. I told them then—and I repeat it now—that in cases such as this I am happy to put them on the front page of the *Daily Telegraph* and to talk to any other media outlet in New South Wales. I believe there are opportunities to utilise properly prepared medications from cannabis for patients who need them.

As I said in the House on 16 October 2014 during my speech on this subject, morphine is a derivative of heroin. Yet we use it in hospitals on a daily basis. I would guess that anyone who has had a major operation, me included, would have been given morphine at some stage. And yet it comes from the opium poppy, which is the source of heroin. I believe medicinal cannabis can be used similarly. I say to David: When you are no longer with us, I will continue to look after your family and to take the fight forward, not only to the people of New South Wales and Coffs Harbour but also to Australia, to ensure that medicinal cannabis can be used by those people who do need it.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.39 p.m.]: I compliment the member for Coffs Harbour for his advocacy in this very moving situation. This week we have heard many members speak in this place for the first time and talk about the common values we share. The test is for us to put ourselves in the position of others. When we do that we often see the injustice. Anything that can be done with compassion and empathy to help improve the lives of children and adults should be done.

Years ago I probably would not have touched on the topic of medicinal cannabis but contributions in this House, the private member's statement by the member for Coffs Harbour and similar stories from my community have changed us. It will make for an interesting discussion down the track. I think the quicker we can get the framework in place the better. I empathise and sympathise with the family. No-one would want to be in their position. Once again, I congratulate the member for Coffs Harbour. He has described a moving situation that is being faced by many people across the country and the world.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Anna Watson): Order! I too thank the member for Coffs Harbour for bringing this matter to the attention of the House. I am sure that many members in this place share his views and agree with what he has said.

HUNTER AND CENTRAL COAST STORM DAMAGE

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) [6.40 p.m.]: I congratulate the volunteers and professionals who assisted local residents in the Wyong electorate during the recent superstorm. I was at home during the storm and the sound of the wind was quite frightening. Speaking a few days later with the caretaker of Norah Head Lighthouse, I learned that winds of 135 kilometres an hour had been recorded. At Soldiers Beach Surf Club, where I am a member, the force of the wind was such that it peeled off facia on the leeward side of the club. On the Tuesday I could not leave home because fallen trees were blocking the road. But we were lucky—our power was out for only 12 hours and we sustained no major damage other than some water in the ceiling. Driving around the electorate on the Wednesday, I saw the damage. On some streets all the trees were flattened. They did not just have broken branches; whole trees had come out of the ground—root ball and all. At Wyong Golf Club trees on fairways had been knocked down one after the other, like something we might see in an American tornado movie.

Although we fared better than other areas, particularly the Hunter, we have heard many stories of near misses in Wyong. Our area is prone to flooding from Tuggerah Lake and a few days after the initial storm water

levels rose and flooded some parts of the electorate. In our rural valleys roads were cut off and State Emergency Service [SES] and other rescue organisation personnel performed rescues by boat. In one case there was a medical emergency and a young fellow was rescued. As members, we must remember and reinforce to the community that our volunteer and professional workers looked after people at the height of the storm. These workers included those from the SES, the Volunteer Rescue Association [VRA] and the Rural Fire Service. Our council workers, who are often overlooked, also worked to repair sewage treatment plants and so on. Initially Ausgrid workers went out alone trying to restore power but they soon had to call for reinforcements from Essential Energy and Endeavour Energy.

Some people were without power for more than five days. Members can imagine how the community rallied around, with people who had power offering those without it the chance to have a shower and cook a meal. When I finally caught up with them on Friday, SES personnel said that the storm was their biggest call-out incident, with more than 2,500 jobs logged. It certainly stretched them to the limit. I thank the volunteers who came from other parts of New South Wales and interstate to boost their numbers and make sure that local residents were looked after. I congratulate local residents on caring for each other and on the patience they showed while waiting for trees to be made safe or cleared from roads and for power to be restored. Unlike in 2007, during this storm we lost our phone services. It was a real challenge because people have become so used to having mobile phones. Losing the communications towers put a great strain on the community.

