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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 2 June 2015

The Speaker (The Hon. Shelley Elizabeth Hancock) took the chair at 12 noon.

The Speaker read the Prayer and acknowledgement of country.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Notices of Motions

General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) given.

Pursuant to sessional order private members' statements proceeded with.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

TEA GARDENS PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) [12.11 p.m.]: Wonderful things often happen in our schools because children are capable of the most amazing things. Today, I make special mention of one such activity that I had the pleasure to witness in my electorate of Port Stephens. On Wednesday 20 May 2015, I attended the twenty-sixth official opening of the school parliament at Tea Gardens Public School. For the past 27 years, since 1988, Tea Gardens Public School has given its students a rare insight into the workings of the Westminster system and the benefit of experiencing democracy in action. But do not think for a moment that it is just a rebadging exercise of school captains to ministers. Tea Gardens Public School has taken it much further than that.

Let me describe what I witnessed; some of this should sound familiar to members. The opening ceremony commenced with the serjeant-at-arms asking all attendees to stand whilst the speaker, clerks and Hansard reporters entered the House, also known as the school covered outdoor learning area [COLA]. The usher of the black rod, who was garbed in a black gown and wielded a beautiful wooden rod which had been turned by the local Men's Shed, then sought entry. She led the new ministers to the House, followed by the shadow ministers, governor-general and parliamentary advisors. The governor-general, also known as school principal Mr Mark Clemson, officially opened the parliament, following which the minutes of the previous sittings were read and each of the ministers delivered a speech, setting out portfolio responsibilities and a report on latest activities.

I congratulate prime minister Cole Johnson, deputy prime minister and minister for sport Paddy Nickle, minister for transport Shona Miller, minister for education Taylor Simmons, minister for building and health Nathan Katz, minister for pupil welfare Indianna McDonald, minister for special events Mitchell Barr, and minister for the environment William Markham. All of the ministers revealed in their speeches a sense of responsibility and genuine care for their fellow students and for the school community as a whole. As the parliamentary advisor, also known as year 6 teacher, Miss Winney said in her speech that the children displayed many leadership qualities, particularly consideration and respect. The shadow ministers were year 5 students, capably led by the leader of the opposition Sophia Jeffries.

Throughout the formalities, 180 honourable members—the student population—sat quietly and showed respect to their colleagues. One could say that there was a significant contrast between the behaviour of the honourable members at Tea Gardens Public School and those sitting in this place. During the formalities I could sense that the honourable members were looking forward to something, and it was not just recess. They were looking forward to their opportunity to participate in democracy: notices of motion were put, questions with and without notice were asked, honourable members spoke for and against motions with gusto and everyone showed genuine interest.

One of my favourite notices of motion called on the government to approve the purchase of additional skipping ropes and hula hoops because there were not enough to go around when it was wet. Members supporting the motion spoke of the need for different length skipping ropes; members against the motion spoke of the desire to save money for the longed-for school playground. Another motion called for an increase in the amount of sport programmed during the school day. One honourable member who spoke for the motion said it was a "mad" idea and "so awesome", language that I would like to see utilised in this Chamber. Motions passed by the House were sent to the senate, otherwise known as the school staff.

During the opening ceremony, the gallery was filled with parents, grandparents, Port Stephens Deputy Mayor Len Roberts, community members, and former school staff. I had the pleasure of meeting a very special former staff member who was in attendance, Mr Darryl Martin. Darryl Martin was a former school principal at Tea Gardens Public School. In fact, it had been as a result of a school excursion undertaken by Darryl with the school students to Parliament House in Canberra 27 years before that had been the genesis of the school parliament at Tea Gardens Public School. He was the school's first governor-general. Darryl has since attended every one of the 26 official parliamentary openings at Tea Gardens Public School.

I thank the current governor-general, senators, ministers, shadow ministers and honourable members of the Tea Gardens Public School for their kind invitation to attend the official opening of their twenty-sixth parliament. I commend the school for its commitment to ensuring its students have a voice and that their opinions can be voiced without fear or favour. In doing so, the school is ensuring not only that the students have a bright future but that our community's future is bright, with a wealth of future leaders and responsible citizens.

PARRAMATTA MISSION

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.16 p.m.]: I bring to the House's attention the great vision, service and work that Parramatta Mission does in Western Sydney under the leadership of Reverend Keith Hamilton. For 40 years, Parramatta Mission has helped the most disadvantaged and vulnerable in our community. Last week, Parramatta Mission held a special fundraising event, the Raising Hope Gala. Parramatta Mission hosted this gala event to raise awareness and funds to help tackle the plight of women facing homelessness. The proceeds from this event will go towards the establishment of crisis accommodation for women. I commend Parramatta Mission for its efforts to expand its homelessness services to address the concerns of women facing homelessness. The Hon. Catherine Cusack from the other place, who attended the gala representing the Premier, spoke of the need to ensure we as a government support women in need.

It is great news that in June the Parramatta Mission will open a house to accommodate up to four single women. Parramatta Mission sees this as a modest start in tackling a big issue. The mission estimates there are some 46,000 homeless women in Australia. They make up approximately 44 per cent of all homeless people. Four years ago Parramatta Mission opened Hope Hostel, which provides crisis accommodation for up to 30 men. The hostel's achievements are a credit to Parramatta Mission's committed staff. Michael Wright, who is the Director of Operations for Community Services at Parramatta Mission, drove the redevelopment of the hostel; Angela Daynes, who is the Manager of Men, Women and Family Services, has oversight of Hope Hostel and is the chairperson of the Raising Hope for Women Facing Homelessness working party; and Indri and Paul are fantastic team leaders at Hope Hostel. Most importantly, hostel staff create a family for the men, who may be without, or may never have had, a family.

Parramatta Mission transitions men into their own accommodation and continues to keep in contact with them. The mission recognises that the men, once in their own accommodation, can experience loneliness and fall back into old life practices. Parramatta Mission believes an integrated approach is essential to breaking the cycle of homelessness and poverty. Through its Raising Hope project, Parramatta Mission is looking to replicate Hope Hostel's model for women facing homelessness in Western Sydney. Donna Kelly is leading this project, with the support of a strong team. The Raising Hope Gala is one way the team is working to make its vision a reality. The Raising Hope team is looking to develop pathways to transition women out of homelessness. The team also wants to raise public awareness of the complex issues surrounding homelessness and the increasing number of women now facing this situation.

The Raising Hope team set up the Raising Hope for Women's Foundation in the hope of securing a property and establish a crisis accommodation for women facing homelessness. This project is one more way Parramatta Mission is helping our community. Dedicated and committed staff and volunteers all play a key role. Senior caseworker Fred Anderson has worked for Parramatta Mission for 12 years and has helped many disadvantaged people start their lives over again, while caseworker Laurie Besant has provided much-needed

outreach, engaging with people in Parramatta who sleep rough and helping them access appropriate services. Board chairperson David Norris and deputy chairperson Ian Gray have provided leadership to Parramatta Mission for more than 25 years.

Reverend Keith Hamilton, who is both senior minister and group chief executive officer, provides invaluable pastoral, spiritual and community leadership. Most importantly, the work of Donna Kelly and her team have made the Raising Hope Project a reality. This is an important project and I was delighted to be able to attend the Raising Gala event this week to show my support. I commend Reverend Keith Hamilton and the staff, volunteers and clients at Parramatta Mission. Government is often not in a position to look after vulnerable people. Unfortunately, cities like Parramatta attract people in desperate need of assistance and Parramatta Mission is to be commended for providing that necessary assistance.

SNOWY MOUNTAINS WILD HORSE CULL

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) [12.21 p.m.]: I ask the House to picture this image: a beautiful stallion running wild and free, his muscles bulging with strength. When he stands up on his back hooves one is overcome by his grace and power. There is nothing quite like seeing a brumby in the wild. It is an absolute thrill. Brumbies are so strongly linked to our heritage that the thought of them being slaughtered makes me sick. The shameful culling and leaving for dead of one of our country's national icons once again has reared its ugly head.

Culling is cruel and barbaric and yet this disgraceful act, in order to control wild horse numbers in Kosciuszko National Park, is being tossed about again in media reports this week. Wild brumbies have been roaming the Australian alps for almost 200 years. They are part of the cultural fabric and folklore of the high country—country that I have grown to admire, respect and love. Nothing is more synonymous with the Australian outdoor lifestyle than the brumby: from *The Man from Snowy River* heritage to the integral role that the Snowy Mountain's bush horses played in the Australian Light Horse campaign during World War I. They even featured at the opening ceremony of the Sydney 2000 Olympics.

Brumbies epitomise what is unique and beautiful about alpine New South Wales. They are allowed to run wild and free and survive in the rugged and extreme conditions of Kosciuszko National Park. In fact, Kosciuszko National Park exists to protect the unique environment of the Snowy Mountains, and that unique environment includes wild brumbies. Love it or hate it, wild horses are now part of the Kosciuszko environment and I will not tire in my efforts to fight any move towards the culling of these great horses. On Anzac Day this year, the Snowy Mountain Brumby Sustainability Management Group paid tribute to the role of the brumby in theatres of war.

Major Callow came to collect brumbies from the mountains at the beginning of World War I. Some of the men on the Snowy River march rode these horses on their recruitment drive to Sydney and 311 snowy bush horses were purchased by the Army Remount from Crackenback Station for use as remounts and gun carriage horses. These astutely bred and managed snowy bush horses are part of the mosaic of the history of the Australian Light Horse. Their memory remains, as do their descendants, in the homeland of the snowy brumby, the Snowy Mountains. Brumbies have acted as police horses and stockhorses and have helped us work the land. They are not nuisance feral animals; they have earned their place as part of our history and must be protected. How cruel that we turn our backs on the very animals that have served us well.

Aerial shooting of wild horses in New South Wales was banned a number of years ago after disturbing images of horses being gunned down in Guy Fawkes River National Park sparked public outrage. The National Parks and Wildlife Service is reviewing the 2008 Horse Management Plan and a number of control methods have been investigated. A draft report for broader consultation will be handed down at the end of this year. The Government has made it clear that aerial culling will not be considered as an option for controlling numbers in Kosciuszko National Park and I will continue to fight passionately to keep it off this list.

I cannot accept that anyone who calls himself a conservationist would condone an aerial culling program. If numbers of wild horses are a problem in the Kosciuszko National Park, there are kinder ways to control the wild horse population, such as programs to break in brumbies and offer them for sale. One of the most time-worn and factually challenged arguments promoted by the zero populist regime within The Greens-National Parks and Wildlife Service-Office of Environment and Heritage alliance about the brumby is the environmental impact of the brumby. The International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources has noted that a number of species, including the corroboree frog and the broad-toothed rat, face greater impacts from feral pigs, yet we do not see the same zest in dealing with the pig issue in national parks.

It is said that wild brumbies damage the environment which is home to endangered native species. Peter Cochran, a former member for Monaro and avid wild brumby supporter, suggests evidence is lacking in this area and claims that other animals such as pigs do more damage than our brumbies. There are few places in the world where wild horses can roam freely. Wild horses are a major drawcard for local tourism and have just as much right as anyone to exist here. These animals are a living part of our history and it is our responsibility to protect them. I will conclude with words from one of our greatest poets, Banjo Paterson, who penned *Brumbies Run* in the late 1800s:

It lies beyond the Western Pines
Towards the sinking sun,
And not a survey mark defines
The bounds of "Brumby's Run".

On odds and ends of mountain land,
On tracks of range and rock
Where no one else can make a stand,
Old Brumby rears his stock.

STRICKLAND HOUSE ESTATE

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse—Attorney General) [12.25 p.m.]: On Sunday 3 May 2015 I attended Strickland House Open Day in Vaucluse, thanks to the kind invitation extended to me by Mr Peter Poland, President of the Woollahra History and Heritage Society. Strickland House is a treasure in my local community. The property, spread across five hectares of our harbour foreshore, is recognised as a unique and valuable asset by my local community and the State. The New South Wales Government first listed the main building, Carrara House, on the New South Wales State Heritage Register in April 1999 due to its historical significance. Carrara House, which is an 1850s colonial villa designed by John Hilly, is an example of early Italianate style.

William Charles Wentworth, the famed Australian explorer, politician and poet, whose portrait hangs here in the Chamber, was the original owner of the property. Strickland House Open Day is an opportunity for members of the community across Sydney and New South Wales to visit the estate. Its doors are opened annually, courtesy of the society and Government Property NSW. If the opportunity arises, I encourage my colleagues to travel to the Vaucluse electorate to visit Strickland House estate. Having grown up in the eastern suburbs, I have known the Strickland House estate my entire life. But it was only when I came to know Peter Poland and his late wife, June, co-founders of the Woollahra History and Heritage Society, that I came to learn more about the history of this great estate and its heritage value.

I am pleased to say that in January 2012, as a result of the community's hard work and the leadership of Peter and his late wife, June, the State heritage listing was extended to include the whole estate surrounding "Carrara". June Poland passed away in November 2013. In a fitting tribute to her hard work preserving heritage throughout my local area and beyond and specifically for her role in protecting the Strickland House estate, her husband, Peter, organised for a memorial bench to be placed within the grounds of the estate. Peter had talked with me for some time about the idea that visitors could stop and use the bench to take in the beauty of the estate and the view to the harbour, which June, his beloved late wife, loved so dearly.

June's other achievements included successfully rallying Woollahra Municipal Council to name Bungaree Reserve, which had previously been an unnamed reserve located next to Rose Bay police station. It is named after the Aboriginal Australian who accompanied Matthew Flinders on coastal surveys as a guide and who was buried at sea. June Poland also authored a booklet about the landing of Governor Phillip at Camp Cove and another entitled *Carrara/Strickland House: the finest site on the foreshores of Sydney Harbour; the history, recent and not so recent*, of which more than 1,500 copies sold. I was honoured to partake in the unveiling of June's memorial bench. It was a wet and windy day, but many were in attendance who wanted to acknowledge her contribution. It was a unique opportunity to again remember her contributions to my local community and to Australia through her work to preserve our heritage.

June was a recipient of a number of honours, including Woollahra Citizen of the Year in 1995 and the New South Wales Government Heritage Volunteers Award in 2005, and on Australia Day this year she was posthumously awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for her service. I am strongly committed to keeping the estate in public ownership, to ensuring that any future use of the estate is sympathetic to its heritage and to protecting the public's right to ongoing access. I am pleased to see the result of Peter's idea and hard work to have a permanent memorial to his beloved wife, June, in such a fitting place on the estate.

LIFELINE MACARTHUR

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) [12.30 p.m.]: On Friday 15 May I had the privilege of attending the Lifeline Macarthur Annual Volunteer Dinner, along with the Hon. Laurie Ferguson, Federal member for Werriwa; Chris Hayes, Federal member for Fowler; Councillor Rudi Kolkman of Campbelltown City Council; and many other local identities, parliamentarians, staff, board members and, most importantly, volunteers. Lifeline Macarthur commenced in 1978 to meet the needs of people in crisis in the Macarthur area. Since then it has expanded to cover areas from Fairfield, Rossmore, Liverpool and Macarthur—which includes Campbelltown, Camden and Picton—to Robertson in the east, Braidwood in the south and Dalton in the west.

Lifeline Macarthur was founded as an extension of the Parramatta Lifeline service until it became a fully accredited Lifeline centre in its own right. It maintains the service 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Lifeline Macarthur is under the umbrella of the Uniting Church of Australia. It delivers a range of free crisis support services to the people of south-west Sydney, Macarthur and the Southern Highlands, including a telephone crisis support line, which is available to everyone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. More than 1,800 people call the national telephone crisis number every day and the Macarthur branch answers about 63 of those calls for help.

Lifeline also provides a range of suicide awareness and prevention resources to individuals, businesses and other organisations, as well as toolkits for the public that are available on a range of topics such as suicide risk and prevention, suicide bereavement, domestic violence, panic attacks, coping with grief and managing stress. Additionally, Lifeline conducts suicide bereavement support groups, offers financial counselling assistance and holds a general psychology clinic. Lifeline Macarthur operates seven retail stores that sell new and pre-loved items, such as clothes, books, household appliances, collectables, toys and reconditioned white goods. Not long ago I purchased from Lifeline some great-quality items for use in the Campbelltown electorate office.

Lifeline Macarthur is one of many members of the national Lifeline network. At the Lifeline Macarthur annual volunteer dinner Campbelltown locals joined many other volunteers who were recognised for their long-term commitment and contribution to Lifeline. I am sure members will join me in commending the award recipients, who came from all parts of our region and beyond. From the Campbelltown region, 15-year service awards were presented to Tracy Darrell of Campbelltown and Debbie Gurney of Airds. Ten-year service awards were presented to Joan Budd of Airds, Carmen Smith of Leumeah, Anita Whitehouse of Bradbury and James Moore of Ambarvale. Five-year service awards were presented to Rudi Kolkman of Bradbury, Elsa Aldous of Leumeah, John King of Bradbury, Emylee Tuzon of Blair Athol, Roger Smith of Campbelltown and Leanne Mauger of Glen Alpine.

The importance of the contribution of more than 400 volunteers to our region is immeasurable; they provide a service that assists people when they are most in need. The silent sufferers within all our communities are undoubtedly those who battle mental health issues and depression—which at times, unfortunately, cause people to take their lives. The services provided by Lifeline help to ensure that people do not take that fatal step, which means a loss to their community, family, friends and loved ones. The direct actions of volunteers have supported many thousands of people during times of crisis and encouraged them to look at the best options to move ahead with their lives. I note the passion of the member for Wollondilly for this issue. I congratulate each and every volunteer who contributes to Lifeline, and especially thank those named at the awards evening for their ongoing and unwavering dedication to our community and to many people in their time of need.

TWEED ELECTORATE EVENTS

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) [12.34 p.m.]: I am 100 per cent for the Tweed. I draw the attention of the House to a number of events I attended recently in my electorate. The first was at Bilambil Public School. It is a great little school attended by approximately 300 students and 53 new kindy kids who started at the school this year. It was a joy to meet all the students. The school's motto is "Inspiring 21st Century Learners". School captains Kaycee-Jane and Luke were my escorts for the day, together with principal Julian Mostert. My visit was organised to teach students about the political process. At the end of my visit the children asked me a number of very good questions. A little girl, who was seated right up the back, asked me a question—

Dr Geoff Lee: You couldn't answer it.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: It was a difficult question. She asked, "Tell me something; when you are in Parliament do you ever get bored?" I said that there are some slower moments and there are some busier

moments but I could not say that it is boring. Another event I attended was a morning tea at Twin Towns Friends, an organisation founded by Doreen Welsh and a band of volunteers a number of years ago that provides friendship and social contact for the frail elderly in the Tweed. When I was the manager of Tweed Heads Bowls Club I was an active financial contributor to the organisation. It is a great organisation with around 230 clients on its books, and is all about visiting, social inclusion and checking on elderly people. The morning tea was held to thank volunteers and we handed out certificates to a large number of them.

I also attended the Biggest Morning Tea, which is held annually to raise funds for the Cancer Council NSW. The tea was hosted by Nerida Dean of New Directions and was held at Babalou, which is a new venue at the famous Kingscliff Beach Hotel. One other gentleman and I attended the event with 75 ladies. It was a great event, with early morning cocktails and some lovely pastries. It was very well organised and most enjoyable, and more than \$1,000 was raised for the Cancer Council.

Recently our great Minister for Health attended the Tweed Hospital and met with senior clinicians to advance the Government's \$48 million election commitment for stages one and two of the hospital upgrade. A number of issues were discussed with the Minister, who once again showed a great deal of understanding of and support for clinicians such as Dr Ian McPhee. I anticipate that the Minister will revisit the Tweed shortly to show further support for the upgrades, which will greatly enhance the capabilities of our great hospital and the hardworking doctors and nurses who manage the health needs of people in the region.

On Saturday I had the honour of attending three local fire stations in the Tweed electorate—Banora Point, Kingscliff and Tweed Heads—for the annual open day. A great bunch of guys and girls work really hard at those fire stations. The open day was well attended by a large number of families and elderly people—the highlight for any child who visits a fire station is to sit in the cab of the fire engine and turn on the siren and the lights. The day coincided with the opening of our local netball season, and I pay tribute to the Tweed Netball Association, which has around 800 players. President Helen Rigby and her executive do an enormous amount of good work. I had the honour of ringing the bell to commence the games. Looking across the vast number of courts and seeing players of all ages was a sight to behold.

Alanna Pengilly has been selected to play for the Queensland State team and other regional teams and is the sport's first ambassador. Part of her role as ambassador is to mentor young netballers. Netball is a great sport. It is wonderful to see people participating in community events. As the local member, it is great to be able to stand beside them and assist them where I can. I am very proud of their endeavours. Once again, I am 100 per cent for the Tweed.

KU-RING-GAI ELECTORATE CENTENARY OF ANZAC COMMEMORATIONS

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) [12.39 p.m.]: The centenary of the Anzac Gallipoli landing in 2015 was much anticipated in the Ku-ring-gai electorate, and it lived up to every expectation. I had the honour of marching in the official party alongside other dignitaries at the Hornsby RSL dawn service on Anzac Day. I thank Terry James, the Hornsby RSL Sub-Branch secretary, for his invitation. As it does every year, the 226 Army Cadet Unit based at Normanhurst Boys High School did an incredible job providing the Catafalque Party for the Hornsby dawn service. The cadets' professionalism was a stand-out and a credit to them and their commanding officer, Captain Stan Hinsby. Cadet Nathan Elliot played the last post, and he has done so for many years.

My first Anzac Day engagement was a week earlier at the ceremony conducted by the Roseville RSL Sub-Branch at the Roseville Memorial Club. Those participating in the service included the Reverend Laurel Barr from Roseville Uniting Church, Killara High School trumpeter Rhys Tirado, the Knox Old Boys Pipe Band, and a talented young violinist, Andrew Liang. Isabelle Woodforde, a senior student at Roseville College; Michael Askey, President of the Roseville RSL Sub-Branch; the 1st Lindfield Scout Group; the Roseville scouts; and John Whitworth also took part in the Roseville ceremony. On 23 April 2015 I attended Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Primary School at Waitara for an impressive but also sombre ceremony. The event doubled as a tribute to a former student of the school, Trooper Jason Brown, an SAS soldier who sadly died in combat in Afghanistan in 2010. Jason's sister Stephanie gave a heartfelt speech—a tribute that had everyone in the room captivated, including our Governor, His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley, AC, DSC.

On the eve of Anzac Day, I had the honour of addressing the entire staff and student body of Pymble Ladies' College. I was pleased to meet principal Vicky Waters and the school leaders, including head prefect Roshana Kanagaratnam and deputy prefect Alexandra Hunter, before I spoke about the examples of service and

the desire for world peace that Anzac Day evokes. West Pymble Public School is another great school in my electorate, and I joined Principal Bronwyn Wilson for a well-coordinated Anzac ceremony. The entirety of year six played a role in organising the event, led by captains Madeline Mamas and Jack Day, vice captains Caitlyn Putt and Bede Taylor, and naval commander Brad Smith, a father of a student at the school. The last post was played very well by Connor McKinney.

