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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 4 August 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

ROUSE HILL TOY FESTIVAL

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) [12.11 p.m.]: On Saturday 25 July it was a privilege for me to open the inaugural Toy Festival at Rouse Hill House and Farm. Presented by Sydney Living Museums, the inaugural Toy Festival was a two-day free event that featured rides, live music, craft activities and workshops, a toy collectors' showcase, and a handmade and vintage toy market. The festival extended the theme of the Toys Through Time exhibition, which has been on display at the Museum of Sydney, into greater Sydney and specifically into Rouse Hill, where many of the exhibition's toy stories originated. I congratulate Toner Stevenson, head of house museums at Sydney Living Museums; Sophie Lieberman, head of programs; and the curator at Rouse Hill, Scott Hill, on the wonderful show that was put on over that weekend and for entertaining thousands of visitors.

The aim of the Toy Festival and similar events such as the recent Autumn Harvest is to generate higher visitor numbers to Rouse Hill House and Farm, build sustainable strategic partnerships with local communities and encourage their participation and visitation. The Toy Festival ran over the weekend of Saturday 25 July and Sunday 26 July. The Toy Festival celebrated some of the much loved toys and games of yesteryear, bringing them back to life in the historic Rouse Hill House and Farm setting for a new generation of visitors to enjoy. Children and adults alike enjoyed a terrific program of vintage entertainment, including hands-on workshops and games, storytelling and live music, and a wonderful collectors' showcase. This family event was enriched by the involvement of groups from the surrounding community, including the Sydney Model Auto Club, Australian Pedal Car Club, Rouse Hill Community Baptist Church and 1st Riverstone Scouts. These groups were generous with their time and energy, helping to make the occasion memorable for the thousands of visitors who attended.

So many people were interested in the event that both the regular and temporary overflow car parks filled up quickly and hasty arrangements were made with nearby businesses to find additional parking. Once visitors were inside, they were able to chat with toy collectors showcasing their unique collections of vintage pedal cars, depression era toys, and Corgi, Dinky and Matchbox cars, before browsing the market stalls packed full of beautiful handmade toys, children's craft and clothing and other artisan gifts. I particularly liked the collection of antique and restored rocking horses, appropriately displayed in the stables building. While some were too precious and fragile to be ridden, others were available to give children a taste of a traditional rocking horse ride.

Dr Geoff Lee: Did you ride one?

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY: I did not ride one. I thought I might have been over the weight limit. Also in the stables building were storytelling sessions with acclaimed children's author Ursula Dubosarsky, whose book *Abyssinia* was inspired by the children who lived at Rouse Hill House and Farm, and there were guided tours through the fascinating historic homestead. The Toy Festival brought Rouse Hill House and Farm to life in a whole new way. It was delightful to see children riding billycarts down the historic Old Windsor Road or testing their skills with old-fashioned games like croquet and quoits on the farm lawns. Others enjoyed learning how to make peg dolls in the historic schoolhouse.

Rouse Hill House and Farm provided the stunning backdrop to a glorious winter's weekend for these historical toys and games to be enjoyed by the younger generations. The event was an opportunity for our younger generations to experience leisure activities that take a step away from the prevalence of technologically-enhanced gizmos and gadgets. Some of the toys and activities on display at the festival brought back memories of my own childhood, such as pedal cars, billycart demonstrations and kite flying—and it was a wonderful weekend for kite flying with a lovely breeze out there on top of the hill. There were also toy collectors present from the Sydney Model Auto Club and the Australian Pedal Car Club showcasing their vintage collections.

My wife, Cathie, attended the opening of the event on Saturday morning with me and enjoyed it so much that she returned on the Sunday with two of our grandchildren. I can report that Sophia and Morgan gave the event the thumbs up. Rouse Hill House is so special because it preserves the tangible evidence of family life of six generations of the one family—the only people to occupy the house since its construction in the 1820s. Its furnishings and interior decoration are layers of that family's story, with each generation's additions and variations overlaid on those that went before, but without changing the basic layout. The historic site encompasses not only the house and the remaining portion of the farm but also the site of the Rouse Hill School and a section of the Macquarie era alignment of Windsor Road which was incorporated into the precinct in the first decade of this century. This is a fantastic historic homestead that holds great value not only for the local community but also for the wider population of Sydney.