During the event our police and professional firefighters worked alongside volunteers to care for people. From 20 April some 44,000 houses in the Wyong electorate were without power and more than 250 volunteers per day looked after the area. The recovery centre is now open at the old Wyong Grove school. I thank Brigadier Darren Naumann for overseeing the recovery in Wyong and across the Central Coast and Hunter. I thank our volunteers and local radio stations for their work. Most of all, I thank our community. In times of hardship they pull together and do the right thing. It makes me proud to live in my community.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.45 p.m.]: I commend the member for Wyong for his advocacy. I have fond memories of Wyong; it is a great part of the world. We often take our volunteer and professional emergency services personnel for granted or do not know they are there until we need them. We commend our Rural Fire Service volunteer firefighters and other volunteers, who do a remarkable job. We do not acknowledge them every day but after the recent drastic weather conditions now is a particularly good opportunity to do so.

OAKLANDS TRUCK SHOW

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) [6.46 p.m.]: Some people see beauty in a painting of haystacks by Monet. Some find beauty in a statue by Michelangelo. For others, true beauty is found in a crimson sunset, a turbulent ocean or in the appealing, pleading eyes of the family cat or dog. Others love their trucks and utes and bikes. Now is the time of the truck. In the 1970s trucks had a moment thanks to the emergence of trucking music and line dancing. From C. W. McCall's huge 1975 hit *Convoy* to Eddie Rabbitt's *Drivin' My Life Away*, trucks became cultural icons. That wave passed.

But now trucks are back, and they are bigger and brighter than ever. Part of the reason for this resurgence, at least culturally, is the convergence of a number of separate phenomena. For a start, people are getting tattooed like never before. The Oaklands Truck Show certainly provided an opportunity for some patrons to dress up for the occasion, displaying their tattoos and piercings with pride. It ties in with a growing love of rockabilly music, with its simple beat and honest arrangements. The live music scene in Sydney and Melbourne is groaning with rockabilly bands. Add in a modern fascination with swing dancing and jitterbug, with dressing up in vintage 1950s and 1960s clothes and cruising around town in cool vehicles, and you have the complete picture: music, tats, piercings, fashion, trucks, utes and bikes. Barbecue food is in one corner of the showgrounds, and cholesterol checks in another.

An event such as the Oaklands Truck Show appeals to the renegade inside each one of us. We all at some time yearn to "head out on the highway, looking for adventure". Trucks and bikes remind us of the call of the open road. But beautiful trucks and bikes do much more: They speak to the artistic soul, and they nourish it. What can be more alluring than a few metres of seamless gloss paint glimpsed along the side of a truck? It is an absolute truth that beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Yet we can all admire the effort and skill that goes into the various art forms displayed at an event like the Oaklands Truck Show, from pin-stripping, chroming and shading, to full-blown animated panels and murals.

It was Elvis Presley who captured this spirit when he said, "When I got outta high school I was driving a truck. I was just a poor boy from Memphis." Trucks can be the way out for some people. Trucks get you on the road to someplace else—hopefully some place better than where you were before. The truck carries that romantic image. Is it any wonder people want to paint them, decorate them and customise them? In March, on the weekend before the State election, I was at Oaklands to open the Oaklands Truck Show for 2015. It is a significant economic and cultural event held in a corner of the newly expanded Albury electorate, which is about 600 kilometres west of Sydney and about an hour's drive north-west of Albury. Oaklands is in Urana shire, which became part of the Albury electorate at the recent election. I welcome the people of Oaklands, and indeed all of the Urana shire, to the Albury electorate.