On Anzac Day itself, as I have already mentioned, I attended the Hornsby dawn service. Later that morning I was attended two services conducted by the National Servicemen's Association of Australia, Sydney Northern Sub-Branch: the first at the Wahroonga War Memorial and the second an hour or so later at the Turramurra Memorial. I thank David Cooper, OAM, and Barney Flanagan for their flawless organisation of those events. I also thank George Katsoolis. Abbotsleigh student Megan Jones gave an inspiring speech at both ceremonies, and bugler Rhiannon Davis, as always, did a great job sounding the last post at both events.

Mr Owen Thomas was a flawless master of ceremonies, and the other men from the Nashos—Ted Webber, Malcolm Thom, Derek Bryden, Arthur Krust, John Astley, Chris Williams, Vic Seaglove and Alan Vale—did stellar jobs on the day. Wahroonga scouts and cubs did an amazing job serving breakfast at Wahroonga, and Turramurra Rotary ran the morning tea at the Turramurra Memorial. Reverend Dr Michael Stead and Father David Ranson led the prayers.

In the afternoon I was honoured to attend with other dignitaries, lay a wreath and speak at the Kokoda Track Memorial at Wahroonga. I spoke about the democracy and freedoms we enjoy in our country because of the actions of our ex-service men and women. Greg Hodgson organised the service at the Kokoda Track Memorial. Owen Thomas was again the emcee at this event. Reverend Andrew Rees, Tom Hazell, Howard Rodgers, Owen Thomas, piper Charlie Hunter and Guy Kingdon also played their parts in making the event a memorable success. On the day after Anzac Day I was a guest of the Knox Grammar School, which in conjunction with Ravenswood School for Girls put on a magnificent parade honouring the Anzac centenary.

The cadet parade unit, led by Senior Cadet Under Officer [CUO] Rob Truskett with CUO Lillian Wilhelm his second in charge, did an extraordinary job on the day. The lament by pipe major William Petro, the last post by Nicholas Thomson and Edward Morris, the reading of the roll of honour by school captain Harry Chapman and prayer by vice-captain Alex Cross, the benediction by Reverend Peter Robinson, and the laying of wreaths by Mark Wilson and Tom Osborn were a fitting and respectful way of honouring our Anzacs.

On the same day I attended a commemorative service at St Martins Church Killara, presided over by Reverend Matthew Heazlewood. A week later I attended a commemorative service at St John's Anglican Church at Gordon, presided over by Reverend Keith Dalby, at which a moving address was given by former ambassador, defence Minister and member for Bradfield, now Director of the Australian War Memorial, the Hon. Dr Brendan Nelson. The citizens of the Ku-ring-gai electorate will remember the centenary of Anzac Day for the rest of their lives.

WHEELS FOR INDEPENDENCE AND MARTHA SIEDE

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) [12.44 p.m.]: Today I speak about a very special woman in my electorate. I do not want her amazing work in our community to go unnoticed, so I acknowledge it in Parliament this afternoon. Martha Siede and I first met when I was on the campaign trail, phoning local residents in the suburb of Claremont Meadows. From the moment I spoke to Martha and her loving husband, Andrew, I knew they were a special family. Martha's story began when she was born with cerebral palsy, which affects her movements, posture, balance and coordination.

One year ago Martha began experiencing shooting pains in her arms, which restricted her movement. The vertebrae in her neck have started to deteriorate, which will likely lead to quadriplegia. There is no way to stop this from happening, so all the help Martha receives is absolutely vital. That is why I am honoured to have been involved in Martha's campaign, for more than a year, to get a wheelchair-accessible vehicle. The campaign recently culminated in a fundraiser night on Saturday 16 May 2015—the Wheels for Independence Fundraising and Trivia Night—at St Marys RSL.

Wheels for Independence is an organisation that Martha formed with the goal of raising more than \$80,000 for a wheelchair-accessible vehicle so that she can maintain her independence. This vehicle will allow Martha to continue to be active in her day-to-day life because, while living with the effects of cerebral palsy,

Martha remains an active participant in our community through volunteering, working part time and providing motivational speaking. She approaches life with positivity and gusto that are to be marvelled at. She is an inspiration to many in our community, including me.

I recently heard Martha speak at the Rotary Club of St Marys. She gave a moving and compelling recount of her life story, including a connection to Rotary from her time at high school. When she attended Jamison High School, Rotary purchased a wheelchair for her to get around the school grounds. As someone who, prior to my election to this place, worked for a long time with people living with disabilities, I know that much can be achieved against the odds. Martha is a great example of that sort of achievement. I am privileged to be her local member and I hope to be able to assist her in raising even more money in future.

Martha was assisted by the local charity Little By Little, an organisation that supports people living with disabilities and their families. Little By Little is best known in my electorate for supporting the students of Kurrambee School, an amazing place providing first-class education for students with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities. I take the opportunity to thank Allen Cullen from Little By Little for his work in making the trivia night possible. Without Little By Little, Martha would not have been able to host the trivia night. I was recently informed by Martha that at the fundraising night on 16 May 2015 she raised an amazing \$11,475—taking her many steps closer to her car. Well done to everyone involved in Wheels for Independence. I was pleased to play a small part on the night. I wish Martha every possible success in future. I know that she will get there.

BLUE MOUNTAINS LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) [12.49 p.m.]: There is a potential calamity regarding land use and development in the Blue Mountains. This issue has arisen after an apparent backflip by the New South Wales planning department over the draft local environmental plan [LEP]. The Blue Mountains City Council has worked with the community intensively for two years to devise an LEP that conforms to the standard template but also takes into account the mountains' unique position within a World Heritage area, its environment, water catchment and character housing. At a meeting on 15 May I understand that members of the Department of Planning legal branch told council they would no longer advocate that those key environmental provisions are included.

In particular, these provisions relate to important aspects of the Blue Mountains planning framework such as: compliance with objectives, flexibility in development in the E2 zone, storm/weather quality management, the protection of significant vegetation communities and period housing areas, the protection of character housing areas and providing outcome objectives for our villages. After years of work and strong assurances from successive Ministers and senior departmental staff, we now have a rearguard action from the department that will deny the Blue Mountains community its identity. Imagine if you will all those waterway protections in the draft LEP—gone. Imagine the buffer between the city and the national park—gone. Imagine constraints on height—gone. Imagine densities and proper controls over them—gone. Imagine, if you will, higher-density development from Lapstone to Mount Victoria and imagine a complete loss of local character.

In a strong show of bipartisanship our deputy mayor and Liberal councillor Chris Van der Kley offered his complete support. Mayor Greenhill reported that when the now Minister for Family and Community Services, Brad Hazzard, was planning Minister he instructed department officers to safeguard the mountains. However, when he was replaced the department undertook a rearguard action to try to convert our LEP into a statewide instrument like everyone else has. I have written on behalf of many in my community who are angry and concerned, on behalf of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society—of which I am a proud member—and on behalf of our local council to the Minister for Planning, Rob Stokes, about reports that the department will not advocate for the inclusion of any provisions in the Blue Mountains LEP relating to heritage and character zoning, and environmental protections.

My community and our villages are not typical of the Sydney area so a standardised planning instrument developed for communities in the Sydney metropolitan area would be completely inappropriate. It is particularly concerning that these reports are emanating so near to the deadline for the finalisation of standardised instrument plans, on 30 June 2015. Our community and the Blue Mountains City Council worked in good faith with the department to ensure that the planning framework for the Blue Mountains would be retained in the conversion to the standard instrument format. I seek an urgent assurance from the Government that its planning department will continue to advocate for the key provisions negotiated with the Blue Mountains City Council and will work with our community to protect the unique heritage and character of our villages as

well as our local environment and the World Heritage listed national park. I, together with many in this place, worked alongside leading environmental advocacy organisations throughout New South Wales during the 2015 election campaign. The document entitled "Our Environment, Our Future", which many candidates perused, states:

Environment protection, conservation, natural resource management, and social well-being are fundamental to planning and ecologically sustainable development. A planning system that seeks to maintain the natural environment and increases its resilience to development pressures is critical to resolving both known and future environmental challenges.

We need to get this right—now rather than deal with the fallout later.

There are very real, growing and alarming threats to the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area—mining, Badgerys Creek airport and the watering down of the LEP—which could see UNESCO remove our World Heritage listing. We must act now.

HORNSBY STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.54 p.m.]: It was a great honour to personally visit the hardworking members of the Hornsby State Emergency Service group last week and to thank them for their outstanding efforts during the recent storm surge. State Emergency Service [SES] Controller Bob Corbett kindly took me on a tour of their facility in Thornleigh last week to discuss options about how the SES can work with Hornsby Shire Council and the State Government to cater better for the organisation's growing membership. Hornsby SES has grown to approximately 100 volunteers and is looking to expand its operations to help more people in times of need. I look forward to working with the dedicated local SES volunteers to ensure that we get the best facility to meet their needs.

The need for increased personnel and resources was of course evident in late April, when Hornsby like many other parts of the New South Wales coastline was battered by the severe storms and rising floodwaters. The storm cell lasted for more than a week and resulted in 546 requests for assistance from the Hornsby State Emergency Service. The damage bill was significant in some parts of my electorate that bore the brunt of road closures, fallen trees, damaged property and disconnected powerlines. After some of the highest rainfall in decades, homes in Hornsby and the upper North Shore were among 200,000 left without power across Sydney. The Hornsby SES was inundated with calls.

Our local schools also were affected, with Pacific Hills Christian School sending students home early, while Wideview Public School in Berowra told parents to collect children early to better prepare for the storm. Commuters faced delays on trains in Killara and Wahroonga due to fallen trees. Brooklyn was also badly affected, with high tides flooding streets close to the station and strong winds smashing many boats into rocks. Suburbs such as Berowra, Berowra Heights and Cowan were without power for up to five or six days, while some residents like my good friend Tony Bray in Berowra Waters, lost boats altogether. Tony also lost his home retaining wall during the storm. My office like many others in the area was flooded with calls from concerned residents who were without power. I thank Ausgrid's senior community liaison advisor for network operations, Craig White, for his continued help over the week ensuring our community was kept up to date with progress. A special thank you also to all the Ausgrid staff who worked tirelessly to make sure that residents were connected as soon as possible.

The destruction in the Hornsby shire was significant but fortunately no deaths or serious injuries were reported. Hornsby was also spared from the most damaging parts of the storm cell, which caused major destruction in areas such as the Central Coast, Newcastle, the Hunter and Dungog. These areas were all declared natural disaster zones. The New South Wales Government promised financial assistance to assist those in need who are living in the worst-affected areas and who are now in the process of a massive clean-up operation. I thank our tireless volunteers from the Hornsby State Emergency Service who went above and beyond their normal everyday duties to help hundreds of people in need of assistance.

Our community in Hornsby owes the men and women in the Hornsby SES a great debt of gratitude. It is those brave men and women who were out removing fallen trees in the rain, it is those brave men and women who were up on roofs patching holes and it is those brave men and women who were conducting rescues when called upon. I give particular thanks to some of the key personnel at Hornsby SES for the vital roles they played in keeping our community safe. More than 75 SES volunteers did their bit to assist the community throughout the storm-ravaged week. In all, more than 2,800 volunteer hours were logged helping the local community. Volunteers such as SES controller Bob Corbett and deputy controller Kris Eriksen did a tremendous job in

pulling their team together and coordinating the calls for help behind the scenes. Their expertise was complemented by SES spokesman John Goh, community volunteer David Kerr, Lynne Hindes, Rodney McLeod, Shevaun Hernon and Tony Northbrook-Hine among many others who left the safety of their own home to go out and help others in need.

I also make special mention of Murray Oakley from Normanhurst, who like many of his colleagues left his normal nine-to-five job to volunteer after hours. Murray worked Monday, Tuesday and Thursday until well after midnight. He even took time off from work on the Wednesday so he could continue to help around the Hornsby shire. I read in the *Hornsby and Upper North Shore Advocate* that Murray was joined by his 17-year-old daughter, who managed to help out by volunteering in between studying for the Higher School Certificate. I personally thank Murray and his daughter for giving up their valuable time to help others across our community. And after wrapping up the local jobs the volunteers set off again to assist their colleagues on the Central Coast.

Murray told the *Hornsby and Upper North Shore Advocate* that he gets great satisfaction from helping others in the community and values the lifelong friendships and mateship in his unit. Murray's story of commitment and leadership is inspiring to hear. I hope that others in the community will follow Murray's lead and get involved to help people, whether it is with the SES, a charity or a local sporting team. Hornsby SES members contacted my office during the week to ask me to thank the NSW Rural Fire Service and Fire and Rescue NSW for their assistance and expertise during the severe storm. Hornsby SES also received assistance from numerous SES teams from other areas, including the group's western region. With extra man resources available, Hornsby was also able to supply members to Gosford, Warringah-Pittwater and Wyong shire once local storm damage had been attended too.

I also thank and make special mention of Hornsby mayor Steve Russell and his Hornsby Shire Council team for providing a free woodchipping day for residents to discard unwanted tree branches. Thank you to everyone involved in the storm response and clean-up effort. It would be remiss of me not to give the SES a quick plug and mention that it is always looking for volunteers, both young and old. Any residents aged 16 years or over can join the SES, with all training provided. The SES does a fantastic job not only in my community but also across New South Wales. Its volunteers assist those who are most in need.

TRIBUTE TO RON BELL

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.59 p.m.]: It is my pleasure to recognise the incredible contribution by Ron Bell, a local broadcaster, to the Clarence Valley. Ron retired last December after spending most of his 46 years in the industry in Grafton. He was, without doubt, the voice of the Clarence Valley. Many young journalists are yapping at his heels, but I can say with surety that he will never be replaced. During his broadcasting career, Ron worked in senior levels in administration and journalism in television and radio throughout regional and metropolitan Australia and Britain. As a young man in Brisbane he had a passion for broadcasting and, without formal training courses available to learn about the industry, he learnt by hanging around radio people.

Ron then made audition tapes that he sent to stations around regional Queensland and New South Wales and subsequently secured a job on radio 2GF in 1968 where he honed his radio skills. Ron started his career on the night shifts and worked his way up to the popular breakfast show. In the early 1970s Ron decided to further his career and work in other stations across New South Wales such as those in Goulburn, Orange, Wollongong and Sydney. Whilst working in Sydney he became friendly with two of Australia's greatest radio broadcasters, John Laws and the late Stan Zemanek. Ron was very good at his craft. However, there is no doubt that Ron's heart truly lay in the Clarence Valley and although he spent time away from Grafton in pursuit of his career, he always returned home.

Ron had a distinguished radio career. He interviewed Prime Ministers Bob Hawke, Paul Keating, John Howard, Kevin Rudd, Julia Gillard and Tony Abbott as well as Deputy Prime Ministers Tim Fischer, Doug Anthony, John Anderson and Mark Vaile. He interviewed Premiers Neville Wran, Nick Greiner, Bob Carr and Barry O'Farrell. Ron supported the Clarence Valley and professes that his proudest achievement was helping to promote the careers of locals Troy Cassar-Daley and the McClymont sisters. He was at his best when he was promoting and supporting local talent, the local footy club, the Grafton Jacaranda Festival and numerous charity events. He often worked in his own time without financial compensation.

Ron was always available to help. During floods we remember listening to Ron on the radio advising us of river heights and warnings, which roads were closed and passing on messages from the State Emergency

Service. During these critical times he would man the radio station for hours on end and often it was our only link to vital information; everyone in the Clarence Valley misses the local information that Ron provided. We felt safer listening to his reassuring voice, knowing that someone was watching over us. We often felt we had a lifeline. Ron would chair meetings in support of Grafton Base Hospital and lend his voice to numerous charity and community events such as calls for more police or his passionate crusade for a second bridge to be built in Grafton, for which he and Des Harvey have been long-time advocates. We have listened and the second Grafton bridge will become a reality by 2019. I hope that Ron is one of the first people to drive over the bridge for which he fought so hard.

Ron's service to the community was not limited to broadcasting. He served as a councillor on Grafton City Council and was a member of the Jacaranda committee. He was a patron of numerous local organisations and was involved at the grassroots level. Ron knew what the community was thinking, how we felt, and he was able to communicate this to the whole of the Clarence Valley with his recognisable and reassuring voice. Congratulations, Ron, on your illustrious career. I hope your retirement is enjoyable, but your voice will be sadly missed on Radio 2GF across the Clarence Valley.

HOMELESSNESS

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) [1.04 p.m.]: Homelessness is far too common in our society. The most recent figures show that there are more than 28,000 homeless people in New South Wales. The most common age group is 19 to 25. However, a concerning number—nearly 13 per cent—are under 12. People become homeless for a variety of reasons, but as shadow Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, I am acutely aware of the role that domestic violence plays in causing homelessness. For this reason my colleagues and I have consistently rejected this Government's Going Home Staying Home policy, which has stripped funding for specialist women's refuges run by women. In New South Wales, 31 per cent of homeless people report that they became homeless as a result of domestic violence or family conflict. This was the most frequent reason given by respondents and compares to 7 per cent of people who report substance abuse or mental health issues as the primary cause of their homelessness.

Women make up 40 per cent of all homeless people in New South Wales, although that proportion increases in rural and remote locations. In the Hunter region we are used to seeing innovative approaches to addressing issues. I note the work of Our Backyard, which is a homelessness service operated by a not-for-profit organisation called Macquarie Care. Our Backyard has a new approach for addressing homelessness for individuals and families who are living in their cars. The program offers a safe space for individuals and families to stay in their cars while they await access to private or supported rental accommodation. Without this safe space, people find themselves attempting to find a level of privacy whilst parked on the street, in alleyways or parks. People who use the allocated space have access to bathrooms, hot showers, kitchen facilities and computer facilities to assist them with job hunting, which would not be available to them if they were parked in public spaces.

Recently I visited Our Backyard and met three male clients and their caseworkers. The importance of a safe place for those men was impressed upon me. One man had had a series of knocks and health issues which had made him homeless. Before coming to Our Backyard he had experienced repeated thefts of the contents of his car while stepping away from it. Those experiences made him feel that he was unable to leave his car and he told me of the effect this had on his emotional wellbeing. Being unable to shower and spending all of his time in the car meant that he and his car became one and he told me that the Our Backyard program was essential to his mental wellbeing.

When I toured the facility, I was told of a woman who had been offered emergency accommodation. However, she spent the evening looking out the window at her car because it contained all of her worldly goods. She had an immense fear that it would be stolen or damaged. The goal of homelessness services must always be to assist people to access long-term, stable accommodation. The reality is that far too many people are in need of emergency accommodation but the fear of losing their independence that having a vehicle provides as well as losing their possessions from their vehicles while staying in emergency accommodation necessitates other approaches.

Individuals and families who use Our Backyard facilities have access also to caseworkers who can assist them in accessing ongoing secure housing and the Our Backyard team has been successful in supporting a number of individuals and families to achieve that goal. Sadly, funding for caseworkers is in doubt beyond September. I will be working with Our Backyard to help establish ongoing funding for its important work. The homeless situation in America dwarfs that in Australia.

Some cities in America approach the problem by making it illegal to sleep in cars on a public street; others have found more innovative approaches—for example, the Safe Parking Program, which works with churches, businesses and other groups willing to host a small number of homeless people in their car parks overnight. The introduction of that program has helped to reduce tension with police, connected people in need with supported services, and helped to provide the stability needed to turn someone's life around. Many of those homeless people are working yet still unable to pay for accommodation. Fortunately, in Australia we have a minimum wage and a social safety net, but for those who slip through that safety net we are grateful to non-government organisations such as Macquarie Care.

SEVEN HILLS ELECTORATE SCHOOLS

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) [1.09 p.m.]: I acknowledge and commend all the educational institutions in my electorate, public and non-government, as well as the very special people who contribute to making them such wonderful places. Recently I had the pleasure of dropping into Toongabbie East Public School, a great example of a thriving public school in the Seven Hills electorate. It was great to catch up with new Principal Colleen Potter and many talented year 3 students. I congratulate the school on several recent achievements, including strong participation in the National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy [NAPLAN] tests; the success of its parents and citizens association in fundraising from the Easter raffle and the Mother's Day stall, and the success of a newly developed school app for smart phones, which is being used by parents—just a few of the great things happening at Toongabbie East.

Toongabbie East Public School is clearly on the up and its smart new school uniform is instilling a greater sense of pride in the students. The school did well at the recent zone athletics carnival. I take this opportunity to congratulate in particular Bethany, Reubie, Bridget, Josiah, Collin, Brenden, Tori, Lata, Jack, Nadar, Ji, Mary-Anne, Bada, Godfrey, Charlie, Louis, Joshua, Tyreece and Jason who all did an outstanding job in representing the school. Mrs McKnight and Mrs Blume commented on how proud they were of those students for not only their success at the carnival but also their excellent behaviour and good sportsmanship.

Ms Christine Oughton recently wrote to me regarding several exciting things that are happening at the school. Ms Oughton, who is a hardworking member of the parents and citizens association, works tirelessly for the school. Next year Toongabbie East will celebrate its fiftieth anniversary and I look forward to taking part in those celebrations. Principal Colleen Potter has given Toongabbie East a new lease on life and I commend her for her incredible work.

The New South Wales Government has already begun the process of progressively rolling out school speed zone flashing lights, reflecting this Government's commitment to student safety. This initiative is well on its way to being installed at every school in our electorate—it was recently installed at Toongabbie East Public School. Student safety is paramount to student success and academic achievement. It is not limited to what happens in the confines of the playground and classroom but also includes travelling to and from school. The Government initiative to install flashing lights is to be commended.

We have listened to the community and provided these necessary upgrades. Last week I had the privilege of meeting and addressing six students from three secondary schools in my electorate taking part in the Secondary School Leadership program—a great civics program run by the New South Wales Parliament. I acknowledge Ashleigh Westwick and Calceum Pecqueux from Northmead Creative and Performing Arts High School, Bradley Murphy and Dane Bracewell from Parramatta Marist High School, and Elinda Aclis and Craig Tiu from Pendle Hill High School.

Those six students are fine examples of the strength of public education not only in my electorate but also across the State. Each of their schools is excelling in their significant roles as educational institutions. It was a pleasure to hear that the students had found the day a rewarding one. They thoroughly enjoyed it, although they were probably lucky to have missed the unusually rowdy question time that day. I hope they do not take the rough and tumble attitudes expressed by some in this Chamber to the playground. All jokes aside, it was a wonderful opportunity to present my view on community service and how it led me to a career in politics.

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Cootamundra—Parliamentary Secretary) [1.13 p.m.]: I congratulate the member for Seven Hills on his great support for educational institutions, public and private, in his electorate. On behalf of the Government I also congratulate the Toongabbie East Public School on its upcoming fiftieth anniversary. Toongabbie East Public School is obviously leaping ahead thanks to its wonderful students and teachers, as well as a great parents and citizens association. I take this opportunity to congratulate all the school representatives who will this week be taking part in the School Leadership Program run by the Parliament of New South Wales.

MYALL LAKES ELECTORATE EVENTS

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [1.14 p.m.]: Today I inform the House of several events that took place in my electorate over the weekend. The great electorate of Myall Lakes is internationally renowned as Australia's water playground, including the Bombora waters, the Smiths, Myall and Wallis lakes network, 156 kilometres of navigable waterways in the mighty Manning River, almost 200 kilometres of pristine beaches, the islands and only a short drive to Ellenborough Falls, the longest single drop waterfall in the Southern Hemisphere. I note that the mighty Manning River is the only delta-formation river mouth in the Southern Hemisphere.