ITALIAN FRIENDS OF LABOR AWARDS

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [12.16 p.m.]: On 11 June 2015 the Italian Friends of Labor held their second annual award presentation at Smithfield RSL. Each year the Italian Friends of Labor present awards for outstanding community service, with last year's recipients being Mr Armando Tornari from *La Fiamma* Italian newspaper and the Hon. Morris Lemma, the former Premier of New South Wales. This year there were two very special award recipients who have made enormous contributions to the community over the years. The first award recipient was Mr Lorenzo Fazzini. Lorenzo has more than 30 years of service in multicultural community affairs in New South Wales and is well known and respected for his voluntary community work as President of Co.As.It. Sydney since 2004.

Co.As.It., the Italian Association of Assistance, was first established in New South Wales in 1968 under the auspices of the Italian Government. Today, Co.As.It. Sydney is one of the major and most active and nationally respected multicultural voluntary agencies, offering a wide range of services and programs to the Italian community in New South Wales, focused on community services, educational and cultural activities. Prior to his election as president, Lorenzo occupied the position of vice-president for five years and that of director for two periods in the 1980s and 1990s. As president, he led the organisation in a period of unprecedented growth and service reach. In his capacity as an Italian community leader, Lorenzo has represented the Italian community and advocated for its interests with many government and community structures.

Recently he has been industrious and instrumental—leading the way—on finding a permanent home for the Italian Bilingual School operated by Co.As.It. and ensuring that the Italian Cultural Centre in

the Italian Forum in Leichhardt remained for use by the Italian community. Lorenzo is also a successful business proprietor in Sydney, and his company undertakes projects across the world. His commitment to family, work and community are obvious to all. Lorenzo Fazzini has done more than his fair share to earn this award. I thank him for his service to our vibrant community over many years.

The second award recipient was the Hon. Amanda Fazio, a former member of the Legislative Council. I had the great pleasure of saying a few words about the Hon. Amanda Fazio on the evening. Amanda's achievements in politics are enormous. I cannot do her justice in such a short amount of time or tell members about all her accomplishments. Amanda's contribution to the Labor Party is extraordinary in many ways. She set the tone for affirmative action for women in the party in the early 1980s. Amanda's career was forged by her family upbringing and her belief in the values of the Labor Party.

Amanda is well respected by many communities and groups for her tireless efforts in raising issues in Parliament and making them known to the wider community. The presence of a large number of community groups at the evening ceremony was testament to the respect she has earned over the years. Amanda has always held social justice for all people as a priority. She has always put the welfare of others first in her representation in the Legislative Council, no matter whether they lived in Sydney or in the country.

Amanda was feared and revered by Opposition members for her in-depth knowledge of legislation and the standing orders of the upper House—so much so that Amanda was elected President of the Legislative Council and held that position from 24 November 2009 until 3 May 2011. Amanda held other prominent positions over the years, such as Deputy President, Government Whip and Opposition Whip. Amanda was raised in Cabramatta, where she developed a strong awareness of the social inequities faced by local families and the need to redress these inequities.

Amanda is a strong woman who is proud of her family's history and heritage. I can think of no-one more deserving of an award for community service. I also put on the record the condolences of the House to Amanda and her family on the recent passing of her father, Vincent Fazio. I was incredibly proud to present Amanda Fazio with the Italian Friends of Labor award for outstanding service to the Italian community and to thank Amanda for her outstanding service in the Parliament of New South Wales.

EDUCATION WEEK 2015

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) [12.21 p.m.]: I speak about a wonderful event in my electorate held each year during Education Week. It was a pleasure to attend this event last Thursday evening. The 2567 showcase brings some of the schools in my electorate together to perform and showcase the musical talents, skipping rope talents, and acting and performance talents of local students. The schools participating were: Narellan Vale Public School, Oran Park Public School, Narellan Public School, Harrington Park Public School and Elizabeth Macarthur High School. The power of public education was on display at this event. I was extremely proud to be there and to see the talent we have within our local area. The wonderful teachers from these schools gave the students the opportunity to showcase their musical talent and skills. Each of the schools performed three items, ranging from school choir performances to dancing groups.