On a perfect autumn day I walked around the show site, taking in the amazing array of beloved trucks, utes, motorcycles and trikes. It was clear that they were very well-treated and tricked-up vehicles. Many of those vehicles were entered into the various categories of competition, but the Oaklands Truck Show is about more than the trucks and vehicles. As with most good things in regional New South Wales, a lot of heart and soul has gone into this event: There were demonstrations by the Corowa Rescue Squad and the local road safety team, a gleaming police Traffic and Highway Patrol vehicle, skydiving and tandem jumps, games for the children and great country food.

The show started in 2009. These were tough times, and the community had been battling droughts, floods and economic hardship with the inevitable pressures such major difficulties place on home life and mental health. So the community got moving, developing this event as a means of supporting economic growth locally as well as providing a positive and fun social get-together. For a community with a large investment in the trucking industry, it seems natural that the truck would once again be the centrepiece for a major event. Now the Oaklands Truck Show has grown to become a two-day event. It attracts people to the area and generates income to support worthy local programs.

I conclude my remarks by congratulating new honour roll inductee Pat Day and "Sporty" for his courageous fundraising parachute jump, along with the president, Frank Smith, and the secretary, Margaret Summons, the organising committee and the Lions Club for their dedication to Oaklands, and for the mighty effort they put into the Oaklands Truck Show. Anyone with a love of trucks should make the pilgrimage to Oaklands, both to enjoy a short break in this beautiful part of New South Wales and to admire the work that goes into these vehicles. While in Oaklands they should also look in on the Vintage Machinery Museum for a perspective on farm machinery over time. Oaklands is a regional town that is making a name for itself—and for the love of trucks.

ARNOTT'S BISCUITS LIMITED

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.51 p.m.]: It is great to make a private member's statement this evening because it gives me an opportunity to inform the House that I had the absolute pleasure of hosting a celebration of a significant anniversary for an iconic brand. Not many companies get to celebrate 150 years of operation. The enduring popularity of Arnott's biscuits can be seen in the longevity of some of its products. If this House had called for a quorum this week, it may not have been formed because every member of Parliament must have found out about some lovely show bags of biscuits and came out of every nook and cranny to be at the celebration, which is fantastic. The longevity of some of the Arnott's products is fantastic. Biscuits such as Sao and Iced VoVo have been around for more than 100 years. Even Tim Tams—my favourite—celebrated 50 years as a product this year.

Arnott's Biscuits have an unbelievable factory at Huntingwood that employs hundreds of staff and produces millions of Tim Tams each year. I was very pleased to welcome the Premier of New South Wales, the Hon. Mike Baird, and all my parliamentary colleagues to be part of the great celebration in Parliament House. We also had a special contingent of Arnott's staff at the celebration led by Mr Umit Subasi, the President of Campbell Arnott's Asia Pacific, and representatives of Arnott's key suppliers across the State, as well as charities supported by the Arnott's Foundation. Some months ago I also had the pleasure of visiting North Strathfield, which is where Arnott's has its iconic showroom. I spent time with some of the Arnott's staff and members of the local community. It was a great celebration and a fitting launch of Arnott's celebration of 150 years with a street party, music and dancing. There was also an Arnott's mobile oven set up that was making another of my favourites, Tiny Teddy, which are chocolate-coated on one side. They are absolutely phenomenal.

It is no small feat to have maintained Arnott's profile and success in a globally competitive industry. This evening during an inaugural speech we heard about the importance of manufacturing, in particular food

manufacturing and processing, and how certain companies easily could have moved overseas. While to a certain degree Arnott's has become international, we must do everything we can to keep the business here and expand its operations. It is sometimes ironic that governments cherry-pick industries to receive assistance while leaving other industries on their own. Arnott's Biscuits has shown it is possible to be a world-class food manufacturer that provides jobs for Australians who are working on site, engaged in growing the raw ingredients used for baking, or providing all the services needed along the extensive supply chain. It is through innovation that Arnott's has been so successful during its 150 years of operation.