One of the fantastic events held over the weekend was the Centenary of Golf in Taree. Despite the extreme wet weather the course held up and some great golf was played. At the dinner to celebrate the centenary, which was held at the fantastic Club Taree, were three very special guests: Max Krilich, a former rugby league player, State of Origin player, Australian team player and, unfortunately for him and many others, former Manly player; Nikki Hudson, a Hockeyroo and Olympic gold medallist; and the great Doug Walters, a former cricketer who played for Australia and New South Wales, and a Dungog boy—I note that Dungog recently coped a bit of bad weather.

Each of them spoke about their experiences. They talked about leadership and what made a good captain. They also shared what they had done with their teams if they felt their teams were going off the rails. They also highlighted what Darren Lehmann has done with the Australian cricket team—for example, players would not eat breakfast together until Darren Lehmann took charge; that has now changed and the team's performance has also changed. More than 200 people attended the dinner and they enjoyed every minute of listening to those three speakers.

At Tuncurry over the weekend the Rural Fire Service also held a training weekend for brigades from Tuncurry, Coomba Park, Smiths Lake, Pacific Palms, Hallidays Point, Bulahdelah and Gloucester. The NSW Rural Fire Service has more than 70,000 volunteers, which makes it the largest volunteer organisation in Australia. More than 20 representatives and a significant number of instructors attended the training session—all volunteers, none of them paid to be there. They trained from 8.30 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday to prepare for the next fire season.

Last weekend the eleventh annual Bonnie Wingham Scottish Festival was also held. This festival attracts thousands of visitors to Wingham. The ball was held on the Saturday night at the Wingham RSL Club. The chieftain was representing Clan Donald, and an old friend of this place, Wendy Machin, and her husband, David Bell, were also present. I congratulate Eric Richardson, affectionately known as "Sir" Eric Richardson, and his committee on the organisation of such a wonderful ball and the entire weekend. It was great to see the Wingham Pipe Band, who performed exceptionally well, as did the young girl who did some outstanding Scottish dancing. One of the highlights was the Robert Burns *Ode to a Haggis*. The haggis was cut in the appropriate way and served to everyone—there is nothing better than haggis for an entree.

They are just three of the magnificent events held in the electorate of Myall Lakes last weekend. The member for Cootamundra and Parliamentary Secretary is obviously excited at the thought of eating haggis. However, when one hears the pipes and drums and sees the man with the dagger one cannot help but love it. It was certainly a fantastic weekend in my electorate. We had a fantastic time and I commend Myall Lakes to everyone as a wonderful place to have a holiday or to live.

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Cootamundra—Parliamentary Secretary) [1.19 p.m.]: I commend the member for Myall Lakes and acknowledge his obvious passion for his electorate. I also thank him for telling the House about three important events that occurred in his electorate last weekend. He is one of the hardest working members of Parliament. The member spoke about a wonderful function attended by 200 people to honour local sports leaders. It focused on what makes a good leader and, of course, highlighted what great role models they make, particularly for young people who look up to them. Of course, fire season training conducted by the Rural Fire Service is extremely important and it involves many valuable community members throughout regional New South Wales. The member concluded his contribution by providing details of the Bonnie Wingham Scottish Festival, including the Wingham Services Club Pipes and Drums performance, the *Ode to a Haggis* and so on. I congratulate the member and I know that he will pass on the best wishes of this House to his electorate.

TRIBUTE TO IAN HUNT**TRIBUTE TO SHAUN BURNETT**

Ms NOREEN HAY (Wollongong) [1.20 p.m.]: I draw the attention of the House to the recent passing of a couple of Labor Party stalwarts from both ends of the age spectrum. I offer my condolences to Ian Hunt's family—his wife Judy, his children Leighanne, Jenelle and Brad and their partners and the four grandchildren. Ian Hunt was no particular supporter of mine. Nonetheless, it is important that we acknowledge people's dedication to their party, regardless of which group within the party they support. Ian Hunt was dedicated to and well known in our community, and I have been privileged to enjoy the support of some members of his family.

I also acknowledge the passing of Shaun Burnett, who was a member of the Labor Party and a supporter of mine. Unfortunately, Shaun suffered from mental health issues, including depression, and took his life at the young age of 31. He left behind his wife, Skye, who is pregnant, and their three children, Marley, Chloe and Noah, and also his eldest daughter, Caitlyn. The trauma that mental ill-health and suicide cause in our community has not diminished. It is unfortunate that we do not seem to be making the inroads into this issue that we want to make. It has certainly had a dramatic and terrible effect on Shaun's mum and dad, Heidi and Graham, his brothers, Brendan and Daniel and their partners, Christie and Melissa, his sister and brother-in-law, Susan and Bryan Greenhaigh, his youngest sister, Kara, along with his many nieces and nephews.

Many members have been impacted by the suicide of a loved one. One hoped that with the increase in focus on mental health and in resourcing to address the issue we would have made greater inroads. We have a very long way to go before we address it effectively. Members speak almost every sitting day about mental health issues and who has done what to address them. It does not matter who has done more or less; the fact is that whatever has been done it is not enough. We must do more; we must finance more research; and we must do more as a society to diminish the stigma of suicide. I recall that when I told my children that my husband had committed suicide they were beside themselves. Saying the word "suicide" had a horrendous impact on them. However, we must say it and keep saying it until we recognise its terrible impact. It is an illness and it is as deadly as cancer.

We must focus more effort on research and offer more support to the families of people who commit suicide. Spouses, children and parents all need support from us when they confront this tragedy. We can all ask why those who have committed suicide did not call out for help. However, for some the very idea of calling out for help is what drives them over the brink. We must think outside the square with regard to attitudes and research. Members from across the political spectrum must do more to prevent young people committing suicide.

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Cootamundra—Parliamentary Secretary) [1.25 p.m.]: It is rare that the member for Wollongong and I agree on anything, but we certainly agree on this issue. It is an issue that has touched both her and me, and we feel our losses very deeply. It is incredibly important that we speak about suicide and the way that it impacts on our lives. There is no point in sweeping it under the carpet. We must be open and frank about it and tell our children about mental illness and how to cope with it. If we do not know how to cope, we will simply repeat the cycle. I agree that we must speak openly and plainly about suicide in the community and do whatever we can to discourage it. We must speak up when we become aware that it is likely to happen and ensure that people are aware of the dangers of mental illness and associated suicide in our community.

[Acting-Speaker (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith) left the chair at 1.26 p.m. The House resumed at 2.15 p.m.]

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I welcome to the gallery this afternoon the Rt. Hon. Ajilon Jasper Nasiu, Speaker of the National Parliament of Solomon Islands, accompanied by Mr Clezy Rore, Clerk. The Speaker and the Clerk are new to their roles and are here as part of the twinning arrangements between our parliaments. The Speaker and the Clerk will take the opportunity to meet and share experiences with their counterparts, as I know they did yesterday. I welcome them to the Chamber. I wish them well and a safe trip home tomorrow.

I acknowledge the presence in the gallery this afternoon of the Leader of The Nationals in Victoria, the Hon. Peter Walsh, MLA, and his Chief of Staff, Luke O'Sullivan. They are guests of the Deputy Premier, Minister for Justice and Police, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Racing. I also welcome to the gallery this afternoon Mr Malcolm Kerr, former member for Cronulla; Ms Virginia Judge, former member for Strathfield; and Ms Wendy Machin, former member for Port Macquarie.

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I welcome to the gallery nine students and their teachers from Blayney High School, guests of the Minister for Local Government and member for Bathurst. I welcome Suzanne and Walter Thomas, and John and Robyn Vandine to the gallery today, guests of the member for Upper Hunter. I welcome to the gallery 14 students and their teacher from Heritage College, Lake Macquarie, guests of the member for Lake Macquarie. I welcome all our guests here today to question time.

CENTENARY OF FIRST WORLD WAR

The SPEAKER: On 4 June 1915 the Third Battle of Krithia commenced and once again Allied and Ottoman forces struggled over a few hundred yards of ground in the shadow of the strategic heights of Achi Baba on the Gallipoli peninsula. Almost nowhere on the blighted peninsular saw so many assaults over the same small piece of territory. The First Battle of Krithia commenced on 28 April and the Allies were repulsed. The Second Battle, fought on exactly the same battle plan, failed on 7 May with terrible losses suffered by New Zealand's Otago regiment. The Third Battle repeated all the errors of the previous two and, like them, it failed. Over these few hundred yards at least 25,000 troops lost their lives. Despite the mayhem of command, there was heroism in abundance.

A young man, George Raymond Dallas Moor, aged only 18 and born in St Kilda, Victoria, was awarded the Victoria Cross for his deeds on 5 June—taking command when his officers fell, rescuing his men and recapturing lost trenches. He had been in the army for less than a year. He was to go on to win the Military Cross and Bar for his gallantry in France in 1918 but was denied his heroes return, succumbing to the Spanish flu in France at war's end in November 1918. The bravery and sacrifice of so many was not just a feature of the repeated battles of Krithia; it was a feature of a whole campaign where the failure of leaders to learn resulted in a terrible price being paid by their rank and file.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Notices of Motions

Government Business Notices of Motions (for bills) given.

[During the giving of notices of motions sought to be accorded priority.]

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind members that last Thursday I directed that members who were on three calls to order would be removed from the Chamber for the rest of the day pursuant to Standing Order 249.

[During the giving of notices of motions to be accorded priority.]

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will come to order. The Leader of the Opposition is waiting to give notice of the motion for which he will seek priority.

QUESTION TIME

[Question time commenced at 2.23 p.m.]

ELECTRICITY PRICES

Mr LUKE FOLEY: My question is directed to the Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy. Given that 32,940 households in New South Wales had their electricity disconnected last financial year, which was a 32 per cent increase, how many more families will have their power cut off if his appeal against the Australian Energy Regulator [AER] price reduction is successful?

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: The Leader of the Opposition has to be kidding. I must inform the House of a conversation I had in my office before I came into question time in which I asked my staff whether Opposition members would be stupid enough to ask another question about the Australian Energy Regulator. I have to say it was 50-50.

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

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I have lost \$100 to my staff this afternoon; Opposition members are stupid enough.

Mr Mike Baird: Never back them in.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I would never back them in. I must say, it showed a level of weakness on my part.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will come to order. I call the member for Canterbury to order for the first time. She will cease interjecting.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I have informed the House on a number of occasions that this Government has delivered record savings to the people of New South Wales through its efficient management of energy providers and retailers. We are delivering the billions of dollars of savings that Opposition members said were unachievable. We said we would find \$400 million, but they said there was no chance at all. We have found almost \$4 billion and we are finding more. It will total \$6 billion that will not be appearing in our books, but will be savings to the people of New South Wales. The AER determination, which energy retailers are currently appealing, is about members on this side of the House finding continued savings. It is in our DNA. We have the track record to achieve it, but we will do it in a measured and balanced manner that provides for safety and reliability.

Members opposite continue to fail to realise that come bushfire season men and women will put their lives on the line to fight fires and protect homes, property and lives. Government members will back them all the way. We will do our very best to ensure that when people move into danger we will be right behind them. Members opposite would put those individuals at an increased risk if we were to listen to them. It is shameful. They should hang their heads in shame. Interestingly, there is someone on the other side of the Chamber who stands up for her volunteers. She has experienced firsthand—

Ms Linda Burney: Point of order: My point of order is relevance.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister has been entirely relevant. The member for Canterbury will resume her seat.

Ms Linda Burney: The question had to do with disconnections and the Minister has not mentioned that.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Canterbury to order for the second time. I have asked her to resume her seat. There is no point of order.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I was not talking about the member for Canterbury. It is with great pleasure that I inform the House of someone on the other side who is backing her residents on reliability, and backing the workers and emergency services personnel. That member is Sonia Hornery. I will quote from the august *Newcastle Herald*.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The Minister is straying badly. The question was about how many families will have their power cut off.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is being relevant to the question. There is no point of order.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I can tell members about how many people had their power cut off during the recent storm events. I can go there if members opposite would like, and I will.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: The Premier said there would be no difference.

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

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: Is she here? She had best listen to the member for Wallsend, who has stood up for her people. She might learn something, the member for—

Mrs Tanya Davies: Maitland.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: —Maitland. That is right. She is so easily forgettable—the member for misery. The *Newcastle Herald* reported:

Ms Hornery, whose electorate is home to about 900 power workers, said cheaper bills wasn't the only consideration.

"Obviously it is important to save money and it is never nice to receive a big bill, but it's also important that residents can rely on their electricity network owners, especially in events like the recent storms," she said.

Sonia Hornery is a local member who can see the truth and she understands what members on this side of the House are doing. I will leave the House with a further reflection. We are appealing, or the networks are appealing, this decision based on safety and security. We will deliver lower prices, whereas the Opposition appealed the decision to kick another billion dollars into its black hole and that came out of the pockets of the people of New South Wales.

GUN-RELATED CRIMES

Mrs TANYA DAVIES: My question is addressed to the Premier. How is the Government reforming sentences for gun-related crimes and placing community safety front and centre?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I thank the member for Mulgoa for her question, for her incredible work across her community, and for her interest in ensuring that the community is kept safe. I also pay tribute to the Deputy Premier, who is leading the justice cluster in bringing incredible experience to this role and ensuring that we do everything possible as a government to keep the community safe. We have argued for that for a while. Ensuring that we do everything possible to reinforce community safety remains at the top of our agenda. Last night's events are a good reminder that we must be vigilant and we must do as much as we possibly can to ensure that we keep our community safe. Getting guns out of the hands of criminals certainly is crucial. We must do it because it is essential to keeping our community safe. We are committed to tackling firearms-related crime and we are getting on with the job of doing that.

Today the Government will introduce legislation that will crack down on serious offenders and increase sentences for gun-related crimes. We committed to that policy through the former Minister during the State election. We are listening, responding, and sending a very clear message to those who are involved with or are contemplating criminal activity using guns. Certainly the police are doing everything possible to keep our streets safe, but as a government we must ensure that they have the tools to tackle gun crime across the State. The Government will introduce standard non-parole periods for five additional firearms offences, which include drive-by shootings, and we will increase existing standard non-parole periods for offences relating to prohibited firearms and weapons. The practical result is that any offenders who are detected and convicted will spend more time in jail.

The Government is sending a very clear signal that it is proud to be delivering. Obviously we hope that the Opposition supports the bill that will be introduced. I cite the example of an offence of discharging a firearm with intent to cause grievous bodily harm, which has a current average non-parole period of just over five years, whereas the proposed standard non-parole period for that offence will be nine years. Those legislative amendments have been made on the recommendation of the New South Wales Sentencing Council and reflect the seriousness of the crimes involved as well as the significant risk posed to innocent members of the community and members of the Police Force. The new sentences better reflect the community's expectations. There is a strong sense among the community that the Government must provide the right types of penalties for gun-related crimes, and the community has been asking for criminals to pay for their crimes by the imposition of appropriate jail sentences. We certainly believe we are doing that.

Under this Government, as we have seen today, major crime categories have either decreased or remained stable. The Government is proud to be delivering that type of improvement, but we are even more proud of our police who are delivering great results. The new standard parole periods build on tough sentences for serious crimes that have been introduced over the past four years and that include mandatory minimum sentences for one-punch deaths, mandatory life sentences for criminals who are convicted of murdering a police officer, and tougher sentences for child sexual assault offences. The Government also has introduced a range of measures that have assisted the police to combat organised crime and gun-related crime. I take this opportunity to pay particular tribute to officers involved in Strike Force Raptor and Operation Talon, who daily do an incredible job of keeping our community safe.

The results for Strike Force Raptor are incredible: more than 2,952 arrests, the seizure of 860 firearms and 75,500 rounds of ammunition, and more than \$4 million in cash. Operation Talon has made 980 arrests,

issued 216 firearms prohibition orders and seized 23 firearms as well as six replica firearms. Our clear message on the back of those results is that our police are doing their job in a manner of which the community should be proud. This Government will take every step and every action necessary to ensure we keep our community safe. On the back of what our Police Force is doing and the legislative measures that will be introduced today, the Government is sending a clear message to criminals who are contemplating any form of gun crime that they can expect to spend more time in jail. The Government is determined to create a deterrent to those considering the commission of gun-related crimes. Importantly, we assure our communities that we are doing everything we possibly can to keep them safe.

ELECTRICITY PRICES

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: My question is directed to the Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business. Given that electricity disconnections for small business customers in New South Wales increased by 42 per cent during the past financial year, does the Minister support his Government's legal challenge to increase power prices for small businesses and regional customers?

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order. The Minister has the call.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I always welcome a question from members opposite about small business and impacts on small business. However, unfortunately, many Opposition members probably have never lived in the small business space where mums and dads mortgage their homes, take risks and have the courage to employ people.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Prospect will come to order. The Minister has the call. Members will cease interjecting.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: The Opposition often uses small business as a political football instead of coming into this House to support what this Government is doing to assist small business. For example, during this term of government Opposition members opposed the Jobs Action Plan that provides payroll tax rebates to support employment in the State. Opposition members come in this House and want to talk about impacts upon small business, yet when it came to extending the payroll tax rebate scheme to 2019, they opposed it. Opposition members should not come into this House and lecture me about what is important to small business. There are many burdens and impacts on small business each and every day. In relation to the Australian Energy Regulator [AER] determination of electricity prices, the Government supports applying downward pressure on electricity prices and has done so for more than four years.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Bankstown to order for the first time. She will cease interjecting.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Earlier we heard from the Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy about what the Government has done over four years to apply downward pressure on electricity prices, not only for families but also for businesses and small businesses. Opposition members have no standing to question this Government in relation to the downward pressure that is being applied on electricity prices.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Under Labor, the cost of electricity increased by 60 per cent, which had to be paid by mums and dads, small businesses and businesses generally.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: The Opposition is using small business as a political football.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Londonderry will come to order. The member for Rockdale will come to order. The member for Campbelltown will come to order.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: If Opposition members genuinely cared about small business, the impacts of costs upon small business and the effect of the AER determination, they would know that supply is equally important.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will come to order and cease interjecting. I call the member for Campbelltown to order for the first time.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: This Government is ensuring that people and businesses in New South Wales have a regular supply of electricity from a network that continues to operate, particularly in regional and rural communities. The Government is also monitoring response times to ensure that small businesses have electrical power restored promptly after natural disasters.

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

Ms Noreen Hay: Sit down.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I have not been asked by anyone to sit down.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Wollongong will do her job and I will do mine.

Ms Linda Burney: Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance. The question was about whether the Minister supports the legal challenge to increase power prices.

The SPEAKER: Order! I know what the question was about. The member for Canterbury will resume her seat. The Minister has returned to the leave of the question and is being relevant to the question.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: The proof of the pudding is in the eating. Over four years, the Government has supported downward pressure on electricity prices and prices are going down. The Government has not changed its position, but the Johnny-come-latelies of the Opposition have. Over four years the Government has been applying downward pressure on electricity prices. In relation to the AER, the Government is supporting downward pressure on prices and that has resulted in prices being reduced.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order. My point of order relates to Standing Order 59, tedious repetition.

The SPEAKER: Order! No point of order is involved. The Minister has the call.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: The new member for Swansea knows she has been set up when a backbencher is told to take this point of order. No member on the front bench would do it.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: It is important for small business that electricity supplies are restored promptly following a disaster or loss of power. When a disruption happens, a quick response is important. In relation to the AER determination, jobs also are important, especially in regional and rural communities.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I feel sorry for the Electrical Trades Union members who backed Labor's campaigns. Labor has gone against them and kicked them in the guts and is going to turf out all those workers in the electricity sector. I welcome further questions on small business.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Campbelltown to order for the second time. I call the member for Prospect to order for the first time. Opposition members should refrain from showing their hilarity and show respect for the Chamber.

NATIVE VEGETATION LEGISLATION

Mr THOMAS GEORGE: My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier. How is the New South Wales Government reforming Labor's failed biodiversity laws to allow our landholders to manage their land sustainably?

Mr TROY GRANT: I thank the member for Lismore for his question. I also welcome to the gallery my guest the Hon. Peter Walsh from Victoria. This is an example of what we inherited when we came to government four years ago. Labor would make an announcement on an issue, about which it had all the best

intentions in the world, and then it would be a catastrophic failure. Land management in New South Wales has been one of our greatest challenges. Labor's draconian native vegetation laws shackled the lives of our farmers and restricted their ability to appropriately protect and manage their land.

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

Mr TROY GRANT: We on this side of the House know that biodiversity and conservation need to be dealt with holistically, not by way of a media headline only. Noxious weeds and feral pests do not respect boundaries; they do not understand or care who own fences and they do not care who owns the land that they invade. In dealing with this issue, ownership should not matter; conservation should be the only thing that matters. The State should be protecting biodiversity and conservation at a strategic level, and that is what the Government is doing. We remain committed to moving to a nil tenure process to deliver the best biodiversity and conservation outcomes. Under our historic reforms farmers will finally be treated like every other landholder, not like second-class citizens as they were under Labor. Biodiversity will be protected under this Government, strategically and with clear outcomes, rather than as occurred under Labor's confused patchwork of laws which operated on a site-specific level only. Labor's laws fundamentally failed to protect biodiversity in New South Wales.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the first time.

Mr TROY GRANT: They did not just let down the people of New South Wales, they let down the environment; they let down everyone. For almost two decades our farming community has suffered with the burden of these laws unfairly placed on their shoulders.

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

Mr TROY GRANT: These laws failed to protect the environment. They allowed pest species to invade across the country, while farmers suffered under draconian land use restrictions. Farmers describe these laws as fragmented, rigid and overly complex. One would have thought Labor would have learned from this. Unfortunately, that is not the case. Labor is wedded to destroying the farming community. All it wants are restrictions upon restrictions on farmers based on feel-good ideology.

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

Mr TROY GRANT: Even when the evidence is clear Labor members are in denial. The work undertaken by the Government has been outcome focused. Even Labor leader Luke Foley told *The Land* before the election that he wants to keep these draconian laws in place on our farming community.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will come to order.

Mr TROY GRANT: He said his first priority for New South Wales was to create a new koala park, the same koalas who were suffering under the conservation failures of those opposite but who will be better looked after from a holistic base by this Government. If Labor is even half serious about genuinely supporting our farming sector and if it is remotely interested in improving biodiversity protection, it will get on board with the Government and support the common-sense reforms, led by the excellent Minister for the Environment in this place, the Hon. Mark Speakman, and the Hon. Niall Blair in the other place.

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

Mr TROY GRANT: These new outcomes will improve our land's productivity and ecosystems and conservation outcomes across New South Wales will be far better. The proposed reforms will finally level the playing field for all forms of development, including the clearing of native vegetation for agricultural development. They will ensure a balanced approach to managing biodiversity and consider the triple bottom-line approach taken by the Government: financial, social and environmental outcomes.

This Government is placing more trust in our farmers—which Labor was not prepared to do—and making land management more simple. Only appropriate activity will occur under strict evidence-based parameters. Biodiversity offsets for land clearing for new developments will be managed strategically as part of this process and in a far more coordinated way than ever before. We will ensure that councils and Local Land Services are properly funded and skilled to handle the work. Those draconian laws are finally a thing of the past.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK: My question is directed to the Premier. Given the housing affordability crisis in Sydney, does the Premier agree with the Prime Minister's comments yesterday that he hopes that housing prices are increasing in Sydney?