Many people within the school communities assisted in putting the event together. I commend the outstanding principals from these schools: Kylie Hedger from Elizabeth Macarthur High School, David Byrne from Narellan Vale Public School, Dale Sessions from Narellan Public School, Andy Best from Harrington Park Public School and Donna Shevlin from Oran Park Public School. Together those outstanding principals and their wonderful staff members ensure that our local children receive the best education possible.

Comperes for the night were Elyse Strahan and Jarryd Guy from Elizabeth Macarthur High School, Noah Posadas and Hannah Penfold from Harrington Park Public School, Tammin Andrews and

Jackson Andrews from Oran Park Public School, Jenaya Simpson and Alysia Cullen from Narellan Vale Public School, and Jake Rouland and Christiaan Marais from Narellan Public School. Of course no good stage performance would ever be successful without the backstage crew. Sound, lighting and stage crew members were Benjamin Minor, Connor McDonald, Max Blanchette, Rhys Langley, James Arnault and Luke Plumridge. These students were incredible with their organisation and skills to make all the performances successful.

Staff at each of the schools are to be commended for their commitment to their schools and the students who performed, including Courtney Brown, Kristy Pugliano, Jamie-Leigh McDonough, Joan Farrow, Brian Hodge, Rosemary Wall, Samantha Gasson, Bronwyn Cook, Lisa Stephenson, Hayley Corvini, Mary Spencer, Angela Kane, Joanna Cooley, Ros O'Gorman, Anne Tidyman, Kerry Smukulis, Kristy Camenzuli, Kristie Banfield, Stephanie Selakovic and Stuart Betts. These teachers are an example of the commitment all teachers give in our public schools and they have shown a great passion and flare for the performing arts.

The encouragement and inspiration that was clearly provided by teachers to students for their performances is to be commended. Without their guidance, performances like this just do not get off the ground. Without students who want to perform, events like this do not happen, and without the support of parents and the extended community, events like this will not happen either. This is the essence of what Education Week celebrations are about—every person involved in the long list of people it takes to ensure the success of our public schools.

My electorate is one of the fastest growing electorates in New South Wales. Oran Park Public School opened in 2014 with only 120 students. The school will eventually accommodate 720 students. School Principal Donna Shevlin has done a wonderful job overseeing the expansion of the school since its opening. Oran Park will eventually be home to 25,000 residents and Oran Park Public School will be very much a part of that community. Construction is underway for a new public school in Spring Farm, which is due to open in 2016.

In Narellan a new special needs school will open in 2018. The school will cater for students with a disability. The new school will accommodate up to 100 students from kindergarten to year 12. This valuable asset will be a state-of-the-art facility, giving children with special needs the same educational opportunities as all other students in New South Wales. I commend all the schools involved—the principals, the wonderful staff who teach in our public schools and all the support staff. I acknowledge what a wonderful event the 2567 showcase was and I look forward to going to the event again next year.

WESTCONNEX

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) [12.26 p.m.]: I draw to the attention of the House an issue that is causing great anxiety and concern to residents in my community—that is, the WestConnex project and in particular stage one, the M4 tunnel, which travels the length of the Strathfield electorate. The Government has indicated that the first stage of WestConnex, the widening and lengthening of the M4, will remove traffic from Parramatta Road. If that does happen, it will be a good thing for my community. However, there is concern that this will not occur. There is no guarantee that it will occur. In fact the deafening silence from the Government when it comes to providing evidence to support its argument concerns me greatly. I will come back to that and other issues shortly.