Last year I had the pleasure of visiting the Concord Hospital, which is one of the great hospitals in Sydney, for the testing of a revolutionary product, Easy Peel, which is a device that can be used as an easy way to open various products. One of the products in the demonstration was biscuits, and Arnott's took the lead in the demonstration. People who suffer from arthritis or other types of frailties have difficulty opening cartons of milk or packets of biscuits. It was amazing how the Easy Peel worked and basically freed up nurses and other staff in the hospital to do their job and make their patients stay more comfortable. Arnott's is a world leader in innovation.

I am pleased that the company still has premises in North Strathfield. I remember growing up in the Drummoyne electorate when it was the hub of manufacturing and industrial activity. Where I grew up in Chiswick we had Lysaght's and Nestlé; in Five Dock we had Hycraft Carpets; we had the Bush's Meat Company in Strathfield; Cyclops in Leichhardt; and we are very privileged to have Bushells still operating in Concord. I congratulate Arnott's, its staff and every Australian who has grown up with Arnott's Biscuits during its 150 years of operation. It is a great Australian story. We hope that there will be plenty of similar stories in the future.

CABRAMATTA ELECTORATE ANZAC DAY EVENTS

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) [6.56 p.m.]: I had the great honour of attending a number of Anzac Day services across my electorate of Cabramatta on 25 April 2015. This year's Anzac Day was a particularly significant one as it commemorated the centenary of the Anzac landing at Gallipoli. In 1914 Australia was dragged into a conflict that raged across the other side of the world as Britain declared war on the Triple Alliance, which consisted of Austria-Hungary, Germany and Italy. Not long afterwards, our diggers were sent to Gallipoli to make inroads into enemy territory. Little did they know of the horror that would unfold upon landing on the Gallipoli peninsula, which is now known as Anzac Cove.

Among our diggers were many young sons, brothers, husbands and fathers. Many of our soldiers were young and yet to experience life to the fullest. Even though victory was not in sight, the Australians displayed great valour, endurance, and mateship. Mateship was forged in the bloodiest of battles at Gallipoli and throughout the remainder of the Great War as it was known back then. Those are the very qualities that befit the Anzac spirit. That is why Anzac Day is such an important part of Australia's history. It is on this day that we all pause to remember the courage our diggers displayed.

On 22 April this year, I was invited to the Bonnyrigg High School to attend an event entitled "Local Heroes", in which service personnel from the local area were remembered for their sacrifices. I thank the headmaster, staff and students of the Bonnyrigg High School for their great efforts on that day. On Anzac Day I attended the Cabra Vale Diggers Club and the Canley Heights RSL dawn services, along with Chris Hayes, the Federal member for Fowler and other local representatives, where we paid our respects by laying wreaths at the memorial sites. I also participated at the noon service at Mounties and in the evening at the Triglav Club in St Johns Park, which both hosted fantastic events attracting many people from our local area and from other areas.

I was amazed by the dawn service attendance as it exceeded the projected numbers that the organisers had envisaged. Some of the Cabra Vale diggers who attended the 5.00 a.m. dawn service said the number of people in attendance was approximately four times the number of people in previous years. This year commemorated an important event in Australian life and people turned out in great numbers. This demonstrates the large respect that today's generation has for our Anzacs, who have fought for the very freedoms that we enjoy today.

What was noticeable about the crowd was the large number of young children who were in attendance. This shows that the Anzac legacy is revered by our younger members of the community. This day unifies all Australians, regardless of background, as we remember the sacrifices that our men and women made for this

country. Approximately 60,000 Australian soldiers were killed throughout the duration of World War I and we must never forget the ultimate sacrifice they made. Not only do we remember those who fought in World War I but also we remember all military personnel who served in subsequent conflicts, such as World War II, the Malayan emergency, the Vietnam War and, more recently, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Lest we forget.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.59 p.m.]: I draw the attention of the House to the work done on Anzac Day by members of this place. Anzac Day is a hectic day and services to mark the day are often spread across more than one day. Services can begin a week or two weeks before Anzac Day, thus giving diggers the opportunity to travel to the city to enjoy the main Anzac Day march. My electorate was much the same as that described by other speakers, with a morning service in Drummoyne, an Anzac Day round of golf and a dusk service. Unfortunately, our dusk service was hailed out. Anzac Day is a great opportunity for us all to thank those who sacrificed their lives and paved the way for us to enjoy the privileged lifestyle that we now all lead. Lest we forget.