The SPEAKER: Order! Members should not ask for an opinion in question time. The member's question is on the borderline. I call the member for Cessnock to order for the first time.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The member for Bankstown has the opportunity to talk to the Prime Minister about this issue. Whatever comments might be made in Federal Parliament or by the Prime Minister, she can talk to them about that. There is no doubt that housing affordability is a challenge we are facing and we have done everything we possibly can to improve supply. That is what is needed. Labor tried many proposals and has actually attacked us for trying to increase supply in this State. But that is what we have done. When we came to government approvals were running at just over 20,000. Over the last 12 months under this Government approvals have reached just over 50,000. That is necessary to drive a long-term solution to affordability of housing in this State. I will leave the macro-policies to the Reserve Bank, which is obviously managing those issues. But what we are about—and the levers we control—is quite simple: improving supply and taking every step we possibly can to improve supply.

REAL ESTATE INDUSTRY REFORM

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA: My question is addressed to my good friend the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation.

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

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA: What is the New South Wales Government doing to reform the real estate industry and crack down on underquoting?

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: I thank the member for Davidson, my good friend indeed, for his question and interest in this important issue. It is an issue that is important to every member of this Chamber; I have no doubt about that. On 7 March this year the Premier announced that a re-elected Liberal and Nationals Government would reform the law in relation to real estate underquoting to better reflect community expectations. Whether it is lawyers, accountants, engineers, doctors or even members of Parliament, every profession must strive to maintain public confidence and integrity. The real estate industry is integral to our State's economic prosperity and the overwhelming majority of real estate agents are hardworking individuals who bring skill and integrity to their profession. The real estate industry impacts upon millions of people at a time when they are looking to make one of the most important purchases of their lives.

Buying property is an expensive process, and when it comes to buying a home there is also an emotional investment. Particularly in this very robust real estate market, it is important that the Government protects consumers where there are irregularities. The Government is doing this by working with the real estate industry on a range of reforms to boost professionalism and training standards. Prospective buyers need to have confidence that when an agent discloses an asking price it is an accurate representation of the price agreed by the seller. In recent times, we have heard a lot about the practice of underquoting. The offence of underquoting occurs when an agent advertises, in writing or verbally, a selling price to prospective buyers that is lower than the price listed in the agency agreement. We know that this practice is occurring but under the current law there is confusion about what constitutes underquoting and the evidentiary burden required to prosecute is reasonably high.

The Government will be clarifying the law in relation to underquoting. We need to ensure that consumers know their rights and real estate agents know their obligations. I am pleased to inform the House that this Government is delivering on that commitment, with legislation due to be introduced into the Parliament this year. Last month I announced new guidelines, which were developed in consultation with industry stakeholders, to provide direction to the real estate industry on publishing prices and ensuring that online listings are kept updated for potential buyers. We will toughen the penalties for agents found to be underquoting.

These changes will make it easier for prosecutions to be brought against those agents found to be engaging in underquoting and will allow for forfeiture of fees and commissions in addition to the existing

financial penalty of up to \$22,000. For example, the average property price in Sydney is \$900,000. Based on that, a commission would be \$18,000. Therefore, in addition to a fine of up to \$22,000 a real estate agent could lose fees of \$18,000. In many cases, these reforms would see a doubling of the financial sanction that could be imposed on agents doing the wrong thing.

The Government will also establish a strict liability offence, which is in line with the laws that have been introduced in South Australia. These measures will act as a significant deterrent against underquoting and other forms of misleading practice. The legislation will also include stronger requirements for record-keeping and price representations, which will increase transparency for buyers. The Government is committed to working in partnership with the real estate industry to drive higher standards and greater professionalism. We will be engaging with peak bodies to conduct a thorough review of training standards across the industry.

As an additional measure, I have asked the Department of Fair Trading to appoint an assistant commissioner for real estate and property who will work with the industry to build confidence amongst buyers and sellers and increase professional standards among real estate agents. This Government will deliver on its election commitment to strengthen protections against underquoting whilst also working in partnership with the real estate industry to implement broader reforms. This Government sees the real estate industry as a vital cog in the New South Wales economy. That is why we will be working with the real estate industry to make sure that we lift professional standards. As I said from the outset, most real estate agents work very hard and do a great job for the community. But in all cases there are some bad eggs and we will be working hard to make sure that they are eradicated.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will come to order.

CBD AND SOUTH EAST LIGHT RAIL PROJECT

Mr RYAN PARK: My question is directed to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. Does the Minister have any plans to change his predecessor's decision to procure 67 metre long trams to operate on the CBD and South East Light Rail project?

Mr Brad Hazzard: You are on track there!

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I thank the member for Wakehurst for his interjection. What do we have, again, from those opposite? It is another day and we have another stupid question in relation to what is going to be an incredible project for the City of Sydney. It is somewhat ironic that the shadow transport Minister is asking this question. We know that the member for Blacktown is supportive of the project. We know that the member for Maroubra is supportive of it. I cannot help but reflect on page 29 of the document titled "Metropolitan Transport Plan: Connecting the City of Cities". It is the 10-year funding guarantee integrating transport and land use planning. On page 29 it talks of light rail in the CBD. This document was produced in 2010.

Mr Brad Hazzard: Who was in government?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: It is not only a question of who was in government; it is a question of who was the Deputy Director-General of the Department of Transport at the time. It was the man who went from departmental liaison officer to chief of staff to second-in-charge of the Department of Transport who is responsible for this plan to build the CBD light rail.

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

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance. The Minister is way off the premise of the question, which was: Does the Minister have any plans to change those dopey 67 metre trams?

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The Minister for Transport and Infrastructure has the call.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: The great thing about the light rail project is that it is going to move 9,000 passengers per hour from Randwick and Kingsford down to Circular Quay. It will increase capacity by 40 per cent over and above the current capacity.

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! If the member for Keira raises a spurious point of order, I will not take another point of order from him.

Mr Ryan Park: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. This was a yes or no question.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister remains relevant to the question he was asked. The Minister has the call. The member for Keira will resume his seat.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: As I was saying, the light rail will move 9,000 passengers per hour down George Street. Running one light rail train is equivalent to removing nine buses from George Street.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: We are removing 220 buses from Sydney streets, we are moving 9,000 passengers per hour down George Street and we are delivering a project that is going to see an economic uplift for New South Wales of some \$4 billion. We are building a raft of transformative projects across the CBD that will tackle the \$5 billion cost of congestion, which is giving everybody a headache. But what do we have from those opposite? We have another cancellation policy. It defies belief that the member for Kirra raises this type of absolute nonsense. I hasten to add that one member whom we are yet to hear from in relation to the CBD light rail is the member for Canterbury. I draw her attention to the reason and the motivation behind the light rail project.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: It is about moving an additional 9,000 passengers per hour and, more importantly, it is about removing 220 buses from the city streets. I could not help but examine some of the bus routes around the place. The 428 bus, which comes from the electorate of the member for Canterbury—

Mr Clayton Barr: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The question related to the length of the trams. Will the Minister answer the question?

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is being relevant to the question he was asked. The member for Newcastle will come to order. Government members will come to order.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: We know how serious the Leader of the Opposition is when he makes the member for Cessnock the shadow finance Minister. Let us be clear: One train equals 1.2 buses and 9,000 passengers per hour. We are going to build this, and build it well.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Canterbury to order for the third time. The Treasurer will come to order.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Mr MATT KEAN: My question is addressed to the Minister for Local Government. How is the Government driving local government reform in New South Wales?

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will cease interjecting.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: That is how to ask a question. I thank the member for Hornsby for the interest he shows in local government and communities across this State. Councils have an important impact on our daily lives. They provide roads, bridges, footpaths and the recreational facilities that our communities need and deserve.

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: We need strong councils in order to have a strong future.

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: The way that we live, work and spend our leisure time has changed dramatically and we need local government to reflect the needs of our communities. Under Labor, local government was a do nothing portfolio. The members opposite have no interest in the local government sector.

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: That is why Labor left the Liberal-Nationals with a \$7.4 billion backlog of infrastructure.

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: Labor left a system that was in tatters, falling apart, in ruins.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Fairfield to order for the first time. There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: Labor did nothing to fix it when it was in government.

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: In comparison, the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals are doing great things. We are committed to working with local government in New South Wales. This Government is committed to ensuring that we have a stronger, smarter system of local government in New South Wales. This Government and the Premier are committed to working in partnership with local government to achieve and guide much-needed reform. We are committed to listening and delivering on these reforms.

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: This Government has a vision to rebuild and strengthen communities across New South Wales and local government reform is an essential part of achieving that goal. This Government recognises that for New South Wales to have a strong future our councils and the communities they represent must also be strong. In September last year, almost eight months ago, the New South Wales Government announced an unprecedented investment to support local government to become fit for the future. It was a record investment of \$1 billion. We are supporting councils in this State to reform local government.

The Fit for the Future reform package will revitalise and strengthen the local government sector. It is clear that our system of local government—with boundaries that date back to the days of the horse and cart in the nineteenth century—will not be able to meet the needs of growing and changing communities. Positive change is needed to ensure our councils will be fit for the future. We want communities to be stronger and to grow and prosper so they can provide the necessary jobs, housing and transport that are needed. Every council in New South Wales will be asked to submit a proposal by the end of this month that outlines its plan to become fit for the future.

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: The Government has invested heavily over the past three years by consulting, meeting with and listening to stakeholders across New South Wales to develop a blueprint for change.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Hornsby and the member for Shellharbour will cease arguing across the Chamber.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: We need councils that are financially sustainable. We need councils that are delivering more infrastructure and providing better services to their communities. We have all seen the analysis, which clearly shows that more than one-third of councils in New South Wales are in a weak or very weak financial position. Councils cannot continue to lose up to \$1 million a day. For a long time, councils have called on the State to treat them as equal partners, to respect the knowledge they have about their communities and businesses and to remove the hurdles that stand in their way. This Government has responded to those calls.

As we enter the phase of the next local government reform, we are excited about the possibilities and opportunities that lie ahead. Fit for the Future will mean a sustainable future for local government in this State.

For ratepayers and residents, it will mean better services, more infrastructure and lower rates. There is a strong future ahead for local government in New South Wales. This Government is getting on with the job and it is making communities across the State fit for the future.

CBD AND SOUTH EAST LIGHT RAIL PROJECT

Mr GUY ZANGARI: My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. I refer to page 98 of the 2012 State Infrastructure Strategy, which states:

... using 60 metre trams is not considered feasible in Sydney's CBD, as it would be too obstructive for retail loading/access points.

Why did the Government ignore the advice from its own independent experts?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: This is a great project for this city and one that was ticked off by Infrastructure NSW. Members opposite have to wake up sooner rather than later and realise that this Government is building public transport solutions for the people of Sydney. We are getting the State moving as it should. The State Infrastructure Strategy underpins every aim of the Government to drive down the cost of congestion. More importantly, it will improve the lives of every citizen in this State. Members opposite must ask themselves one simple question in the next 24 to 48 hours: Will we do the right thing by the people of New South Wales and back the lease transaction to allow the Government to get on with the job of rebuilding New South Wales? Those silly little questions from members opposite show how ignorant they really are. The members opposite have no idea.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Until last week, the policy of the Labor Party was to back light rail in the central business district.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: The question is: What happened between the 2015 State election and last week?

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: This issue needs to be further explored.

WORKERS COMPENSATION SCHEME

Mr ADAM CROUCH: My question is addressed to the Minister for Finance Services and Property. How are the Government's reforms and sound financial management of the workers compensation scheme delivering for businesses and employees?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I am proud to be a member of a party that has become the new party of the working class in New South Wales because when it comes to looking after workers the Labor Party has never understood that funds are needed to support them. I accept that is a novel concept for the members opposite.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The members opposite do not understand that in order to have a fair workers compensation scheme it must be a sustainable workers compensation scheme. The workers compensation scheme that we inherited was \$4 billion in deficit. Business premiums were due to rise by up to 28 per cent. According to the NSW Business Chamber, 12,000 jobs across the State were at risk.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: It was a scheme that was failing the workers, businesses and taxpayers of this State. It was plunging into deficit because, as we all know, Labor has never met a deficit that it did not like. Since coming to office this reforming Government has also reformed the workers compensation scheme and the mess that was left behind.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Port Stephens to order for the second time. The member for Londonderry will come to order.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The results speak for themselves. As of 31 December last year the scheme was back in surplus.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. It is not too late to eject members for the remainder of the day. The Minister has the call.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Business premiums have been reduced by 17.5 per cent.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: And weekly income support for the most seriously injured workers has increased by more than 70 per cent. Now, more than ever before, more injured workers are back at work—we have the equal highest return to work rate in this country. Having funds, which those opposite do not understand, gives us flexibility. That is why last year I announced several enhancements to the scheme to better support the return to work of this State's injured workers, and we will continue to look at ways to make improvements. We also made the commitment that, if re-elected, the Baird Government would immediately review the financial position of the scheme—that for every dollar above the minimum surplus required to keep the scheme sustainable two-thirds would be invested in supporting injured workers back to work and the balance returned to businesses in lower premiums.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: That is exactly what the Government is going to do. As this Government has done so much to reform the scheme, I am wondering how the Labor Party can continue to call itself the party of the worker. It cannot.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Rockdale will come to order. The member for Port Stephens will come to order.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Somewhat coincidentally, in a sign of goodwill, the other day my very good friend the member for Liverpool—

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order: My point of order is that apart from misleading the House, the Minister is being grossly offensive in saying that he is a friend of mine. It is also a breach of Standing Order 75, use of the wrong title.

The SPEAKER: Order! I uphold the point of order.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The Cold War is over, we won. The other day the member for Liverpool lent me one of his favourite bedtime reading books: *The Communist Manifesto*. I was enjoying—

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order: My point of order is relevance. Whatever the question was about, it was not about *The Communist Manifesto*.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will return to the leave of the question.

Pursuant to standing order additional information provided.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I was reading this great book and I suddenly thought to myself: Where have I read this before? Then it struck me—namely, the *Basic Principles of the Australian Labor Party (NSW Branch)*. And it is pretty basic. It states at the beginning: "... take forward the struggle of the working class against the excesses, injustices and inequalities of capitalism."

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order—

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

Mr Paul Lynch: My point of order relates to relevance. Whatever the Labor Party policy or platform might be about, it is not related to the question the Minister was asked.

The SPEAKER: Order! I uphold the point of order. The Minister will return to the leave of the question.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: It also talks about the socialisation of industry. Karl Marx is alive and well in the New South Wales Labor Party. It is little wonder that The Greens are winning Labor's seats, there is no product differentiation anymore.

Question time concluded at 3.14 p.m.

ITALIAN NATIONAL DAY SIXTY-NINTH ANNIVERSARY

The SPEAKER: Today is the sixty-ninth anniversary of Festa della Repubblica or Italian National Day 2015. On behalf of all members who have constituents in their electorates of Italian heritage and/or are of Italian heritage themselves—indeed, there are several animated and rather vocal Italian members in this Chamber—we say thank you to all the Italians in New South Wales who have made such a huge contribution to this State.

PARLIAMENTARY ETHICS ADVISER

The Speaker tabled, pursuant to clause 6 of the resolution of the House relating to the Parliamentary Ethics Adviser, a copy of correspondence from the Parliamentary Ethics Adviser enclosing advice provided to the Honourable George Souris, former Minister, dated 1 June 2015.

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**.

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**.

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**.

The Clerk announced that the following Minister had lodged a response to a petition signed by more than 500 persons:

The Hon. Niall Blair—Pig-dog Hunting Ban—lodged 7 May 2015 (Mr Alex Greenwich)

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:

- (1) To permit the taking of more than 47 private members' statements this week.
- (2) On Wednesday 3 June 2015 to:
 - (a) permit the taking of private members' statements from 11.00 a.m. until 1.15 p.m.; and
 - (b) provide for the following routine of business after the conclusion of the motion accorded priority:
 - (i) government business;
 - (ii) private members' statements;
 - (iii) taking of community recognition statements for a period of up to 30 minutes;
 - (iv) matter of public importance; and
 - (v) the House to adjourn without motion moved at the conclusion of the matter of public importance.

CONSIDERATION OF MOTION TO BE ACCORDED PRIORITY

Australian Energy Regulator Determination

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Parliamentary Secretary) [3.18 p.m.]: My motion should be accorded priority because the Government is standing up for the safety of emergency service workers and that should be made very clear to the people of New South Wales—whether or not the Opposition does the same. This motion puts the Australian Energy Regulator on notice and calls for the regulator to provide not only a path for price reduction but also a smooth transition on behalf of workers, whilst ensuring that the appropriate bushland mitigation is in place to protect those emergency service workers on whom we depend. We need look no further than the horrific fires in the Blue Mountains, where almost 200 homes were lost, to see that we depend on the NSW Rural Fire Service and Fire and Rescue NSW to be out on the front line to protect our property and our lives. If we do not stand up for them then we are not worthy of being in government.

The SPEAKER: Order! In accordance with longstanding practice there will be no interjections during the three-minute addresses on motions to be accorded priority. It is a longstanding and bipartisan agreement.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: Do we want to see cheaper electricity prices? The Liberal Party and The Nationals have been the only parties in this place to bring prices down. We stand by that commitment to reduce prices. The former Labor Government increased the price of electricity by 63 per cent. We have brought prices down and we will continue to force prices down. But we are not going to accept cheaper prices at the expense of our workers. We will stand up on behalf of the workers, even if the Opposition will not. The once-great Labor Party is now staring down the workers, denying workers their rights and denying the rights of emergency service workers.

There are a couple of parties now in Government that will not stand by and see our workers deprived of their rights. We will not stand by and watch the Labor Party wash its hands of workers and their rights. We will stand up on behalf of workers. We want to see electricity prices brought down, absolutely. We make no secret

about that. We are the party which, through reform, has saved \$3 billion—which has not been injected into the cost of electricity. But we will not do that at the expense of our workers. We will not do that at the expense of people who have not been transitioned appropriately into new employment services. We will not do that and deprive our emergency service workers of their safety. This motion should be accorded priority.

Electricity Prices

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn—Leader of the Opposition) [3.21 p.m.]: There is one party in this Chamber that is on the side of eight million electricity consumers in New South Wales and that wants to ensure that people on modest and middle incomes, struggling with the cost of electricity, receive their power at the most affordable rate. When it came to office four years ago, this Government rightly identified gold plating of the electricity network as a matter that demanded to be addressed. The member for Castle Hill talked about price rises but he neglected to tell the whole story—that during the first three years the Liberal-Nationals Government was in office prices rose by 42 per cent. He did not tell that story.

All of us in this Parliament should give thanks that today the Australian Energy Regulator [AER] is led by Paula Conboy, a woman who puts the interests of pensioners and low-income people struggling with the cost of power bills first. Those opposite speak about vegetation management. I will tell the Chamber what Essential Energy's own documentation said about their vegetation management. This is from the final decision of the AER:

... Essential Energy's own documentation, including a report it commissioned from Select Solutions, provides evidence that its vegetation management practices in the base year (2012–13) were inefficient. Select Solutions' review found that Essential Energy must move to a "significantly more efficient" vegetation management model to reduce the impact of its expenditure on customer prices.

That is from the review done by Essential Energy. The member for Castle Hill talked about the Blue Mountains. Essential Energy distributes electricity to the people of the Blue Mountains. Their own review by Select Solutions found that the distributor must move to a significantly more efficient vegetation management model to reduce the impact of its expenditure on customer prices.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! Government members will come to order.

Mr LUKE FOLEY: Those opposite speak about the bush. Why is it that people in the bush pay hundreds of dollars more each year for their power than do people in the city? That is the racket that the National Party is engaged in to keep power prices artificially high at the expense of its own constituents. It is a disgrace that this Government is using taxpayer funds to mount a legal appeal to make those people pay more for their power.

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

The House divided.

Ayes, 49

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

Noes, 39

Ms Aitchison	Mr Harris	Mr Parker
Mr Atalla	Ms Harrison	Mr Piper
Mr Barr	Ms Haylen	Mr Robertson
Ms Burney	Mr Hoenig	Ms K. Smith
Ms Car	Ms Hornery	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	
Ms Doyle	Mr Mehan	
Ms Finn	Ms Mihailuk	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Foley	Mr Minns	Ms Hay
Mr Greenwich	Mr Park	Mr Lalich

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): I welcome to the gallery Mr Luke Sikora, his mother and his niece. It is good to see them here this afternoon.

AUSTRALIAN ENERGY REGULATOR DETERMINATION

Motion Accorded Priority

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Parliamentary Secretary) [3.31 p.m.]: I move:

- (1) Supports the decision by the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) to reduce prices by 11 per cent in its latest determination.
- (2) Notes that the AER determination fails to provide for a redundancy payment or workable transition plan for the thousands of workers to be affected.
- (3) Notes that the AER determination fails to provide appropriate funding for vegetation management and bushfire mitigation.
- (4) Calls on the AER to provide a glide path to the 11% price reduction by supporting workers and bushfire mitigation in the appeal process.

The New South Wales Government is committed to providing cheaper electricity prices for consumers. The genuine intention of that statement is demonstrated by the electricity price reductions that have occurred under this Government's watch. As a bit of a history lesson it is worthwhile pointing out that the Australian Energy Regulator [AER] made its last determination in 2009 under the watch of the former Government. As we remember, at that time we faced exorbitant electricity prices that had increased some 63 per cent prior to 2009. In 2011 when we came to government we immediately set about reforming the networks through our network reform program. To date we have delivered \$3 billion in savings for New South Wales consumers and we are on track to make it \$6 billion by 2016.

Everyone supports lower prices. It is clear that Government members support electricity price reductions because we have forced down prices since 2011, but that cannot come at the expense of workers. Workers who will face redundancy must be provided with redundancy packages and a smooth transition to further employment. Most importantly, the appropriate precautions and procedures must put be in place for our emergency services workers. Members need not just believe me. I will quote what a couple of people have said about the determination. The first is none other than a good friend and good bloke, Mr Greg Mullins, who is the Commissioner of Fire and Rescue NSW. He said in response to Mr Vince Graham:

Fire & Rescue NSW shares significant concerns about the possibility of increased bushfire ignitions should there be a reduction in essential vegetation management.

Mr Mullins shares significant concerns about the safety of his workers. But let us not just take it from the Commissioner of Fire and Rescue NSW. I will also quote my good friend who I greatly admire, NSW Rural Fire Service Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons. He stated:

I am deeply concerned that the draft determination made will lead to a reduction in vegetation management and preventative programs by the industry and potentially increase the bush fire risk to communities.

Those two people preside over the emergency services that protect our communities. Members do not have to take it from me but they can take it from those two commissioners. They have significant concerns about the AER determination and how their workers will be protected in the future. In addition to those workers, thousands of electricity industry workers will also potentially be affected by the 11 per cent electricity price reduction that the AER has proposed.