First, I draw to the attention of the House the great deception that has been perpetrated by the Government on the people of Burwood, Homebush, Croydon, Haberfield, Ashfield, North Strathfield and Concord. In all its rhetoric, and there has been much, since 2012 the Liberal Government has indicated the tunnel from Homebush to Haberfield would go under Parramatta Road. Even in its June 2015 media release announcing the detailed design plans and the successful contractor that same commitment was made, and I quote:

The Australian and NSW Governments are wasting no time in delivering a world class motorway for Sydney, today announcing the preferred design for the M4 East tunnels to run under Parramatta Road.

But, of course, the tunnel does not travel under Parramatta Road; in fact it travels under around 500 homes. That is a rough estimate, because we have had to count the houses between faint dotted lines on a map to try to work out how many properties will be impacted by the route of the tunnel. Residents have discovered there will be a tunnel under their homes by looking at the map—certainly not by being informed by the WestConnex Delivery Authority. Many residents are still unaware of the path of the tunnel. I recently held a street meeting to do what I could to inform residents. To their credit, staff from the WestConnex Delivery Authority accepted my invitation to attend the meeting. They were patient in answering questions, but it is clear there is still great uncertainty over issues such as vibrations from the tunnel drilling, potential damage to homes both during and after construction and, significantly, why the tunnel is no longer going under Parramatta Road.

There has been no consultation and information to residents has been sparse; in fact, in parts it has been non-existent. The environmental impact statement [EIS] has not been released. Although the Government has promised it will be released in mid-August, that promise is likely to be broken. While the EIS may provide some information for residents, the acquisition of houses indicates to me and my community that the EIS phase is merely a tick-the-box exercise and that comments and submissions by experts and members of the community will not really matter. These critical issues are causing great anxiety in my community. Today I instigated a petition—and I will continue doorknocking in the area to collect signatures—to have this issue debated in this Parliament. I acknowledge the work of Dora Makaritis and Tarja Shepard, who have been representing residents at forums and briefings.

I turn briefly to other issues of concern with this project. The latest information indicates that construction costs are at \$15.4 billion, which is a \$5 billion blowout since the project was announced in 2012. Without a business case, we do not know much about the project. It is critical, indeed fundamental, that major projects are accompanied by a business case. It is disturbing, therefore, that there is no business case for this significant project. I am also concerned about the location of the stacks and the treatment of residents who are impacted by them. I have held a meeting with residents of Homebush and I am planning a further gathering in August. These residents live in the area where the stacks are to be located. Residents are working their way through the acquisition process with Roads and Maritime Services. By all accounts, this process is being plagued by delays, lost paperwork, cancelled meetings and offers well below market value.

The two stacks will be unfiltered. Without the EIS, there is no understanding why this decision was made. I can only guess it is a decision that was made on cost, not on evidence. There is a lack of detail about the funding of this project. Even with State and Federal government contributions, including a \$2 billion loan, a funding gap of \$10 billion still remains. Tolls and private sector involvement will help fund the project. However, when the M4 is again tolled, motorists will do all they can to avoid that toll and will revert to travelling along Parramatta Road. For my community, that will defeat the purpose of the tunnel. The lack of transparency and secrecy with this project is on a scale not previously seen. Over the coming four years I will continue to hold the Government to account on this project which will have a significant impact on my community.

PEEL HIGH SCHOOL NAIDOC WEEK CELEBRATION

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) [12.31 p.m.]: On Tuesday 28 July I had the pleasure of attending National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee [NAIDOC] Day celebrations at Peel High School in Tamworth. I pay tribute to its organisers. Peel High School is renowned for its agricultural resources and success in this area and prides itself on developing academic, cultural and sporting opportunities. Around 35 per cent of the school's approximately 620 students are Indigenous. The school, under the leadership of principal Mr Bill Campbell, continues to set benchmarks in our region.

Tshintina Knox delivered the welcome to country. Following the address given by Edan Porter, we enjoyed a performance by the Peel High School Gomerai Dance Group, who did a magnificent job. These dancers could hold their own on any stage in Australia.