Private members' statements concluded.

PESTICIDES AMENDMENT BILL 2014

Message received from the Legislative Council returning the bill without amendment.

Pursuant to resolution matter of public importance proceeded with.

INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA AND TRANSPHOBIA

Matter of Public Importance

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) [7.00 p.m.]: The International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia [IDAHOT] will be recognised around the world on 17 and 18 May. It has been just over a decade since this day was recognised as a way of drawing the attention of politicians, policymakers, opinion leaders, the media and the public to the violence and discrimination experienced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex [LGBTI] people around the world. The day carries an important significance for many, being the anniversary of the World Health Organization's decision to declassify homosexuality as a mental disorder, which was as recent as 1990. IDAHOT is now celebrated in more than 130 countries, including 37 countries where LGBTI people still face prosecution from their governments.

Celebratory IDAHOT events are important and provide opportunities to unite people in support of the lives and relationships of all people, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or expression. The International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia has been described as a global celebration of sexual and gender diversity. New South Wales has come a long way since the first Mardi Gras march of 1978. In that march, when LGBTI people first expressed a desire for equal recognition of their relationships, they were met with violence from authorities, condemnation from the press and retribution from family and colleagues. The names and addresses of those arrested during the original march were published for all to see. Many lost their jobs and many faced hostility from people they used to call friends, but the 1978ers who joined the first Mardi Gras group fought on and in 1984 the Wran Labor Government decriminalised same-sex relationships in this State.

It would be many more years before the social and legal discrimination experienced by LGBTI people began to fade. The ending of their sexuality as a crime was an essential step in advancing equal rights for LGBTI people. In this place members have passed laws to recognise same-sex relationships, extend de facto rights to same-sex couples, protect LGBTI people through antidiscrimination laws and ensure that same-sex parents have equal access and protection to parenting in New South Wales. A number of people have had a particular impact on LGBTI policy in New South Wales. Gay and lesbian members of Parliament have been icons, ambassadors, figureheads—and targets. They have borne the brunt of hurtful words but achieved much in their time in this place.

I recognise Paul O'Grady—whom many of us consider a friend—as the first openly gay member of this Parliament. Paul was known for fighting discrimination. He fought against discriminatory laws against gays and lesbians in the Defence Force, against the exclusion of transgender people from our discrimination laws and the exclusion of sexuality from anti-vilification laws. He campaigned for three years for his partner to receive the

same access to travel and other benefits to which the spouses of other members of Parliament were entitled. He spoke out against gay bashings and campaigned against the homosexual advance defence—the "gay panic" defence.

I recognise and welcome back Penny Sharpe as the first lesbian to serve in the New South Wales Parliament and as someone who continues to campaign for equality for all people in New South Wales. I also recognise Helen Westwood for her efforts on the same-sex adoption legislation; Bruce Notley-Smith, for his efforts in expunging historic gay sex convictions; Alex Greenwich, for his ongoing efforts in campaigning for marriage equality; and Don Harwin for his consistent support for gay and lesbian relationships.

In New South Wales an important part of the International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia is the Wear It Purple movement. Like many other campaigns, the adoption of a colour to symbolise support for the cause is a useful tool to increase recognition and support. On 17 and 18 May we will see people in workplaces, schools and community groups wearing purple to publicly show their support for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people. Although Parliament will not be sitting on 17 or 18 May this year, I will be wearing purple and I call on fellow members to show their support, wherever they are that day.