This Government supports a reduction in electricity prices on behalf of New South Wales consumers and has reduced prices significantly from the 63 per cent increase during the term of the former Labor Government. However, we are also determined to ensure that a smooth transition process is in place as workers seek further employment or that redundancy packages are available. Most importantly, we must ensure that protections are in place for the most important people—those who face emergency situations such as bushfires whether they be the good workers of Fire and Rescue NSW or the great volunteer members of the Rural Fire Service.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) [3.36 p.m.]: I move:

That the motion be amended by leaving out paragraphs (2) to (4) and inserting instead:

- (2) Recognises that the Government is appealing the AER price determination to increase the sale price of the electricity network.
- (3) Calls on the Government to support families and businesses in New South Wales and discontinue its appeal immediately.

I almost thought I would be physically sick while listening to the contribution of the member for Castle Hill.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Castle Hill has had an opportunity to contribute to the debate and has the right of reply.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK: The member for Castle Hill stood in this Chamber and appeared to demonstrate concern for New South Wales workers. I remind the House of the four years during which the Government removed 15,000 public servant positions in New South Wales. That is how many people lost their jobs in the health sector, the education sector including TAFE, and other sectors. Every part of the New South Wales public service was impacted by the Government's decision to cut those jobs. I never heard the member for Castle Hill raise any concerns about redundancy payments, workers' livelihoods or any other thing proposed in this motion. I suggest that the motion moved by the member for Castle Hill is nothing but emotional blackmail.

Members on this side of the House are quite right to support the Australian Energy Regulator's determination to reduce electricity prices for families and small businesses. It is ironic that our party has to be the one to stand up for small business and support them in reducing their electricity bills. Once again New South Wales families will have to rely on the Labor Opposition, along with the AER, to reduce electricity prices. Why would we agree to this motion when the AER has made a very significant determination?

It has studied what has to happen and has made very clear that the networks can afford, given the revenue being received, a price reduction. As the Leader of the Opposition stated earlier, there has been a 42 per cent increase in price over a three-year period but we never heard a sound from either the former or current Premier. Now, when we are seeing a reduction in those prices for the first time, what does the Government do? The Premier, Mike Baird, announces that he supports lowering prices. Of course he does, but in reality the Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy, who is the court jester of this House, released the cat among the pigeons by twice saying that it is not the networks that really are appealing this decision; in reality, it is the Government that wants the decision to be appealed against.

Mr Clayton Barr: He used the word "we".

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK: That is right: He used the word "we". The Government has decided to blame the Commissioner of the Rural Fire Service whereas, in reality, the Government can address the concerns of the commissioner in the upcoming budget that will be presented in a few weeks. The Government does not want to do that. The Government wants to make families and small businesses in New South Wales continue to suffer, whereas the Australian Energy Regulator [AER] quite rightly determined that the networks can afford to reduce their revenue. It is important that people who are struggling with the high cost of living, such as pensioners, are given some relief by the Government ensuring that they pay less of their income towards the cost of electricity. I commend the amendment to the House. I ask the Government to truly consider genuinely supporting the AER's determination, cease the appeal processes and support the amendment I have moved.

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) [3.41 p.m.]: I oppose the amendment and support the original motion moved by my colleague the member for Castle Hill. This motion is a very important one for the House to debate, particularly from the perspective of rural and regional energy customers. I come to this debate as a member of Parliament who made my own submission on behalf of my electorate of Northern Tablelands in relation to the draft determination of the Australian Energy Regulator [AER] and opposed the draft determination for a number of reasons. I had a lot of concerns, as do the vast majority of people in my communities—particularly rural and remote communities—who rely on Essential Energy for a staple in their daily lives, electricity. They need it to do business, to survive, to work on the land and to go about their daily lives. Chief among the concerns in that submission on behalf of my community were concerns related to the determination's cuts to the operating allowance of Essential Energy, which no doubt would impact on vegetation management clearing.

Essential Energy is an electricity network that is unique in Australia. It covers 95 per cent of the land mass of the State yet has only 24 per cent of the State's customer base. It has the highest operating costs because it has the largest area to cover and the lowest number of customers over whom to apportion those costs. That is why country people pay more for their electricity than do people who live in metropolitan areas, and probably why they always will. However, Essential Energy needs to retain that revenue to carry out necessary vegetation management. We need only look to our southern border and recall the Victorian bushfires of 2009 as well as the subsequent findings of the royal commission on inadequate vegetation management and resources as the cause of some fires and, tragically, some of the lives that were lost to realise the importance of vegetation management and clearing. People who live at Mungindi, Bonshaw, North Star and Yetman in my electorate live right at the end of the line.

They are at the extremities of 150,000 kilometres of poles and wires that traverse heavily vegetated areas. They rely on Essential Energy to maintain the easements properly to ensure that vegetation does not collide with power lines. If Essential Energy does not do that, bushfires start, potentially lives are lost, and electricity definitely goes off. The people in my electorate deserve an adequate and reliable supply of electricity just as much as does anyone who lives in an electorate represented by any other member of this House. To my mind, the issue is equity of access to electricity. Vegetation management is critical to maintaining equity of access. In country areas people want cheaper electricity prices, but that must not be achieved by compromising a safe and reliable supply of electricity, let alone jobs. This debate is not just about livelihoods, jobs and lower electricity prices but about people's lives.

Ms Tania Mihailuk: It is, actually. It is about lower prices.

Mr ADAM MARSHALL: If the member for Bankstown will cease being so rude, I will make the point that in rural areas we rely on poles and wires. It is essential for vegetation to be cleared.

Ms Tania Mihailuk: You are not actually selling it in rural New South Wales.

Mr the ADAM MARSHALL: Essential Energy is not being sold.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) [3.44 p.m.]: I speak on the faux motion in its entirety that has been moved by the member for Castle Hill. I have to say that the concern and understanding expressed about household budgets of hardworking families in New South Wales seems to be a little bit mixed. I will read a statement from a great colourful brochure entitled "Rebuilding NSW" presented by the Government on 18 December 2014, which states:

Electricity network prices and household bills are on their way down in NSW and will continue to fall as a result of the AER determination ... Typical residential customers could receive the following average annual savings on their electricity bills under the AER draft determination proposals ...

For Essential Energy, a \$370 saving was the Government's promise, the Government's policy, and the Liberal Government's program to reduce electricity prices for hardworking families across our State. How quickly times have changed. How quickly those words have been forgotten. How quickly those principles have been so easily discarded. How is it possible to move a motion to support the decision of the Australian Electricity Regulator [AER], which would reduce electricity prices, while at the same time mounting a legal challenge to the determination by using valuable public resources? The challenge, if successful, will result in more households paying more for electricity. State budgets are like family household budgets—always tight. There are many demands on them, and of course there are many emergency and unexpected items that arise. What do we have here? We have a State Government that is using valuable public resources to mount an expensive and wasteful campaign against New South Wales households.

This Liberal-Nationals Government has the numbers in both Houses and the deal is pretty much all stitched up in the Legislative Council. The Government does not need to challenge the AER's decision, but it

chooses to do so. Of course, the biggest losers are the hardworking householders of New South Wales. If the Government wants to support households, it should cease its challenge to the AER's decision. The reason it wishes to challenge the decision is that it wants to fatten or artificially inflate the cash flow and profits for the market. The Government has no concern or care for the people of our State and the household budgets that they run. I know people and businesses in Macquarie Fields that will be hard hit as a result of this legal challenge. It is not right, it is not fair, and it is wrong. I urge the Government to support the amendment moved by the member for Bankstown, support the Opposition, and support householders in our State to ensure that electricity prices remain low—as the Government promised back in December 2014.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Parliamentary Secretary) [3.47 p.m.], in reply: The determination of the Australian Energy Regulator [AER] fails to provide redundancy payments or workable transition plans for thousands of workers who will be affected by the proposed 11 per cent reduction in electricity prices. As I have stated previously—and I repeat it for the record—this Government wants and supports lower electricity prices. This Government remains committed to that objective. However, that objective cannot be achieved at the expense of good hardworking people within the industry who do not have a smooth transition plan to further employment or a redundancy package. That must be guaranteed on their behalf. The Opposition fails to recognise this fundamental principle. The Opposition wants to cut costs, but does not care a damn about the workers that that will affect.

If Labor members vote against this priority motion today they will actually be voting against the rights of electricity industry workers. They will also be voting against a smooth transition plan to retirement, which the Government supports. They will be voting against cheap electricity prices, which remain a fundamental objective of this Government. They will also be voting against protections for emergency services workers who go out time and again to attend bushfire tragedies and put their lives on the line. As I have stated, both Commissioner of Fire and Rescue NSW, Greg Mullins, and the Commissioner of the Rural Fire Service, Shane Fitzsimmons, have significant concern about the failure of the Australian Energy Regulator [AER] to provide in its determination for mitigation bushland management practices.

The Government profoundly supports putting the AER on notice by saying that it needs to show in its determination that there will be a smooth transition plan for the workers either through further employment or redundancy packages. The AER also must ensure protection for its emergency services workers. We have stated that previously and we will continue to state that. In 2009 I was the first parliamentarian in this House to raise the exorbitant price increases that had been imposed under the former Labor Government. Those prices continued to increase by 63 per cent. After coming to office, the Coalition Government introduced reform packages through the networks that resulted in electricity prices coming down. The Government remains committed to that objective, but it will not come about at the cost of our good, hardworking workers in the electricity industry or our emergency services personnel.

Question—That the words stand—put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 49

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

Noes, 38

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

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That the motion be agreed—put and resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

Pursuant to sessional order government business proceeded with.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

Appointment and Membership

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

(1) Committee on Children and Young People

Madam SPEAKER

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

- (1) That under section 36 of the Advocate for Children and Young People Act 2014, a joint committee known as the Committee on Children and Young People be appointed.
- (2) That under section 38 of the Act, Mr Greg Donnelly, Mr Paul Green and Mrs Bronnie Taylor be appointed to serve on the committee as members of the Legislative Council.

Legislative Council
2 June 2015

DON HARWIN
President

(2) Committee on the Health Care Complaints Commission

Madam SPEAKER

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

- (1) That under section 64 of the Health Care Complaints Act 1993, a joint committee known as the Committee on the Health Care Complaints Commission be appointed.
- (2) That under section 67 (1) (a) of the Act, Mr Lou Amato, Ms Jan Barham and Mr Walt Secord be appointed to serve on the committee as members of the Legislative Council.

Legislative Council
2 June 2015

DON HARWIN
President

(3) Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption

Madam SPEAKER

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

- (1) That under section 63 of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988, a joint committee known as the Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption be appointed.
- (2) That under section 65 (1) (a) of the Act, Mr Trevor Khan, Revd Fred Nile and Ms Lynda Voltz be appointed to serve on the committee as members of the Legislative Council.

Legislative Council
2 June 2015

DON HARWIN
President

(4) Committee on the Ombudsman, the Police Integrity Commission and the Crime Commission

Madam SPEAKER

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

- (1) That under section 31A of the Ombudsman Act 1974, a joint committee known as the Committee on the Ombudsman, the Police Integrity Commission and the Crime Commission be appointed.
- (2) That under section 31C (1) (a) of the Act, Mr Scott Farlow, Mr Trevor Khan and Mr Adam Searle be appointed to serve on the committee as members of the Legislative Council.

Legislative Council
2 June 2015

DON HARWIN
President

(5) Legislation Review Committee

Madam SPEAKER

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

- (1) That under section 4 of the Legislation Review Act 1987, a joint committee known as the Legislation Review Committee be appointed.
- (2) That under section 5 (1) (a) of the Act, Mr Shaoquett Moselmane, Mr Greg Pearce and Mr David Shoebridge be appointed to serve on the committee as members of the Legislative Council.

Legislative Council
2 June 2015

DON HARWIN
President

(6) Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters

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 Thursday 28 May 2015 relating to the appointment of a Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters.
- (2) That the representatives of the Legislative Council on the Joint Standing Committee be Mr Robert Borsak, Mr Ben Franklin, Mrs Courtney Houssos, Dr Peter Phelps and Mr Peter Primrose.
- (3) That the time and place for the first meeting be Thursday 4 June 2015 at 9:00 a.m. in Room 1254.

Legislative Council
2 June 2015

DON HARWIN
President

(7) Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety

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 Thursday 28 May 2015 relating to the appointment of a Joint Standing Committee to inquire into and report on road safety in New South Wales.

- (2) That the representatives of the Legislative Council on the Joint Standing Committee be Dr Mehreen Faruqi, Mr Scot MacDonald and Mr Daniel Mookhey.
- (3) That the time and place for the first meeting be Wednesday 3 June 2015 at 1.00 p.m. in the Waratah Room.

Legislative Council
2 June 2015

DON HARWIN
President

(8) Joint Standing Committee on the Office of the Valuer-General

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 Thursday 28 May 2015 relating to the appointment of a Joint Standing Committee on the Office of the Valuer-General.
- (2) That the representatives of the Legislative Council on the Joint Standing Committee on the Office of the Valuer-General be Mr Greg Pearce and Mr Ernest Wong.
- (3) That the time and place for the first meeting be Wednesday 3 June 2015 at 9.30 a.m. in the Waratah Room.

Legislative Council
2 June 2015

DON HARWIN
President

LEGAL PROFESSION UNIFORM LAW APPLICATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2015

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 27 May 2015.

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) [4.07 p.m.]: I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. The Opposition does not oppose the bill. The object of this bill is to amend the Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act 2014 so as to allow the commencement of the Legal Profession Uniform Law. That uniform law is introduced to this State by the application of the 2014 legislation of the Victorian Parliament. The bill before the House also proposes to amend other legislation consequent upon the commencement of the Uniform Law. It is to come into effect on 1 July 2015. When one talks to those in the profession involved in the process of developing the uniform law, one is often struck by the sense of exhaustion that they exhibit. It has taken some time to get to this point, but it is nonetheless an important and significant piece of work. As I have said previously, I struggle to find any rationale in the twenty-first century to argue against a uniform national law.

[*Interruption*]

I note the interjection from the former Attorney General's ex-chief of staff.

Mr Jai Rowell: Is he your mate?

Mr PAUL LYNCH: Absolutely not. He would be grossly offended if I claimed that he was; if I said so outside the House, he would probably sue for defamation. In February 2009, the Coalition of Australian Governments [COAG] brought regulation of the legal profession onto its microeconomic and regulatory reform agenda. This was predated by a national model bill. The 2009 COAG decision commenced with a Federal Labor Government and a State Labor Government in this place. The project has always had bipartisan support in this place. The previous Labor Attorney General, I note, was enthusiastic about the process.

In 2011 it was clear that Western Australia and South Australia would not be part of the scheme. In 2012 the Queensland Attorney General announced that Queensland would not participate. That was merely one of a number of odd decisions made in this policy area by that government. New South Wales and Victoria were left as the two remaining participants. Whilst it is only two States, it includes about 70 per cent of all legal practitioners in the country. One would anticipate that other States will participate in the future and there is speculation from time to time about one or more of the other recalcitrants joining the scheme.

The bill establishing the scheme was passed in the Victorian Parliament in March 2014. New South Wales legislation then followed and applied the scheme in this State. The new National Legal Services Board and the National Legal Services Commissioner will be established in New South Wales. The uniform law will

govern matters such as maintaining and auditing trust accounts, practising certificate types and conditions, complaints handling processes, continuing professional development requirements, billing arrangements and professional discipline issues. It will establish a common legal services market between the two States. The role of the Law Society and the Office of the Legal Services Commissioner will continue. The Law Society and the Bar Association are supportive of the bill. I note the President of the Law Society, John Eades, stated:

I wish to acknowledge the ongoing support of all political parties in NSW over a number of years as we have worked to develop the framework for a common legal services market ... It has been a long road to reform but a necessary one due to the changing nature of legal practice in the context of nationalisation and globalisation of legal services.

Some have a view that a later start date of 1 September was preferable. The date of 1 July was set down as the start date months ago, but I understand that the professional bodies only saw the final bill last week. There will inevitably be teething problems in a bill of this complexity, but members of the legal profession are willing to work through the issues that arise. The most common criticism of the proposal is that it provides difficulties for smaller practices and sole practitioners. When I spoke in support of the 2014 legislation I said there are some other advantages that will accrue to such practitioners. Several other matters in the bill have been raised and I seek a response to those issues from the Attorney General.

The first issue has been the subject of correspondence to the Attorney General. I have been contacted about the proposed uniform bar rules to be formulated by the Legal Services Council and the Australian Bar Association. A significant number of barristers in New South Wales are concerned about proposed Rule 15, which defines the work of barristers. There is no reference in the proposed rule, as I understand it, to alternative dispute resolution [ADR] being part of the work of barristers. However, the importance of alternative dispute resolution not only to the profession but also to the community as a whole to resolve disputes without court proceedings and having Sydney as a possible seat of international arbitration seem very odd. The absence of ADR from Rule 15 has caused dismay and concern among a number of barristers. I ask the Attorney General for an assurance that Rule 15 will expressly recognise ADR as part of the work of barristers or that there is some other resolution to that issue.

The second issue relates to schedule 2.45 of the bill. Interestingly, it was not mentioned by the Attorney General in her contribution to the second reading debate. Those provisions lift the ban on solicitors advertising for workers compensation matters, which means that lawyers can advertise for workers compensation matters in the same way as for any other matter. The ban on advertising for personal injury matters generally was not repeated in the 2014 legislation. Of course, one has to be sceptical about the practical impact of this considering the gutting to the workers compensation system in relation to the availability of claims at all, the quantum when claims are possible and the provisions about legal costs. I suspect much of the work currently being done by lawyers on workers compensation is done pro bono. If that is so, the issue of advertising is not a practical one.

The change in the bill is affected by removing the reference to lawyers in the relevant sections of the Workers Compensation Regulation 2010. The reference to agents remains so the ban still applies to them. I do not cavil with that. The 2010 regulation was introduced in response to what were perceived as abuses. I ask the Attorney General for her view about this. If the provisions are passed, will she monitor the situation and take appropriate action if those abuses recur. Finally, I note that the bill proposes no change to section 160 of the 2014 Act. I welcome that position as pursued by the Government. The Opposition does not oppose the bill.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [4.13 p.m.]: I speak in debate in support of the Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. I compliment the Attorney General on introducing the legislation. As the member for Liverpool said, this legislation has been on the drawing board for 30 years or more. When I attended law school it was suggested that this legislation would be passed and at legal education seminars we spoke about how it was close to occurring. Finally, the Attorney General has introduced the bill before the House. As the Attorney General outlined in her second reading speech, the bill makes amendments to the Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act 2014, as well as a number of other consequential amendments to other legislation, to allow for the commencement of the uniform law scheme.

The amendments to the bill will ensure that New South Wales is ready for commencement of the Legal Profession Uniform Law. Once the uniform law is in operation, more than 70 per cent of the nation's lawyers will be covered. The uniform law has been drafted with the expectation that other jurisdictions will join the scheme in the future. The uniform law provides the flexibility for jurisdictions to join while making appropriate local arrangements for regulating the profession. Some may wonder about the significance of the bill. I will give a perfect example. In my practice as a solicitor I had a client who had resided in the Manning Valley for many years.

An allegation was brought against him that he was involved in a fraudulent scheme that was being perpetrated in Queensland. The charges were made in Queensland and the matter was heard before the Southport District Court. Before this scheme, to represent my client I had to be accredited in Queensland or, alternatively, engage a barrister who was accredited in Queensland. The bill abolishes that rule. It is ridiculous that lawyers in New South Wales cannot represent their clients in Queensland. That is one example why the legislation is so important. Another example is that businesspeople conduct business in all States and they need to engage trusted lawyers who can look after their affairs in other States.

The reforms began as a national reform project under the auspices of the Council of Australian Governments. One of the key goals of the National Legal Profession Reform project was achieving economic and efficiency gains from uniform regulation. Although only New South Wales and Victoria have so far committed to this substantial reform, significant benefits will flow to law firms in those two States. The uniform law aims to reduce regulatory complexity and compliance costs for all law firms in New South Wales and Victoria, not only those that operate across borders. Greater benefits will be available for firms that operate across State lines, particularly those in the border towns of Albury and Wodonga. Those firms will be able to maintain a single costs agreement for both jurisdictions and the same trust account management software.

The uniform admission rules will allow new employees who have qualified in Victoria or New South Wales to obtain admission in the other State without further study being undertaken. This will maximise their fee-earning capacity from day one. Consumers will also gain through better arrangements for complaints handling and resolution and tailored consumer-friendly orders providing practical remedies. Law practices will have a duty to charge fair and reasonable costs, which enhance consumer protections and foster better communication, leading to fewer disputes.

I will speak about a particular amendment to the application Act. One area of significance in the bill is the revised part 7, which sets out provisions for the cost assessment process. While the application Act currently contains provisions for costs assessment, the revised part 7 aims to improve those provisions as originally enacted to do the following. First, it makes their operation clearer, including in relation to rights of review and assessment of costs ordered by a court or tribunal; secondly, it aligns them more closely with the provisions of the Legal Profession Act, where appropriate; and, thirdly, it incorporates recommendations from the Chief Justice's review of the costs assessment scheme.

The Chief Justice instigated the review to examine whether the legislation, principles and procedures underpinning the operations of the costs assessment scheme continued to support the just, quick and cheap resolution of costs disputes. The review was undertaken by the Hon. Justice Paul Brereton, AM, RFD, supported by a committee of representative stakeholders. Some 39 submissions from professional bodies, cost assessors, cost consultants, legal practitioners and self-represented litigants were received. The Chief Justice published the review and conducted further consultation, seeking comments on the recommendations. These were taken into account in his response to the review, which accepted the recommendations, subject to a number of comments about specific recommendations.

The bill adopts several of that review's recommendations, which the Chief Justice supports. It is the culmination of an extensive and thorough process involving significant efforts and contributions from many individuals and organisations, whose hard work I acknowledge today. Costs assessment is an important part of the justice system; it directly impacts individuals, businesses and legal practitioners. The review and this bill are part of the ongoing process of continuous assessment to ensure that costs assessment legislation and processes remain well suited to ensuring the just, quick and cheap resolution of costs disputes.

I will now turn to specific clauses of the bill. The rules of the NSW Admission Board will be changed to allow persons from other jurisdictions to be admitted in New South Wales. I have already spoken about costs assessments. The right of review by the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal about Australian practising and registration certificates is also dealt with. For many decades those in the profession have been seeking this legislation. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) [4.22 p.m.]: I speak in debate on the Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 and state at the outset that the Opposition does not oppose the bill. Most members who have participated in this debate understand that the Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act 2014, which commenced last year, has generally recognised the bipartisan nature of this Parliament in supporting the development of uniform legal professional rules. The formal and ancillary provisions, which relate to the Victorian Act, of the application Act commenced on 1 July 2014; the remaining

provisions are yet to commence. The bill will amend the application Act to enable the full commencement of the uniform law scheme within New South Wales and, upon the commencement of the uniform law scheme, make various other amendments to other legislation and complete the repeal of the Legal Professional Act 2004.

It has not been an easy journey to achieve uniform regulation of the legal profession within the various Australian jurisdictions, including New South Wales. A former Labor Attorney General, the Hon. John Hatzistergos, and a Federal Labor government commenced the process at the 2009 Council of Australian Governments meeting. Labor has always supported the notion of consistency between Australian jurisdictions, and this position has not changed. Last year, after a lengthy period of consultation, the application Act passed through this House. Currently, only New South Wales and Victoria have agreed to join the new uniform law scheme. However, it should be noted that approximately three-quarters of all Australian legal practitioners come from those two jurisdictions.

This bill makes a number of amendments to the application Act, which I will briefly address. Schedule 1 will give the Legal Practitioners Admission Board the power to make rules in relation to various matters, including administrative matters, registration of students at law, examination of candidates for registration and committees of the board. Schedule 1 will also allow the Law Society Council, Bar Council and Legal Services Commissioner to delegate functions to certain individuals and entities as prescribed by regulation. The bill will also make a series of technical amendments to provisions within the application Act that are duplicated under the uniform law.

Schedule 1 [27] to the bill will amend the cost assessment process, including assessment of costs ordered by a court or tribunal and costs payable on a solicitor-client basis, known as uniform law costs, among other substantive amendments with respect to costs assessment. Once the bill is enacted, as a result of the repeal of the Legal Profession Act 2004, schedule 2 will make various amendments to other Acts, regulations and rules. Overall, the uniform law will regulate the legal profession with respect to matters of governance, including the types and conditions of practising certificates, the maintaining and auditing of trust accounts, requirements surrounding continuing professional development obligations for legal practitioners, complaints handling processes, billing and other professional misconduct and discipline issues. The bill has been welcomed by the President of the Law Society of New South Wales, Mr John Eades. In a press release, dated 29 May 2015, he said:

In particular, the new scheme will deliver consistency in practising certificates, admissions to practice, continuing professional development and conduct rules.

Clients will benefit from a regulatory system which is characterised by consistency and accessibility,

It is undoubtedly in the best interests of both the legal profession and consumers who utilise the services of legal practitioners for there to be a consistent and uniform approach across various jurisdictions.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) [4.27 p.m.]: I speak briefly in support of the Legal Profession Uniform Law Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. I endorse the comments of the member for Liverpool in relation to this bill. It is worth reflecting on the original Act and what it has achieved. For some time—the member for Liverpool is probably correct in saying 30 years—the States have been negotiating to achieve consensus on a national regulatory regime to govern the legal profession. For many years it has been an agenda item on successive meetings of Attorneys General. Despite the best plans of many heads of department, the process was like herding cats. Laurie Glanfield, when he was head of the New South Wales Department of Attorney General and Justice, spent many hours cajoling State Attorneys with a view to obtaining a unified profession. He nearly got there.

In principle, one has to ask: Why would all of Australia, in the best interests of consumers, not want to embrace a system aimed at delivering a profession governed by the same rules Australia-wide? Why should the rules for a lawyer in practice in Toowoomba be any different to those that govern a lawyer in Bega? The clear answer is they should not. The problem is that each jurisdiction is of the view that their regulatory system is the best and does not need changing. Read into that: "We want to keep our fiefdom under our control and we do not want a national body making rules that will govern us". This flies in the face of stated facts that govern the delivery of a national body.

Briefly, the facts around the delivery of a national legal system are as follows. All legal practices would benefit from simplified, uniform legal regulation. Uniform legislation and rules will do away with unnecessary regulatory differences that add unnecessary cost to the delivery of legal services. Smaller firms in cross-border areas like Canberra-Queanbeyan and Tweed Heads-Gold Coast stand to benefit just as much from uniformity as do national firms. Smaller firms complained that there was nothing in it for them, but certainly for those

cross-border firms there is. Well over 500 pages of legislation will be reduced to just 200 pages. That means less complexity and clearer regulatory standards for everyone. Firms practising in one jurisdiction only will enjoy the benefits of lighter regulation as well as regulatory standards that are developed with direct input by the legal profession through the National Legal Services Board.

In addition, the independence of the profession is assured. Under the proposed national law, the standing committee and the legal profession will each appoint three members to the board. The chair of the board can only be appointed with the concurrence of the Law Council of Australia and the Australian Bar Association. Supreme Courts will continue to control the admission and discipline of lawyers. Again, this was of concern to a number of stakeholder bodies. While an independent admissions committee will issue compliance certificates, no-one can be admitted other than by the Supreme Court. The national law expressly preserves the inherent jurisdiction of the Supreme Court to admit and discipline lawyers, including to refuse admission irrespective of whether a person has been given a compliance certificate. The judiciary will dominate the admissions committee, which will also include representatives of the legal profession.

Professional associations and legal services commissioners will continue in their existing regulatory roles. This means the professional associations will be able to continue administering practising certificates, overseeing trust accounts and appointing external interveners; and legal services commissioners can undertake functions such as compliance auditing as they currently do. Consumers will be better off, and that is the most important thing. Consumers will have consistent rights and remedies under the uniform law. Current arrangements vary considerably across jurisdictions and in some cases lack transparency.

Consumers will be able to resolve service complaints and costs disputes with law practices more quickly and informally. The duty on law practices to charge fair and reasonable costs and streamlined costs disclosure requirements will enhance consumer protection, foster better communication and lead to fewer disputes with law practices. Importantly, this is not a Commonwealth scheme. The Commonwealth committed \$1.7 million for the estimated start-up costs of the board. However, other than contributing money, the Commonwealth has no ongoing role in the operation of the scheme or policy decision-making.

One would have thought that this scheme would have had support from all jurisdictions. It was heavily supported by the Commonwealth Attorneys General Robert McClelland, Mark Dreyfus and George Brandis as well as successive New South Wales Attorneys General John Hatzistergos, Greg Smith and Brad Hazzard. And yet to date only two jurisdictions have signed up: New South Wales and Victoria. However, that is encouraging because, as other speakers have indicated, those two States have over 70 per cent of the lawyers in the country.

Hence, in 2014 the national legal profession framework was given its existence in the Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act. This Act mirrored the Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act which was passed in Victoria that same year. This law saw the establishment of three new bodies for the oversight of the unified profession: the Legal Services Council, the Commissioner for Uniform Legal Services Regulation and the admissions committee. Those bodies needed to consult with State bodies to reach a consensus on the rules that will govern the unified profession upon its commencement on 1 July 2015, and that is what this bill addresses.

Previous speakers have addressed a number of provisions in the bill. The bill can largely be broken down as addressing three major matters, as well as having consequential amendments which the member for Liverpool alluded to and which flow through to numerous other Acts. The bill seeks to regulate the manner in which complaints handling measures will be continued in a manner which sees the legal services commissioner delegate functions to the Law Society and the Bar Association. Exemptions are granted for in-house and government lawyers. Perhaps the most important amendment is the delivery of an agreed costs assessment and review regime, which was addressed by the member for Myall Lakes.

Finally, the bill also deals with the retention of the Legal Profession Admission Board. Some of our best and most practical lawyers have obtained their qualification through this process, and I welcome its retention. It is a tragedy that more jurisdictions have not seen fit to come on board with the unified profession. However, once they see the success of this legislation and the smooth operation of the profession, which has its head office in Sydney, I am sure they will embrace it. I am told that the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory are close to joining the scheme. It is worth noting some of the observations that have been made in relation to this bill. The president-elect of the Law Council, Mr Stuart Clark, said:

A client of a firm which operates in Sydney and Melbourne will now have one engagement letter, one retainer, one set of rules that govern the relationship between lawyers and clients ...

Supermarket chains, insurance companies and banks engage lawyers on a national basis yet they have to deal with what used to be lawyers' cottage industry.

Mr Clark said the regulatory regime will make compliance easier for law firms and clients and cut costs as law firms no longer had to deal with different rules relating to legal education, billing clients and retainers. This gives them a more competitive edge. He went on to say a uniform law will also make Australian lawyers more competitive against foreign lawyers. He said:

If we want to compete on a global stage, we have to have the most efficient regulatory regime which minimises the cost of compliance [and] makes it easy for foreign clients to engage us ...

I endorse those comments. He said small firms along the Murray River and big firms in the capital cities would benefit. The uniform law was first flagged in the Hilmer report of 1993 in an attempt to extend the competition policy principles to the legal profession. The Australian Bar Association President, Fiona McLeod, said she was pleased with the uniform law passing after a long journey. She said:

It reduces all those barriers for lawyers who work across the border.

For all practitioners in NSW and Victoria, for the first time we have consistent rules of conduct, practice and education. For the first time we have a national profession.

The new rules will not prevent barristers from undertaking mediation or any other form of alternative dispute resolution, the Australian Bar Association said. That may be an answer to the query of the member for Liverpool to the Attorney General. I commend the bill and the work done by the profession, by many past Attorneys General and by this Attorney General, who had the task of bringing this bill to the House.

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) [4.37 p.m.]: I support the Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. It makes important amendments to the Act prior to the uniform scheme commencing on 1 July 2015. As mentioned by previous speakers, it has long been advocated that we need nationally consistent regulation. It makes good microeconomic sense. I remember discussing notions such as having a national uniform scheme during my days at law school. It is great to see this important reform being discussed in this Chamber today.

The amendments in the bill will ensure that New South Wales is ready for the commencement of the legal profession uniform law. Once in operation, over 70 per cent of the nation's lawyers will be covered. The uniform law has been drafted with the expectation that other jurisdictions will join the scheme in the future. We certainly encourage them to do so. The uniform law provides the flexibility for jurisdictions to do so while making appropriate local arrangements for regulating the progression. These reforms began as a national reform project under the auspices of the Council of Australian Governments.

One of the key goals of the national legal profession reform project was to achieve economic and efficiency gains from uniform regulation. Although only New South Wales and Victoria have committed so far to this substantial reform, significant benefits will flow to law firms in other States. The uniform law aims to reduce regulatory complexity and compliance costs for all law firms in New South Wales and Victoria, not just those that operate across borders. Greater benefits will be available for firms that do operate across State borders, particularly those in the border towns of Albury and Wodonga. I note the member for Albury is here in the Chamber. This Government has certainly done a lot of border reform work. I note that the member for Monaro is also in the Chamber. Last year the member for Albury and I announced important mental health reforms that will help people on both sides of the border get the treatment they need. The Government is continuing to do important cross-border work.

Under the legislation firms will be able to maintain a single cost agreement for both jurisdictions and the same trust account management software. New employees who have qualified in either Victoria or New South Wales will be able to obtain admission in the other State without any further study being undertaken because of the uniform admission rules. That will maximise their fee-earning capacity from day one. A good friend with whom I went to law school did a lot of work in New South Wales and eventually moved to Queensland where he had to ensure that his qualifications were up to date. Had this legislation been in place in those days it would have been of real benefit to him and his clients.

Consumers will also gain through better arrangements for complaints handling and resolution and tailored consumer-friendly orders providing practical remedies. The duty of law practices to charge fair and reasonable costs will enhance consumer protections and foster better communication, leading to fewer disputes. Further, the ability of lawyers to provide pro bono services has been enhanced with more flexible practising entitlements and the creation of a low-cost volunteers practising certificate. That will assist those consumers with limited means to access lawyers.

The reforms will create a range of benefits for the legal profession and consumers. The reforms rely on the principles of co-regulation where the profession will partner with government to deliver an effective regulatory regime. In addition to carrying out key regulatory functions, the uniform law enshrines the principle of co-regulation by giving responsibility for developing professional conduct and practice rules to the Australian Bar Association and the Law Council of Australia. Participation and leadership from those who are to be regulated will ensure that the regulatory framework is fit for purpose, free of red tape and contains the right balance of protections for consumers and law firms. Within the co-regulation model the independent Legal Services Commissioner will exercise complaint-handling functions and ensure independent oversight of the profession in New South Wales.

The legal profession in our State has been deeply involved in the development of the uniform law and all associated instruments necessary to set up the framework for the scheme. As the Attorney General noted in her second reading speech, the Bar Association, the Law Society, the Office of the Legal Services Commissioner and the Legal Profession Admission Board all made substantial contributions to bringing these reforms to the point of commencement. The bill paves the way for the full uniform law scheme to commence in New South Wales and I note that the Attorney General and Government have commended all involved for their hard work and dedication. They have particularly thanked the presidents of the Law Society and Bar Association, the staff of those professional associations, the current and former Legal Services Commissioners and the staff of the Office of the Legal Services Commissioner.

Schedule 1 items [28] and [29] of the bill relate to the Attorney General's power to approve, by order in writing, professional indemnity insurance policies. Rather than providing that compliance with any conditions of an order is a prerequisite for a policy to be regarded as an approved policy. New section 95 (3A) of the application Act provides that, if any terms or conditions imposed by an order are not complied with by the insurer or provider of the policy, the order may be amended to prohibit or restrict the future issue of policies by that insurer or provider and that the Attorney General may take into account any such failure to comply when deciding whether to approve future policies. The bill contains a number of amendments—some big, some small—that provide for consistency across the two States.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge Macarthur Law Society President Brett McGrath, who I have known for a long time. He is doing an absolutely fantastic job as the new president of the branch. For many years Brett and I have spoken about issues such as a national reform scheme. He is a strong advocate for a more efficient legal system for the benefit of not only his firm but also the community in the region he represents. I know that he supports the bill. It is good to have him as the new president of the Law Society. Like Brett, I agree that bills such as this will ensure that the legal profession has reduced regulatory and compliance costs where firms are better able to manage invoicing, trust accounts, complaints handling and professional discipline across borders. Ultimately, that will mean a win for consumers and clients. They will get a new low-cost system to resolve complaints and legal practitioners will be obliged to charge them fair and reasonable costs, which is an issue that has been long debated in the community. I note that the Opposition does not oppose the bill and I commend the bill to the House.

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) [4.44 p.m.]: The object of the Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 is to amend the underlying application Act to enable the uniform law scheme to commence operation. As the Minister outlined, this is another stage—albeit an important one—in a process that has been going on in various forms and forums with varying levels of enthusiasm for some 29 years. The bill has special relevance for those who live and work in my electorate of Albury, which of course sits on the border between New South Wales and Victoria. Between them the cities of Albury and Wodonga in particular have developed to become a modern and substantial commercial hub.

I have spoken before in this place about the difficulties caused by trade licensing, driver licensing and a host of cross-border anomalies that conspire to make ordinary processes more expensive and bureaucratic. Today, therefore, I am pleased to see progress on uniform arrangements affecting the legal profession and its dealings with the public. On the border we have a number of issues that fall into that basket. First, legal practitioners are aware of pricing differences applicable to their professional indemnity insurance premiums. The premiums are large and any respite is welcome for its impact on reducing business overheads. Of course, the legal profession has its share of defaulters and poor practitioners, but the actions of the few have significant ramifications for premiums paid by the honest and competent professionals. If premiums are different the question arises: Are lawyers more negligent in one State than another? Pricing policies seem out of step with on-the-ground realities.

Second, local border solicitors perform work for people and businesses that operate on both sides of the Murray River. That raises interesting questions about legal practice and regulation. The situation, as I understand it, is that a legal practitioner can only hold a full practising certificate for one State. It has to be either New South Wales or Victoria, not New South Wales and Victoria. Local Albury solicitors typically have one practising certificate—for New South Wales—and are then registered as associates with the Law Institute of Victoria so that they can undertake legal services work in Victoria. But a solicitor who during his or her career moves across the river to Victoria will have to make the decision whether to cancel or let lapse their New South Wales practising certificate in order to apply for a full Victorian practising certificate. Is that kind of step really necessary anymore?

Third, the issue leads on to the question of dispute resolution. I note the bill deals with various powers of delegation by those who regulate the legal profession, such as the Legal Services Commissioner, and with improving the processes by which complaints and disputes are handled. In New South Wales we have layers of regulation and supervision of lawyers, extending from their primary professional bodies such as the Law Society and the Bar Association and spiralling upwards into the Legal Services Commissioner, the Legal Profession Admission Board and the Supreme Court.

In Albury it is not unusual to have a resident of Wodonga engage an Albury solicitor to handle a property transaction in Victoria or the sale of a business that has premises in both New South Wales and Victoria. If things do not go smoothly and dispute resolution services are required, does the member of the public head into the New South Wales system or the Victorian system? In practice these issues of jurisdiction are guided by various rules; however, in this area we are looking for ongoing simplification and clarity as the two States pursue uniformity.

These matters will require ongoing attention. For today, however, we have a bill that tidies up a number of areas on the way to creating a unified national legal profession market. As the Minister said, "Consumers will enjoy better protection by having the same protections, rights and remedies across jurisdictions in New South Wales and Victoria." Reviews of legal costing processes are welcome, as are provisions for in-house lawyers to match those provisions already in the application Act for government lawyers. New section 45 states:

- (1) The local regulations may make provision for or with respect to:
 - (a) exempting persons or classes of persons from the requirement to hold Australian practising certificates, either generally or for specified periods, in respect of their functions as corporate lawyers ...

This is the type of tidying-up of the rules we need—freeing up the profession and its customers from costly and unnecessary bureaucracy. What we have before us is the final legislative element necessary to prepare New South Wales for the uniform reforms to regulate legal services across State boundaries on a common basis. This bill should streamline processes and simplify important matters such as dispute resolution, complaints handling and costs administration. For those reasons I commend the bill to the House.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse—Attorney General) [4.50 p.m.], in reply: First, I thank all Government members who contributed to the debate—the member for Myall Lakes, the member for Epping, the member for Miranda, the member for Wollondilly and the member for Albury. I also acknowledge contributions to the debate made by members of the Opposition: the shadow Attorney General and member for Liverpool, and the member for Bankstown. A number of matters were raised during the debate, and I will address two in particular. The first related to the definition of barristers' work and the proposed Legal Profession Uniform Conduct (Barristers) Rules.

The rules are not before the House, but I understand the Opposition raised issues and I am very happy to answer what was contended by the Opposition. The shadow Attorney General stated that the form of the rules does not refer to barristers acting as arbitrators, mediators, referees or other alternative dispute resolution principals. The reason is that the definition of barristers' work in the proposed Legal Profession Uniform Conduct (Barristers) Rules is in exactly the same terms as the existing New South Wales Barristers' Rules. That definition has been in place since 2011.

The Australian Bar Association is the body that is responsible for developing the proposed Legal Profession Uniform Conduct (Barristers) Rules. The Legal Service Council makes the rules, which are submitted to the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General—a meeting of attorneys-general of participating jurisdictions—which can veto the rules only in limited circumstances. The issue of the definition of barristers' work therefore is an internal matter for professional bodies such as the Australian Bar Association. It is understood that the issue of whether the definition of barristers' work should include acting as an arbitrator et

cetera has been considered by the Australian Bar Association, which has not accepted that it should. In other words, the professional body is agreeing and promoting the rule as it is currently drafted. Indeed, the rule as it is drafted is supported by the New South Wales Bar Association.

The second matter raised in discussion was a comment made by the shadow Attorney General on lifting the ban against advertising as it applies to workers compensation professionals. That has taken place in uniformity with our colleagues in Victoria. I am very happy to take up that matter by having the Legal Services Commission monitor the impact of lifting the ban both on the profession and on consumers to ascertain how that change will impact upon professional and consumer outcomes in New South Wales. Put very simply, as all members who participated in the debate noted, this bill is the capstone piece of legislation. It represents the final legislative step required to prepare New South Wales for the uniform law. These necessary and long overdue microeconomic reforms will create for the first time a common legal services market stretching from Bass Strait in the south to Byron Bay in the north, and so it should.

The reforms will allow lawyers to focus on being lawyers and lawyering, give consumers consistent protections and make it easier for lawyers to practise on both sides of the Murray. Given the legal profession is both a key contributor and enabler of our economy, the reforms are good not only for the legal profession, the consumers of legal services in Victoria and New South Wales but also for our wider economies. By working with the legal profession to make regulation smarter and better we are helping to boost economic activity in New South Wales—a matter on which the Government focuses during our period of stewardship across New South Wales. Importantly, the Uniform Law scheme preserves a system of co-regulation in which the profession is still involved in critical areas of regulatory responsibility. Under the Uniform Law, the legal profession will have a direct role in formulating the regulatory standards through nominating members of both the Legal Services Council and the Admissions Committee.

Shorter, less complex regulation will mean reduced compliance costs, including red tape, and allow lawyers in New South Wales and Victoria to better focus on providing legal services to consumers. As I mentioned in my second reading speech, the development and delivery of the Uniform Law scheme has been a long and, indeed, at times arduous journey for all those involved. No doubt at times along the way, people doubted whether this would ever happen: It has been over 20 years in formulation. As policymakers, these reforms serve as a very strong reminder that doing what we must do while we have stewardship in government requires equal measures of vision, persistence and hard work. As the current Attorney General of New South Wales, I have the privilege of building on what was started by those who went before me. I note it took a Liberal State Government to push through with the issue to the point at which it has come before the New South Wales Houses of Parliament.

I again acknowledge the contributions made by Commonwealth and State attorneys-general who preceded me and stakeholders in New South Wales: In particular I single out the Bar Association, the Law Society, officers of the Legal Services Commissioner, the Legal Profession Admission Board and the Supreme Court—all of whom have worked very hard for a long time with goodwill to bring this bill to the House today. I also acknowledge in particular the work of the Legal Services Council and the Commissioner for Uniform Legal Services Regulation. They have worked extremely hard over the last few months—I know that because I have seen it—to ensure that the uniform rules, which are necessary to supplement the Uniform Law before this House, were ready in time for commencement.

In closing, I point out that this bill brings the reality of a seamless and unified national legal services market finally within our sights and finally within our reach. New South Wales and Victoria carried the baton closer to the finish line than has anybody else, but we need the other States and Territories to bring a finish to this race. New South Wales and Victoria have invested heavily in the infrastructure for a national legal services market and we are paving the way for other States and Territories to join us. All that is needed from the other States and Territories is the will to reform for the benefit of consumers of legal services. I want them to take courage and to stop standing on the sidelines. I want them to get into the game. I call on them now to do so. The Victorian Attorney-General and I will continue to urge the other States and Territories to embrace the reforms. Only when there is a truly national legal services market will all people in Australia benefit from this important microeconomic reform. I commend the bill to the House.

Question—That this bill be now read a second time—put and resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Motion by Ms Gabrielle Upton agreed to:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council with a message seeking its concurrence in the bill.

STATUTE LAW (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL 2015

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 27 May 2015.

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) [4.59 p.m.]: I lead for the Opposition on the Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2015. The Opposition does not oppose the bill. There are a number of objects of the bill. Most obviously, the bill seeks to make minor amendments to various Acts and regulations. These are set out in schedule 1 to the bill. The other objects are to make amendments to Acts and instruments so as to achieve statute law revision, to make minor amendments following upon the Government Sector Employment Act, to repeal various Acts, regulations and instruments, and to make consequential and ancillary provisions.

This is a type of bill used by all governments in all parliaments as an efficient way of making minor and non-controversial amendments. Self-evidently, it is more efficient than moving a plethora of separate amendments. The Aboriginal Land Rights Act is amended in relation to community land and business plans and resolutions concerning land dealings. I note that appears to be an amendment to an Act that has not actually been proclaimed yet, which suggests that something was wrong to begin with, but these things happen. An amendment also clarifies the role of the registrar concerning agreements under new section 36AA, which once again looks like it was missed in the 2014 legislation.