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) [7.05 p.m.]: Madam Acting Speaker, congratulations on becoming an Acting Speaker in the Fifty-sixth Parliament. I thank the member for Charlestown for bringing the attention of the House to this issue. As the member for Charlestown eloquently outlined, ending discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people has been a long and arduous road. The many who have worked to end discrimination have required inner strength during their fight for equality in New South Wales and across Australia. I come from the catering game and I have a lot of gay and transgender friends who work in that field. People such as my mates at school would sometimes chip me by saying, "You are working with people who are homosexual or transgender." I have always found LGBTI people to be honest and open because they do not have anything to hide and they value one's friendship. In today's society we should be bringing them closer to us rather than pushing them away; and laws that will accomplish that are well overdue.

In 2013 the Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act 1984 was amended to introduce prohibitions on discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity, intersex status and relationship status. Acts done in direct compliance with the New South Wales law are exempt from the prohibitions on discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status, but not relationship status. This exemption ends on 31 July 2015. The related bill's second reading speech indicates that after the current exemption ends, only specifically nominated State and Territory laws are to be exempt. New South Wales is examining which of its laws should continue to be exempt. It comes down to the fact that we need to fight in this place for the rights of LGBTI people and I concur with the comments of the member for Charlestown.

I have marched in the gay Mardi Gras. Unfortunately this year I definitely was not gay enough—I was five minutes late for the gate and, missing the cut-off, I was unable to get in. The Mardi Gras is the celebration of a lifestyle. When people avail themselves of the opportunity to develop friendships with those of a different background, the society we live in becomes a better place. I thank the member for Charlestown for bringing this matter of public importance before the House.

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) [7.10 p.m.]: Tonight I speak about the importance of IDAHOT, the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia. In Katoomba this Sunday I will attend the rainbow flag-raising ceremony as the member for Blue Mountains because it is a great day and also because vilification and persecution are still a feature of everyday life for members of our lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and questioning [LGBTIQ] community, and it has to stop.

I note some alarming facts and figures, as teachers often do. Same-sex relationships are still illegal in 78 countries. In 11 of them, the death penalty can be applied. There were a total of 1,731 cases of reported killings of transgender and gender diverse people from 1 January 2008 to 31 December 2014. Same-sex attracted and gender diverse youth who may or may not be open about their sexuality or gender identity have reported significantly higher mental health and wellbeing concerns than heterosexual youth. Across Australia, 61 per cent of same-sex attracted young people report having experienced verbal abuse and 18 per cent report having experienced physical abuse on the basis of their sexuality. When asked where they were when the abuse took place, 80 per cent said it was at school.

My friend Eryk Kesa has spent 58 years struggling to reconcile the difference between his physical gender and his own identity. Born a woman in Catholic Poland, Eryk was teased and bullied by classmates for

being different. Eryk said that in those days "everyone was straight". Of course, in reality, there would have been many lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people living in secrecy and in fear throughout the community, but "coming out" was not done. Eryk and his mum fled Europe and settled in Australia where he continued to live as a woman. Three years ago, Eryk made the decision to transition to a woman and underwent hormone and invasive therapy.

This week Eryk shared his story with our local newspaper, the *Blue Mountains Gazette*, in the hope it will help to educate other transgender people, particularly the young, about the issues faced by our transgender community. In raising this matter of public importance and in keeping with my mantra of the personal is political, I finish by paying positive tribute not only to Eryk—and all those who need their communities to waive rainbow flags for and with them—but also to my dear friend D C Sanders who has travelled a path that has involved frustration and pain, but also colour and love. All strength to her.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) [7.12 p.m.], by leave: I thank the member for Charlestown for bringing this matter of public importance to the attention of the House. I speak as The Greens spokesperson on sexuality and gender identity. The Greens believe that all people have a right to their self-identified sex and gender. We do not tolerate a person being harassed, abused, vilified, stigmatised, discriminated against, disadvantaged or exploited because they are or are perceived to be intersex, transgender, bisexual, gay or lesbian. These are not issues of conscience for the Greens. They are issues of common sense and for me, as a human rights advocate, they are issues of human rights.