There are amendments to the publications, film and computer games legislation consequent upon national changes. Changes are made to the New South Wales Crime Commission because of the change in the Government's administrative requirements. The Saint John's College Act is amended to allow the time of office of certain members of the governing body of Saint John's College to be continued. There are some interesting amendments to the Subordinate Legislation Act to prevent the repeal of various regulations. It rather raises the issue of whether aspects of the principal Act were perhaps a little too zealous to begin with.

One section for which I seek an explanation from the Minister is that relating to the University of Western Sydney Act. It is amended to remove the requirement that an appointed or elected member of the Board of Trustees of the University of Western Sydney reside in New South Wales or the Australian Capital Territory. I assume there is a basis for that. On the face of it, I would have thought there would be little need to go too far outside New South Wales to fill such positions. There are also consequential amendments that update terminology and references relating to public service agencies, heads of agencies and public service employees as a consequence of the Government Sector Employment Act. There are also other miscellaneous amendments that are consequential to the Act. As I indicated, the Opposition does not oppose the bill.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [5.01 p.m.]: I speak in support of the Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2015. This type of bill often comes before the Parliament to make a number of minor and inconsequential amendments to various pieces of legislation. It will make a number of minor amendments to the following Acts and regulations: the Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983, Biological Control Act 1985, Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Enforcement Act 1995, Co-operative Housing and Starr-Bowkett Societies Act 1998, Co-operative Housing and Starr-Bowkett Societies Regulation 2005, Crime Commission Act 2012, Conveyancers Licensing Act 2003, Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, and Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000.

It will also amend the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment Act 2014, Gambling (Two-up) Act 1998, Gaming Machines Act 2001, Health Care Complaints Act 1993, Holiday Parks (Long-term Casual Occupation) Act 2002, Holiday Parks (Long-term Casual Occupation) Regulation 2009, Home Building Act 1989, Liquor Act 2007, Mental Health Amendment (Statutory Review) Act 2014, Passenger Transport Act 2014, Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979, Public Health Act 2010, Registered Clubs Act 1976,

Residential (Land Lease) Communities Act 2013, Saint John's College Act 1857, State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989, Subordinate Legislation Act 1989, University of Technology, Sydney, Act 1989, University of Western Sydney Act 1997, and the Veterinary Practice Act 2003.

The proposed amendments to the Aboriginal Land Rights Act will, firstly, ensure that a local Aboriginal land council's community, land and business plan which, among other things, sets out the council's strategies and objectives for land and business dealings, can only be adopted by special resolution carried by 80 per cent of voting members present at the meeting concerned, consistent with the requirement for land dealings by the council to be authorised by a special resolution; secondly, remove requirements for the transfer or disposal of an asset, or the termination of certain arrangements, by the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council to be approved by a special resolution at a meeting in respect of which special notice has been given so that an ordinary resolution and ordinary notice are sufficient, consistent with the position applying in relation to other decisions of the council; and, thirdly, make it clear that the functions of the registrar appointed under the Act include keeping and maintaining a register of Aboriginal land agreements, which may be entered into under new provisions to be inserted by the Aboriginal Land Rights Amendment Act 2014.

The proposed amendment to the Biological Control Act 1985 will update a definition of the body, the "council", that is recognised by the Act as having the function of making recommendations to the New South Wales Biological Control Authority with respect to the biological control of pests. The definition of "council" currently refers to the former Agricultural and Resource Management Council of Australia and New Zealand and will be updated to refer to the Agriculture Ministers' Forum or, if that body ceases to exist, either a ministerial body that replaces that body or a ministerial body specified by an order of the Minister for Primary Industries.

The proposed amendments to the Co-operative Housing and Starr-Bowkett Societies Act 1998 and Co-operative Housing and Starr-Bowkett Societies Regulation 2005 will remove a requirement for certain statements and information to be prescribed by regulation and recreate in the Act the substance of the relevant provision of the Co-operative Housing and Starr-Bowkett Societies Regulation 2005. The proposed amendment will mean that readers are not required to consult both the Act and the regulation to identify the statements and information concerned.

The proposed amendments to the Crime Commission Act 2012 provide that the Secretary of the Department of Justice or the secretary's nominee will replace the Chief Executive of the Ministry for Police and Emergency Services as an ex officio member of the New South Wales Crime Commission Management Committee. The amendments are consequential on the amalgamation of the Ministry for Police and Emergency Services with the Department of Justice on 1 July 2015. The proposed amendments to the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment Act 2014 and Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000 will make it clear that the regulation may prescribe the particular version of a document prepared by the NSW Rural Fire Service that a consent authority may take into account in determining a development application relating to bushfire-prone land and prescribes the current version of the document in the regulation.

The proposed amendments to the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment Act 2014 will, firstly, make it clear that, for the purposes of investigative powers of councils and others, occupier of premises includes a tenant or other lawful occupant who is not the owner of the premises, and, secondly, remove a requirement for certain development applications to be notified in a local newspaper and allow instead for notification in accordance with the regulations. This proposal is related to the introduction of the New South Wales planning portal website.

The proposed amendment to the Gambling (Two-up) Act 1998 will provide for the repeal of the Gambling (Two-up) Regulation 2010 by incorporating into the Act a provision that allows two-up to be played on Victory in the Pacific Day, which is 15 August, and after 12 noon on Remembrance Day, which is 11 November. These dates have been prescribed by regulations for about 10 years as commemorative days on which a game of two-up may be conducted. The amendment to the Gaming Machines Act 2001 will remove redundant text relating to the setting by the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority of a zero gaming machine threshold, that is, the maximum number of gaming machines that may be authorised to be kept in a hotel or club, for those hotels or clubs that had not been allocated gaming machine entitlements at the time the gaming machine threshold scheme was introduced.

The proposed amendments to the Health Care Complaints Act 1993, which involve adding the Assisted Reproductive Technology Act 2007 to a list of Acts, will ensure that the Health Care Complaints Commission is

required to notify the Health Secretary of the details of complaints involving a possible breach of that Act. As is the case with other Acts in the list, enforcement of the Assisted Reproductive Technology Act 2007 is primarily the responsibility of the health secretary. Amendments to the Holiday Parks (Long-term Casual Occupation) Act 2002 will replace a requirement for certain warrants for possession issued by the principal registrar of the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal to be in the form prescribed by regulations with a requirement for those warrants to be in the form approved by that principal registrar instead. A similar amendment is proposed to the Residential (Land Lease) Communities Act 2013. The bill contains a number of other amendments and I commend the bill to the House.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse—Attorney General) [5.09 p.m.], in reply: I thank members for their contributions to the second reading debate on the Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2015. I thank the member for Myall Lakes and the shadow Attorney General, Paul Lynch. I will take on notice the two matters the shadow Attorney General raised during his contribution. I will mention briefly what I understand those matters to be, although they were a little hard to identify. I was very clear about one of the matters he raised, which was a query about the change to the University of Western Sydney Act—an amendment that I am advised was proposed by the Department of Education on the specific request of the University of Western Sydney. The contentious issue is the locality of members who can join the university governing board.

The change proposed by the Minister for Education enables the appointment of members to that governing body who live outside New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory. I will take the advice of the Minister for Education and take on notice the shadow Attorney General's concerns. The second matter he raised related to the Aboriginal Land Rights Amendment Bill 2014, legislation that was passed by both Houses of Parliament on 12 November 2014 and assented to on 19 November 2014. I understand that that bill has not been proclaimed, but I am seeking confirmation of that. I am happy to take on notice that query from the shadow Attorney General and seek further advice from the Hon. Victor Dominello—although it relates to his previous role—or the current Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Leslie Williams.

As I stated in my second reading speech, the Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2015 continues the statute law revision program, which has been in place for more than 30 years. Bills of this kind are a good way in which to implement minor policy changes, rectify drafting errors and repeal redundant legislation. This takes care of business—all the housekeeping. Schedule 1 to the bill contains miscellaneous amendments to 26 Acts and two regulations. In the Government's view, these amendments are minor and inconsequential. Schedule 2 deals with matters of pure statute law revision consisting of minor technical changes. Schedule 3 contains miscellaneous amendments that are consequential on the enactment of the Government Sector Employment Act 2013, including amendments that update terminology and references relating to public service agencies, heads of agencies and public service employees.

The bill also deals with consequential and technical amendments, and repeals various Acts and provisions that no longer have any operation. As I noted previously, the amendments contained in this bill are of a minor and non-contentious nature. As part of the ongoing statute law revision program, this bill enables minor policy changes to be made efficiently and effectively, and redundant legislation to be taken off our legislative books. The bill ensures that New South Wales legislation remains as up to date and as effective as possible. I commend the bill to the House.

Question—That this bill be now read a second time—put and resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Motion by Ms Gabrielle Upton agreed to:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council with a message seeking its concurrence in the bill.

CRIMES (SENTENCING PROCEDURE) AMENDMENT (FIREARMS OFFENCES) BILL 2015

Bill introduced on motion by Ms Gabrielle Upton, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse—Attorney General) [5.14 p.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Amendment (Firearms Offences) Bill 2015, which makes good on the Government's election commitment to improve sentencing for gun-related crime. People want, and are entitled, to be safe and secure in their homes and communities. Guns and weapons are used by criminals as tools in their illicit trade. For too long the community has felt that violent, serious criminals have been getting off too lightly for owning or using a firearm or weapon, or committing drive-by shootings. The New South Wales Government has listened to the community's expectations about safety. We are acting to better and more appropriately punish criminals who seek to create fear or hurt other members of the community with guns or other weapons.

This legislation establishes standard non-parole periods for five firearms offences that were not subject to that scheme, and increases existing standard non-parole periods for two offences relating to the unauthorised possession or use of firearms and prohibited weapons. It will help ensure that sentences for firearms and weapons offences are better aligned with community expectations and that they reflect the seriousness of these crimes. In 2013 the Government asked the NSW Sentencing Council to review the operation of the standard non-parole period scheme. The council was required to conduct community consultations, and make recommendations on what offences should be included in the scheme, what the standard non-parole periods for those offences should be, and how we should go about administering the scheme. The council then developed a series of recommendations on how the scheme can be improved, and we are pleased to introduce today the bill that will implement the second tranche of those reforms.

A number of recommendations have been progressed already as part of the Government's response to the recent report by the Joint Select Committee on Sentencing of Child Sexual Assault Offenders. Indeed, its recommendations will come before the Legislative Council shortly in the form of a bill. Standard non-parole periods are an important mechanism in our sentencing laws. They are a bridge between the Legislature and the courts. They say to courts, in the clearest possible terms, "We see these types of offences as among the most serious that exist, and we want to ensure that the sentences imposed are consistent, adequate and appropriate, and that they meet community expectations." That is why the Government is today proposing the addition of a number of new offences to the standard non-parole period scheme, and why we are adopting the NSW Sentencing Council recommendations on setting the appropriate standard non-parole periods for these, and other, firearm and weapon offences.

This bill sets standard non-parole periods for five very serious firearms offences that are not currently included in the scheme. The NSW Sentencing Council recommended that these offences be added to the scheme because of the serious criminality involved, the significant risk of causing harm to innocent members of the community or law enforcement officials, and the fear and apprehension they create in the communities where they are committed. The proposed standard non-parole periods for these offences are set at the level identified by the NSW Sentencing Council, taking into account the seriousness of the offences and their relationship to other offences within the scheme. The bill also takes up the council's recommendations to increase existing standard non-parole periods for offences relating to prohibited firearms and weapons.

Under the bill, the standard non-parole period for unauthorised possession or use of a prohibited firearm or pistol will increase from three years to four years, and the standard non-parole period for unauthorised possession or use of a prohibited weapon will increase from three years to five years. These increases reflect the potentially serious consequences for the community arising from these offences, which gives rise to a special need for deterrence.

I now turn to the detail of the bill. Schedule 1 amends the Crime (Sentencing Procedure) Act 1999. Items [1] and [2] of schedule 1 add five new firearms and weapon offences to the standard non-parole period scheme. Those offences and their corresponding standard non-parole periods are: first, discharging a firearm with intent to cause grievous bodily harm under section 33A (1) of the Crimes Act 1900, with a standard non-parole period of nine years; and, secondly, discharging a firearm with intent to resist arrest or detention under section 33A (2) of the Crimes Act 1900, with a standard non-parole period of nine years.

Further offences include: thirdly, discharging a firearm at a dwelling house or other building with reckless disregard for the safety of any other person under section 93GA (1) of the Crimes Act 1900, with a standard non-parole period of five years; fourthly, discharging a firearm during a public disorder at a dwelling house or other building with reckless disregard for the safety of any person under section 93GA (1A) of the Crimes Act 1900, with a standard non-parole period of six years; and, fifthly, discharging a firearm in the course of an organised criminal activity at a dwelling house or other building with reckless disregard for the safety of any person under section 93GA (1B) of the Crimes Act 1900, with a standard non-parole period of six years.

Item [3] of schedule 1 changes the standard non-parole period for the offence of unauthorised possession or use of a prohibited firearm or pistol under section 7 of the Firearms Act 1996 from three years to four years. Item [4] of schedule 1 changes the standard non-parole period for the offence of unauthorised possession or use of a prohibited firearm under section 7 of the Weapons Prohibition Act 1998 from three years to five years. Item [5] of schedule 1 is the savings and transitional provision, which provides that the amendments apply only to offences committed on or after the date of commencement.

I thank the NSW Sentencing Council for its good work informing our legislative agenda in this House so that we can protect our community. I thank it also for its diligence and central approach, which is borne out in this report, and for its guidance that leads to good policy and good laws. Those laws improve community safety and increase the confidence of its members in our justice system. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned on motion by Mr Paul Lynch and set down as an order of the day for a future day.

Pursuant to sessional order private members' statements proceeded with.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ST ANDREWS PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) [5.23 p.m.]: On Monday 25 May 2015 I enjoyed an inspiring visit to St Andrews Public School. As a former student of the neighbouring Robert Townson Public School in Raby, I was always curious to see the playground and classrooms of so many of my former high school friends and classmates at Robert Townson High School. As I walked into the office, I noticed the polished wooden noticeboards emblazoned with gold text of former school captains, vice-captains and high achievers. I instantly recognised some of the names and my thoughts wandered to where they are now and what great things they have achieved in their lives—it all started at St Andrews Public School.

I was warmly greeted by two dedicated professionals, principal Richard Batty and deputy principal Chad Harris, who are leading and inspiring their staff and the school community to abide by the school's motto of "Live to Learn". I witnessed the motto in action and experienced a positive working environment at the local public school. I met Brian Butler, who has worked at the school grounds for more than 42 years. He does a marvellous job. No doubt he has seen multiple generations of the same family walk through the gates on Ballantrae Drive. I met three office ladies, Cathy, Christine and Lesley, all of whom have been at the school for more than 15 years. No doubt they have seen many positive changes at the school. There was a nice warm feeling amongst the long-term staff at St Andrews. Their knowledge and history is what makes St Andrews able to continue to provide a quality education for so many kids in my electorate.

The focus of the school is to provide quality education for its 800 students from K to year 6, and to provide a caring environment for future generations in our area. St Andrews is inclusive and caters for students of all abilities. It has opportunity classes for academically gifted students in years 5 and 6. No doubt teachers are asked some tricky questions by their curious students with intellect beyond their years. St Andrews is not only a school for gifted students; it also provides support classes for students with autism and those with a moderate to mild intellectual disability. It has a supportive environment and committed teaching staff who ensure that students who need extra help receive the attention they need to help them to learn better.

Principal Batty mentioned that while students have different abilities, there was never an "us versus them" grouping among students. He is proud that the kids play and learn from each other throughout the day. The school environment includes everybody and excludes nobody. I am confident that every parent who knows

this fact is proud that St Andrews Public School is teaching their sons and daughters the value of sharing and including others. The school community is supported and enriched by the involvement of parents with staff. Every Friday morning the school hosts a morning chat over coffee between parents and staff. No bookings are required and staff members are on hand to discuss with parents ideas and issues about how to make St Andrews Public School even better. The school has demonstrated leadership by involving parents and the local community, all with the aim of ensuring that kids are learning in a positive and productive school environment.

The school is technologically savvy and makes use of the Skoolbag app to help busy parents stay abreast of activities and events. It sends reminders of school excursions, events and late cancellations, and complements the traditional school newsletter. It adds another layer to the success of the school. I had a wonderful day touring the school and talking with the staff. My experience reinforced my view that St Andrews is a good local public school with dedicated teachers and committed parents who want a better future for our kids. I acknowledge the fantastic job they are doing, and thank them for their time and for the personal development they provide to students. I look forward to a return trip to St Andrews Public School and wish it every success in the future.

INALA

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) [5.28 p.m.]: I draw the attention of the House to the work done by Inala for people with severe disabilities who work at the forefront of my community. Inala was established in 1958 in Cherrybrook in the north-east of my electorate by Joachim Pohl and his wife, Kyra. The charity provides a range of opportunities and services to its participants, including vocational training, creative arts and volunteering programs to actively engage with the community. Inala comes from the Indigenous word meaning "place of peace". I cannot think of a more appropriate name for this organisation. The charity serves to make the lives of people living with disabilities—often severe—easier and happier, and it has never ceased to humble or amaze me. Inala's community participation program is truly inspiring. The program provides volunteering services to the local community. True humility, shown through this selfless act by a charity that already serves people living with disabilities and that gives to the community, is uplifting.

On 20 May I was fortunate to be invited to the 2015 Dulkara Art Exhibition, where I saw firsthand the product of a caring and individually centred program that seeks to get the best out of every human being regardless of whether that person is living with a disability. The artwork that greeted me at Dulkara was stirring. The pieces were constructed with meticulous effort and care, and were guided by knowledgeable and dedicated teaching staff. This art exhibition serves to remind us of Inala's core philosophy: to recognise the wholeness of individuals, regardless of disability. Community events such as the 2015 Dulkara Art Exhibition serve to break the stigma of disability. Integrating charities with the public sphere and promoting civic involvement in organisations such as Inala is the bedrock of a civil and caring society.

Day by day, the team at Inala serve to break down the barriers by equipping their participants with vocational skills and playing sport in the community. Inala provides more than care; it also equips participants with the skills necessary to participate in everyday life. But this was not the first time that I had witnessed the efforts of the Inala staff and the amazing work of its community. In March I visited Wandana Cherrybrook and was confronted with the realities of caring for people with complex needs. Many of the residents at Wandana need constant support and care, as well as an outlet to cater for their creative expression. Inala provides all of these things. Some of the people who are cared for at Inala have been there for many years and have very severe disabilities.

I give individual thanks to the joint chief executive officers of this amazing initiative, Michael Porteous and Rebecca van Bilsen. Indeed, without the dedication of those two individuals the Inala community would not be as inspiring as it is. There is no way to measure how many lives those two people have touched and how many lives they have improved. Undoubtedly, our community owes Michael and Rebecca a thank you for their service, compassion and dedication to Inala. I also cannot neglect to mention the efforts of their staff. Caring is an incredibly demanding and difficult job; it comes filled with emotional hurdles. To dedicate one's life to the caring of another is truly moving and is not praised often enough. I thank the staff who impart vocational knowledge, and the carers and dedicated families who make up the Inala community. They have enriched the lives of the Epping community and the lives of Inala members.

Speaking at length with the staff and management at Inala has further affirmed my belief in the absolute necessity of the National Disability Insurance Scheme [NDIS]. I am a passionate supporter of the NDIS, which has been long overdue. It will prove integral in freeing up funds for Inala, and many other charities

across Australia and New South Wales. It will significantly improve working conditions for carers, as well as the living conditions of those living with disability, and will provide support for the families of a person living with a disability. Those families and carers need our support and dedication. I recommend the work of the Inala community to the House; it is a truly inspirational organisation.

THE HUB COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) [5.33 p.m.]: Tonight I draw the attention of the House to a serious threat to the future delivery of community health services at the Hub Community Health Centre, which is located at Miller within my electorate. Proposed changes have provoked a petition, which has been signed by many residents, and considerable public opposition from residents such as Eileen Neale, Gladys Nimmett and Judy Arkley. The proposed privatisation of the Hub Community Health Centre is a matter of great concern. The Hub has been operating for about 15 years and has a particular emphasis on preventative health measures, which attracts a clientele often not reached by other health services. In that time I have seen the work of the Hub, together with other services and structures located in Miller. In fact, I took part in the original discussions that developed the Hub and the services around it, and the Community 2168 project in Miller.

The Hub is run by the South Western Sydney Local Health District, as its current iteration is known, of NSW Health. Health workers employed by NSW Health are based at the Hub, and they are supported by a plethora of volunteers and events. I have always been impressed by the work of the Hub and those associated with it. Indeed, the standard of that work has been emphasised by the accolades it has received—for example, it was awarded first place in the 2002 Baxter health awards. It has also received a Premier's award and an award for best practice in 2014 working with Pacific communities. The origin of the present crisis seems to be in the latest economic rationalist and managerialist onslaught in NSW Health.

In October 2013 a review was reported to have commenced into the community health services of the South Western Sydney Local Health District. The Minister said, "One objective of this review is to consider whether current services delivered by community health could be more effectively managed by community partners, including non-government agencies." That is, the review was set up to recommend privatisation. The review was done by PricewaterhouseCoopers—hardly something to inspire confidence in those wanting services to remain in government hands. The petition I referred to, which was signed by many residents, sets out the argument:

South Western Sydney Local Health District has decided after 15 years to make changes to the running of the Hub. These changes mean exchanging our staff with non-government managerial staff. In other words, we won't have Health workers running the Hub and with new management will come new ideas of what the Hub should do and shouldn't do. This includes everyone who walks in the front door. Qualified health professionals are doing a great job of running the Hub.

Repeated pleas to the Health bureaucracy and relevant Minister have had no impact. A consultation process was meant to be completed by February 2015. Given that community and professional opinion is almost universally opposed to the change, one has to wonder why such a charade of consultation was indulged in. Residents such as Eileen Neale argue that the Hub is a unique model. Taking away their health workers will both damage Miller and take away something that the community needs.

Part of the problem is that the managerial health bureaucracy making the decisions seems to dismiss centres such as the Hub as merely delivering social welfare services—what the Minister dismissingly describes as "social and welfare supports". The decision-makers hold an absolutely myopic and short-sighted view that a service that uses models of preventative health and focuses on the social determinants of health is somehow not core business. They have a view that the Hub simply does community development work, when the Hub is actually involved in health promotion and improved service access—that is, preventative health, which sometimes uses community development strategies.

Whilst clinical services are critically important, avoiding the need for them in the first place is also critically important and should be just as much a priority for any rational health service that is not being pummelled by an expenditure review process. Frankly, as a matter of pure logic and of long-term economic and financial rationality, there should be a greater not lesser emphasis by NSW Health on preventative strategies. One critic has said to me that this proposal for the Hub resembles the attempted dismantling and privatisation of the National Health Service in England—the result of that was a disaster; hardly a model to be emulated or adopted. This proposal is a potential disaster for Miller and should be abandoned. The long-term wellbeing of many people whom I represent is being sacrificed on the altar of managerial cost cutting. It is an outrage.

THE HILLS RELAY FOR LIFE 2015

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Corrections, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) [5.37 p.m.]: I bring to the attention of the House the phenomenal turnout and fundraising efforts at the Hills Relay for Life 2015 over the weekend of 16 and 17 May. Thousands of Hills residents took part in the activities that weekend, with a particular focus on the power of hope in our community. The relay annually recognises and celebrates Hills cancer survivors, patients and their carers. I thank the chair of the community organisation for the Hills Relay for Life, Mrs Lynne Pike, and the rest of the committee, including Cathy Aird, James Butler, Denise Daynes, Ruth Didsbury, Katie Didsbury, Robin George, Alison Harper, Deanne Lees, Bryan Mullan, Angela Pike, Christine Zec, Victoria Bonello, Saquie Musa Kifafi, and Relay for Life veteran and Hills Citizen of the Year Bev Jordan.

The services of 2CH broadcaster Gareth McCray as master of ceremonies were greatly appreciated by all, as was the assistance of relay patron Councillor Michelle Byrne. The relay is a great opportunity for all people affected by the indiscriminate scourge of cancer to meet other survivors and carers. The importance of the fundraising undertaken at this event for essential research into cancer treatment is abundantly clear to all involved. The Cancer Council gives \$15 million a year to fund 266 researchers, who are working on 80 different projects. According to Cancer Council researcher David Smith, who spoke to us at the relay, an extra 61,000 Australians have been saved by research and better treatment methods facilitated by this funding.

It was a pleasure to be in attendance with my parliamentary colleagues Mr Ray Williams, MP, Mr Damien Tudehope, MP, and Mr Mark Taylor, MP, as well as our Federal colleague Mr Alex Hawke, MP. Schools, preschools, church teams, groups of families and friends, sports and service clubs, the St John Ambulance Hills Division, The Hills State Emergency Service, the Kenthurst Rural Fire Service, the North Rocks Rural Fire Service and The Hills Local Area Command provided teams—all evincing the Hills' unique community spirit. The Relay for Life activities included one of the biggest candlelight ceremonies ever held. More than 1,500 people stood in front of the illuminated "Hope" sign, with hundreds of candles burning brightly throughout in a solemn tribute to cancer victims.

The relay presents a great opportunity for communities to get behind sufferers whom they know and love. Students from Pennant Hills High walked more than 800 laps in support of two students undergoing cancer treatment. Colourful costumes and a particularly touching tribute were part of the display of the relay team "Rachelle's Princesses"—a band of 56 family and friends of the late Rachelle Stedman, a Rouse Hill mum who loved princesses but who was tragically taken by cancer. This team alone, dressed as Disney characters from Disney stories and popular culture, raised \$24,512. The princesses walked on Saturday and Sunday in memory of Rachelle.

The Hills community raised an astounding \$268,234 for the 2015 Relay for Life. The previous 13 relays at Castle Hill have raised more than \$3 million for cancer research and one-to-one support programs in the Hills. These small examples of the teams, each punching above their weight in their fundraising efforts, are part of the rich tapestry that makes up the Hills community, one that I am immensely proud to continue to represent.

TAMIL GENOCIDE REMEMBRANCE DAY

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) [5.40 p.m.]: Today I draw the attention of the House to Tamil Genocide Remembrance Day on 18 May. This is a day of mourning for the Tamil community both in Australia and overseas. The community held a large memorial function at Bowman Hall on Campbell Street in Blacktown on 18 May to remember the thousands of people who were killed during the civil war. Tamils the world over recognise and remember May 18 as a day for remembrance of genocide, especially in memory of the thousands of Tamils killed during May 2009.

During the last phase of the civil war, Tamil civilians were told by the government of Sri Lanka to assemble in designated "no fire zones". Those people were then subjected to heavy artillery fire and aerial bombings. According to the United Nations panel of experts report published in 2013, civilian assembly locations, schools and hospitals were deliberately targeted for bombing under the pretext of military operations. The United Nations panel of experts stated that more than 40,000 civilians were killed during the last phase of the war alone. Others bodies, including local non-government organisations and the Catholic Church, have estimated that around 140,000 may have perished in the war.

On 18 May Tamils seek a new beginning where Tamil civilians can live in dignity with permanence, peace and freedom from oppression in Sri Lanka and Australia. The event in Blacktown was attended by hundreds of war victims who fled from Sri Lanka and sought refuge in our country. Many young Tamil Australians also took part in a walk for justice from the Tamil memorial at Rookwood Cemetery to the memorial service at Blacktown. The walk symbolised the displacement of roughly 330,000 Tamils in 2008 and 2009. They were forced to flee from bombing and shelling by the advancing Sri Lankan military.

I congratulate the organisers of this event and the many organisations around Australia that work to support the welfare of Tamils in their new home. I am proud to be a friend of the Tamil community and their representative for the electorate of Prospect. I am committed to supporting the Tamil community in Australia and in Sri Lanka, reconciliation between all of the peoples of Sri Lanka, and the teaching and protection of the Tamil language. I especially support Tamil as a language of study in the Higher School Certificate under the national curriculum and Tamil language schools within the electorate of Prospect.

I support the establishment by the United Nations Human Rights Commission of an investigation into war crimes committed against the Tamil population during the Sri Lankan conflict. I also support a humane refugee policy in Australia. Australia must meet its international obligations and treat refugees and asylum seekers with dignity and respect. I look forward to actively working with the Australian Tamil community to promote human rights, political resolution and reconciliation in Sri Lanka and among communities in Western Sydney.

I acknowledge the fine work of the New South Wales Chapter of the Australian Tamil Congress [ATC]. The ATC is the peak body for Tamil organisations in New South Wales. It provides a strong and respectable voice for Tamils in New South Wales. Its work will continue for many years to come. Furthermore, I acknowledge some of the Tamil organisations in the electorate of Prospect. I congratulate the Consortium of Tamil Associations for organising a multicultural event on Anzac Day this year and I am grateful to have been invited to speak. I also acknowledge Voice of Tamils, an organisation that provides opportunities for Tamil youth in my area, especially through sports teams and cultural events.

The Tamil community is a significant and important part of my electorate of Prospect. The communities of Pendle Hill, Wentworthville, Girraween and Toongabbie in particular are home to a vibrant and burgeoning neighbourhood that combines the wonderful flavour of multiculturalism with our peaceful and democratic society. Many small business owners, hardworking professionals and committed blue collar workers are succeeding in Australia. They have overcome hardships and have witnessed cruelties that thankfully their children will never experience.

The Tamil people are resilient and have overcome threats to their existence. They were taken from India and sent to the island of Sri Lanka as servants and slaves by the British some 400 years ago. They fought in war alongside Australians. After Sri Lanka declared independence, their rights remained those of second-class citizens. We must acknowledge the 30 years of brutality of a largely unknown and ultimately futile civil war. In time, the wounds of war will heal; but the memories will last forever.

HAWKESBURY AND CASTLE HILL ELECTORATES

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Hawkesbury—Minister for Finance, Services and Property) [5.45 p.m.]: Today I give my first private member's statement as the newly elected member for Hawkesbury. First, I thank the people of Castle Hill for giving me the opportunity and privilege to represent them in the New South Wales Parliament. This Government had some great successes for the Hills district, which for many years had been neglected as a community. The start of the construction of the North West Rail Link and the upgrade of Showground Road are just two key projects which have now begun and will have a significant impact on the lives of many families in the Hills district.

I thank a number of community groups that I came to know and became very good friends with over the past four years and which have served the Hills community with distinction. Don Tait, Warren Glenney and the Castle Hill RSL and RSL Sub-branch have become such good friends to me and my wife, Helen, and family—particularly Charlotte, who is here in the Speaker's gallery tonight. The Rotary clubs, Lions club, the Community Foundation of North Western Sydney and Inala at Cherrybrook, which the member for Epping talked about earlier today, do amazing things. I thank Peter Gooch and the Castle Hill Show Society and Judith Adam and the Castle Hill Art Society.

One of the projects I initiated in the Hills was the Castle Hill Leadership Program, and I am looking forward to extending that program to schools in the Hawkesbury electorate. The program was completed last year and I had the privilege of trekking the Kokoda Track as an alternative to "schoolies" with the 14 year 12 students who participated in the program. I thank Governor-General Sir Peter Cosgrove, who is the program's patron, Gail Kelly, John Howard, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Tom Bathurst, Police Commissioner Andrew Scipione, Pat Farmer, Miranda Devine, and David Kirk, who had agreed to mentor the students over the course of their Higher School Certificate year. The trip with the students, following in the footsteps of those who fought for our freedoms, was a phenomenal experience and one which I know will remain with the students throughout their lives. I wish the incoming member for Castle Hill, Ray Williams, all the best over the next four years.

I was truly humbled to be given the opportunity to represent the people of Hawkesbury as their elected member in this place. The local community has been very warm and welcoming of both me and my family and we already feel very much at home. I am proud to represent the people of Hawkesbury as a member of the Baird Liberal team, which has completely turned this State around in the last four years. We have an ambitious vision for the State of New South Wales, underpinned by new world-class infrastructure, jobs creation and the promotion of small business. Delivering for Hawkesbury is central to that vision.

I have often said, "You do not know where you are going unless you acknowledge where you have come from". Hawkesbury is famous for its strong links to our past. It has a rich history dating all the way back to 1810 when Governor Lachlan Macquarie established the five Macquarie towns. These would be instrumental in providing the young colony of New South Wales with almost half of its grain supplies and ensure that New South Wales would have a future. Once again, the future of Hawkesbury is key to the future of New South Wales. My vision is for the Hawkesbury to be connected, protected and promoted. It is the platform we ran on during the last election campaign—a platform soundly endorsed by the local community.

On being connected, I believe the Hawkesbury electorate can reach its potential only by being connected both internally between its townships and externally to metropolitan Sydney and rural and regional New South Wales. We are getting the Hawkesbury moving by tackling congestion. We are accelerating stage two of planned roadworks between Richmond and North Richmond, spending \$5 million on safety works and the Pitt Town bypass and completing the Richmond Road upgrade by the end of 2016. On being protected, I believe the Hawkesbury, as one of the oldest European settlements in Australia, must have its rich heritage and history protected and preserved. That is why we have committed to building a new community recycling centre for better waste management, constructing a state-of-the-art fire station at South Windsor and completing stage two of the flood management program. I acknowledge John Miller for his advocacy on that issue.

I believe Hawkesbury is a special region of New South Wales with natural beauty and a rich tapestry of history that must be promoted. That is why we have pledged \$3 million for local tourism to showcase our region and bring visitors to the area. Of course, the Baird Government is also focused on service delivery. The Hawkesbury region will benefit from a new Service NSW one-stop shop in Richmond, our support of chemotherapy services at Hawkesbury Hospital and the construction of a new hospital at Rouse Hill.

I am convinced that exciting times lie ahead for the Hawkesbury. The lease of the poles of wires to provide better infrastructure, sound economic management and a focus on helping the vulnerable will underpin the Baird Government this term and will be of much benefit to the people of Hawkesbury. I thank the people of Hawkesbury for giving me the humbling privilege of representing them in this place. It is my intention to do whatever I can to repay their trust by delivering for the Hawkesbury.

Private members' statements concluded.

Pursuant to sessional order matter of public importance proceeded with.

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

Matter of Public Importance

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) [5.50 p.m.]: I ask the House to note as a matter of public importance that World Environment Day will take place on Friday 5 June 2015. This year the focus is "Seven Billion Dreams. One Planet. Consume with Care." Water, food and energy are key factors that highlight the finite resources of

our planet. Without potable water, sustainable food sources and affordable energy we will not survive as a species and we will be responsible for taking a plethora of species with us. An extract from the World Environment Day website reads:

The well-being of humanity, the environment, and the functioning of the economy, ultimately depend upon the responsible management of the planet's natural resources. Evidence is building that people are consuming far more natural resources than what the planet can sustainably provide.

Many of the Earth's ecosystems are nearing critical tipping points of depletion or irreversible change, pushed by high population growth and economic development. By 2050, if current consumption and production patterns remain the same and with a rising population expected to reach 9.6 billion, we will need three planets to sustain our ways of living and consumption.

The WED theme this year is therefore "Seven Billion Dreams. One Planet. Consume with Care." Living within planetary boundaries is the most promising strategy for ensuring a healthy future. Human prosperity need not cost the earth. Living sustainably is about doing more and better with less. It is about knowing that rising rates of natural resource use and the environmental impacts that occur are not a necessary by-product of economic growth.

Leonardo DiCaprio is a World Environment Day ambassador. His main focus is for people to do just one thing in their control by not wasting food. The World Environment Day website states about food:

While substantial environmental impacts from food occur in the production phase (agriculture, food processing), households influence these impacts through their dietary choices and habits. This consequently affects the environment through food-related energy consumption and waste generation.

It goes on to state that 1.3 billion tonnes of food is wasted every year, while almost one billion people go undernourished and another one billion go hungry. Overconsumption of food is detrimental to our health and the environment and some 1.5 billion people globally are overweight or obese. It also states that land degradation, declining soil fertility, unsustainable water use, overfishing and marine environment degradation are all lessening the ability of the natural resource base to supply food. The food sector accounts for around 30 per cent of the world's total energy consumption and around 22 per cent of total greenhouse gas emissions. Increased consumption adversely affects food security, increases food prices and leads to an upsurge in production methods that use more resource-intensive food products. Finally, the website states that resource-intensive foods deplete the agro-ecological resource base, affecting its ability to produce plentiful food.

Despite technological advances that have promoted energy efficiency gains, energy use in OECD countries will continue to grow another 35 per cent by 2020. Commercial and residential energy use is the second most rapidly growing area of global energy use after transport. In 2002 the motor vehicle stock in OECD countries was 550 million vehicles, 75 per cent of which were personal cars. A 32 per cent increase in vehicle ownership is expected by 2020. At the same time motor vehicle kilometres are projected to increase by 40 per cent. That is not a sustainable level of increase. We must look at our own actions to see how we can quell consumption. The New South Wales Government has established a \$465 million Waste Less Recycle More package, introduced tougher penalties on waste crimes and tightened controls on waste management, transport and storage of waste. It has also introduced an Energy from Waste Policy. I commend World Environment Day to the House.

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) [5.55 p.m.]: On 5 June each year the United Nations Environment Programme honours World Environment Day to raise awareness about environmental issues and make a call for action. The theme of this year's event is sustainable lifestyles. Its motto is "Seven Billion Dreams. One Planet. Consume with Care." It is a particularly powerful topic because it encourages everyone to take a moment to question how we live and how our actions impact the planet. The program this year asks everyone to evaluate their consumer habits—how we shop, eat and travel. According to the United Nations Environment Programme, creating more sustainable lifestyles is crucial. The World Environment Day website states:

By 2050, if current consumption and production patterns remain the same and with a rising population expected to reach 9.6 billion, we will need three planets to sustain our ways of living and consumption. Living well within planetary boundaries is the most promising strategy for ensuring a healthy future.

It also states that many of the Earth's ecosystems are nearing critical tipping points of depletion or irreversible change, pushed by high population growth and economic development. In this discussion on the matter of public importance, the member for Heathcote stated that living within planetary boundaries is the most promising strategy for ensuring a healthy future and it need not cost the earth. We have to do more and better with less. Many New South Wales environmental organisations are united by a vision in which our society lives sustainably, recognising the limits and services provided by nature and mobilising our capacity for innovation and investment in the future.

Several advocacy organisations outlined that vision in the lead-up to the recent 2015 State election. On World Environment Day those organisations must be acknowledged and I thank the following groups for their work: the Nature Conservation Council of NSW; the National Parks Association of NSW; the Total Environment Centre; the Wilderness Society; the Blue Mountains Conservation Society; the Colong Foundation for Wilderness; the North Coast Environment Council; the Central West Environment Council; and the South East Region Conservation Alliance.

Collectively those organisations have provided a platform for professional and powerful advocacy, research, campaigns and solutions to the environmental issues facing us today. Many of those groups had their genesis in local communities. Through their skill and environmental expertise, their members have risen to be some of the most significant voices in Australia and overseas. On World Environment Day, I will salute those groups and their dedication to a positive vision of environmental protection and nature conservation. Margaret Mead stated:

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

I commend World Environment Day to the House.

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) [6.00 p.m.]: On Friday 5 June we celebrate World Environment Day 2015. World Environment Day is the United Nations' principal vehicle for encouraging worldwide awareness and action for the environment. The theme this year is "Seven billion Dreams. One Planet. Consume with Care." According to the United Nations Environment Programme:

... the well-being of humanity, the environment and [the functioning of] economies ultimately depends on the responsible management of the planet's natural resources. [Yet] evidence is building that people are consuming far more natural resources than what the planet can sustainably provide.

This year's host country is Italy, which is displaying its World Environment Day activities in collaboration with the Milan Expo—a famous exhibition that this year runs from 1 May to 31 October and includes more than 140 countries plus a significant number of international organisations. The focus in Milan will be on how state-of-the-art technology can be brought into play to manage issues of the consumption of resources, including food and water. World Environment Day is all about action, not so much about talk. Local organisations are encouraged to register their World Environment Day activities on the international register.

The Albury region has a strong history of involvement in environmental studies and actions and in supporting World Environment Day. In 2012 the region held Sustainable House Day. This was an occasion for those considering building or renovating their home to look at ideas that would help them to reduce their environmental footprint. Open homes in and near Albury provided inspiration and practical examples of how to do things better. Visitors found solutions to common environmental challenges such as hot water heating, efficient appliances, space heating and cooling, energy monitoring and water use. Located within the Charles Sturt University at Albury is the Institute for Land, Water and Security, under the directorship of internationally renowned wetlands ecologist Professor Max Finlayson. The United Nations Regional Centre of Expertise—Murray-Darling, which was launched in October 2013, is also hosted within this institute.

A good sign of the wide recognition attained by the institute and its research capabilities is its success last year in securing nearly \$7 million in Commonwealth funding for two new five-year projects. The Institute for Land, Water and Security works collaboratively with community, regional and national partners. While the majority of its research projects are in the Murray-Darling Basin, I understand that its researchers are also involved in projects in other countries, including China, Austria, Italy and India. In concluding on this matter of public importance, I would like to promote a couple of activities taking place as part of World Environment Day in my region.

From 10.30 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. tomorrow at Lavington Library, families are encouraged to join in a morning of storytelling and art and craft activities to help to celebrate the day. The Albury City Council's sustainability and environment team also will be holding an information session to provide information on how we can save energy in our homes, how we can find out about local unique flora and fauna, with trails and parklands to explore, and how to help protect our environment. Our environmental theme continues into next week when on Tuesday there will be a workshop on organic pest control. This year I encourage all members to take at least one day to focus on our environment, to learn how to better manage our relationship with our environment, and to simply enjoy World Environment Day 2015.

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) [6.03 p.m.], by leave: I thank the member for Heathcote for bringing this matter of public importance to the attention of the House. I participate in the discussion on World Environment Day, which will be celebrated across the globe this Friday 5 June. World Environment Day is hosted by the United Nations Environment Programme. The aim of the global day is to raise awareness of environmental issues facing the planet but, more importantly, to galvanise people into taking action to protect, conserve, support, rehabilitate and, quite frankly, get out of the way of the health, beauty, diversity and the existence of our diverse species and precious ecosystems.

From a purely anthropocentric viewpoint, human beings love nature, seek solace in the environment and take enormous pleasure from the natural world. Many people across the globe recognise that the natural world belongs collectively to all and to future generations—a fact that is not easily reconciled by the inadequacy of laws that are in place to protect and conserve our great natural treasures in so many countries. In Australia, the Great Barrier Reef is a perfect example of a World Heritage and priceless natural treasure that, as we speak, is facing destruction as a result of the coalmine adjacent to it.

Trickle-down economics and economies of scale take no account of intergenerational resources or future rights to enjoy them. They are limited by the fact that profit margins recognise neither the right for species, oceans, forests and landscapes to exist nor the right of future generations to experience them. I take a moment today and this week to recognise the great work of environmental activists all over the world, particularly the Earth Law movement, of which I am part. I encourage the next generation to participate because, quite frankly, against the backdrop of climate change, yet another level is being added to the imperative of World Environment Day.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) [6.05 p.m.], by leave: I participate in the discussion on World Environment Day, which will be celebrated on 5 June. I acknowledge the member for Heathcote for bringing this matter of public importance to the attention of the House. The Greens stand shoulder to shoulder with the people of New South Wales, Australia and the world in recognising the need to protect our precious marine parks, national parks, native vegetation and biodiversity on World Environment Day. The Greens also acknowledge in this place, across Australia and around the world the need for action on climate change and the need to address the impact it is having on our local and worldwide communities.

It is crucial when we are discussing World Environment Day to recognise the real impacts upon people's lives, our environment and precious places that we all enjoy and appreciate as well as the need for global action. That is why days such as World Environment Day are crucial to recognising the responsibilities we have as global citizens to play our part within the Newtown electorate, within New South Wales and indeed across the planet. It brings home to us the importance of protecting our environment.

Last year, 2014, was New South Wales hottest year on record, yet there is still no holistic response to the manner in which we address dangerous climate change, with the continued extraction of fossil fuels and the classification of wind farms in New South Wales as polluters. We need to take collective action in our approach to dealing with the protection of our environment and addressing dangerous climate change, not as a political point-scoring exercise but as a way in which to examine how we transition New South Wales to an environment in which we protect our natural resources and towards renewable energy. We also need to take that approach when we celebrate World Environment Day. I thank the member for Heathcote for the opportunity to speak in debate on this matter of public importance.

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) [6.07 p.m.], in reply: I thank all members who participated in the discussion on this matter of public importance, that is, World Environment Day. I especially thank the member for Albury, the member for Blue Mountains, the member for Ballina and the member for Newtown. It is very important for us to recognise World Environment Day.

Mr Mark Coure: Tell us why, Lee.

Mr LEE EVANS: I will tell the member for Oatley why. My electorate has the oldest national park in the Southern Hemisphere.

Mr Mark Coure: How old?

Mr LEE EVANS: It was declared in 1852, if the member for Oatley must know. I am very proud that my electorate has the oldest national park in the Southern Hemisphere. My electorate comprises 458 square

kilometres, the majority of which is national parks and State forests. As the local member, I am responsible for a water catchment area for 4.2 million people, so I am aware of the importance of protecting the environment. I am pleased to bring forward this matter for discussion and to make the House aware of the great importance of World Environment Day. I want to relate my firsthand experience in relation to protecting the environment. During the Sydney Olympics, I was the food supply and purchasing manager for the Olympic villages. We had a massive amount of food waste and had to consider what was to be done with it. The prevailing opinion at the time was that it would end up in a dump. A counter-suggestion was that we should use the food for worm farms.

Two 40-foot containers were filled with waste food every day and transported to worm farms at Kemps Creek. The worms were very happy and got stuck into churning up the food. That huge amount of food waste brought home to me the importance of controlling and reducing the amount of waste generated within our own homes. Unless everyone reduces household waste, we will quickly exhaust landfill areas and will not have the space to contain waste properly.

Mr Christopher Gulaptis: You have lost a few kilos.

Mr LEE EVANS: I have. I have lost 25 kilograms and I am heading for a loss of 30 kilograms. I reiterate how important it is for us to preserve our land and not fill it with waste. I commend to the House this matter of public importance, World Environment Day, which will be celebrated on Friday 5 June. I hope everyone plays their part for the environment by reducing the household waste that is currently being dumped in landfill.

Discussion concluded.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 6.10 p.m. until
Wednesday 3 June 2015 at 10.00 a.m.**