I acknowledge the strong foundations which lay in the hearts of The Greens by the out and proud Australian Greens leader Senator Bob Brown. On 17 May, the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia marks the day in 1990 that homosexuality was removed from the International Classification of Diseases of the World Health Organization. Twenty-five years later, too much homophobia and transphobia remain in our society. It is our responsibility as legislators and public representatives to dismantle institutions of discrimination wherever we find it. Therefore, we must remove the exemptions in the Anti-Discrimination Act in New South Wales. The law too often trails behind public opinion.

It is wonderful to know that there are many events happening in my local electorate of Newtown. The Sydney Gay and Lesbian Choir is performing on the concourse of Central Station, the Surry Hills police are having a barbecue, and an afternoon tea on Bedford Street will be hosted by the Gay and Lesbian Counselling Service of NSW. I acknowledge those organisations and the many organisations that work tirelessly in New South Wales, across the country and around the world to advocate for the rights of sexual and gender diverse people in our communities.

I say also that it is with much pleasure and pride that I regularly see rainbow flags and rainbow crossings throughout the electorate of Newtown and beyond. This year IDAHOT NSW is asking people to take a pledge, to be an ally against homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and intersex phobia. I commit to that pledge. Everyone has the right to be accepted for who they are, how they choose to express themselves and who they love. I pledge to share this message with my friends, family, neighbours and colleagues, to speak out against prejudice, discrimination, hate or intolerance wherever I see it, if I can safely do so, and to provide hope for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer or questioning youth by letting them know that The Greens and I are their allies.

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) [7.15 p.m.], in reply: The International Day Against Homophobia added the explicit mention of transphobia to recognise the frequent and unique discrimination experienced by transgender people in this State and around the world. Transgender and other gender diverse people continue to experience health and social outcomes far below their straight gendered peers. While much has been improved for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people in New South Wales in recent years, there are still many social barriers for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex [LGBTI] people to overcome and the health and social outcomes for LGBTI people remain below their straight peers in a number of areas.

Health and social outcomes for transgender people continue to be especially poor, with 90 per cent of transgender people experiencing some form of discrimination, from violence and verbal abuse to harassment over the gender listed on government documents; 60 per cent of transgender men and half of transgender women report experiencing depression; and up to half of transgender people have attempted suicide at least once in their life. LGBTI people have the highest rates of suicide of any population in Australia. LGBTI people who are

Aboriginal, refugees, or live in rural or remote communities have a particularly high risk of suicide. The average age of suicide attempts is 16 years. Almost 40 per cent of LGBTI young people describe their school as homophobic or very homophobic. Only 20 per cent describe their school as supportive.

The experience of LGBTI people around the globe continues to be highly variable. A number of countries have embraced legal and social reform to increase the social inclusion of LGBTI people, but in a number of nations a hostile legal system poses a serious challenge to the wellbeing of gender and sexually diverse people. The member for Blue Mountains mentioned that homosexual acts are still illegal in 78 countries. The death penalty can be applied in 11 of those countries. In our region, homosexual acts are outlawed in Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga and parts of Indonesia. There is still much to do in New South Wales to ensure that LGBTI people have the same opportunities for work, love and happiness. Hilary Clinton has been receiving attention recently so I will end with a quote from her:

Like being a woman, like being a racial, religious, tribal, or ethnic minority, being LGBT does not make you less human. And that is why gay rights are human rights, and human rights are gay rights.

I thank the member for Heathcote, the member for Blue Mountains and the member for Newtown for supporting this matter of public importance.

Discussion concluded.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to resolution, at 7.18 p.m. until
Thursday 14 May 2015 at 10.00 a.m.**