The principal's address by Mr Bill Campbell, which was inspirational, focused on the meaning of NAIDOC Week in relation to both the past and going forward. While we acknowledge elders past and present, it is also about the young ones who will continue to present their cultures and traditions into the future. We enjoyed a number of musical performances by Kayalan Lyons and Mr Bareki Knox—it was a pleasure to hear the songs that he has been performing for many years. The guest speaker was Aunty Stellar Lamb, who is a highly respected and distinguished aunty in the Kamilaroi nation. She transfixed us with stories from her childhood and of her mum teaching her about Indigenous culture as they walked along the river banks. She said this set the groundwork for her life. I thank her for her talk at the Peel High School NAIDOC Day celebrations.

I, together with Mr Peter Gebadi, Tamworth Regional Council mayor Mr Col Murray and Aunty Vivian Knox, had the pleasure of presenting encouragement awards. Mrs Tamara Gasson also was present. A performance by the Bangarra Dance Company was followed by Mr Mat Flanagan, Mr Shaun Allan and Mrs Rose Wadwell presenting awards for dance and principal Mr Bill Campbell presenting the NAIDOC Certificate of Appreciation to Peel High School staff members. The NAIDOC Deadly Awards were presented by Mr Bill Campbell and Aunty Stellar Lamb. I acknowledge Mr Billy Stanton, who does a fantastic job at Peel High School. He goes beyond his duty to ensure that students are looked after, that they have a vision and a plan, and that they are supported during school times and also throughout the holidays. I sincerely thank Billy for his great work.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags were raised by Aunty Vivian Knox and Mr Peter Gebadi, and Aunty Stellar Lamb cut a great cake. Following significant works to the school frontage, Peel High School is now one of the most picturesque schools in our region. As one heads into Tamworth from Gunnedah and looks to the right-hand side, it is virtually the gateway to the city of Tamworth. I congratulate principal Mr Bill Campbell and the parents and citizens association on their great work and cooperation with me to gain funding and support for the school. The school grounds look magnificent and there are now safe bus bays, pick-up and drop-off points and car parking for staff. Peel High School in Tamworth is a great school and I am proud to be associated with it.

FRED'S PLACE COMMUNITY SLEEPOUT

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) [12.36 p.m.]: I bring to the attention of the House a great event that occurred on Thursday 30 July. The event was organised in conjunction with the St Vincent de Paul Society, which runs a drop-in centre called Fred's Place in the Tweed electorate. Homelessness is a significant issue, with about 300 people in the Tweed sleeping rough. For a number of years our community has been working to create extra services, particularly wraparound services, to address this issue. For the past five years, on a Thursday during parliamentary sittings I have volunteered, by serving breakfast, at the Matthew Talbot Hostel at Woolloomooloo. This grounding experience has given me an opportunity to work with dedicated and committed staff and volunteers. It helps me to understand the issues of homelessness. I attended the community sleepout, which was held last Thursday, with 40 other individuals.

My accommodation for the evening was a Kelvinator fridge box, a blanket, a sleeping bag and a pillow. It sounded like a good idea but by 3.00 or 4.00 a.m., when the temperature had dropped to a single digit figure, it was an uncomfortable experience. However, I now have some understanding about the plight of those who sleep rough at night. I know that many members in this place from both sides have participated in the Vinnies community sleepout. I pay tribute to Brian Goodall, regional president of St Vincent de Paul, and service manager Jason McDonnell, who is a dedicated individual. I note that well-known identity Mathew Fraser and Julie West also participated. Shaku Robertson, St Vincent de Paul community liaison officer, did a fabulous job on the night.

The participants in the Fred's Place community sleepout, apart from creating awareness of homelessness in the wider community, raised \$33,000. A number of my supporters, who thought it a good idea for me to spend a night sleeping rough, contributed generously. The homeless people who were present gave us a better understanding of the issues they face. As members well know, there is no silver bullet, no quick fix. Often involved are mental illness issues, as well as illicit and legal substance abuse. In my electorate, we are endeavouring to provide wraparound services and to promote community. I recognise the many hardworking volunteers, including a large contingency of students in social work from Griffith University, who were present that night. As I said, it was a grounding experience, especially when it became very cold in the early morning. I was pleased to assist in raising money for the homeless but I am equally pleased to show my support for the hardworking volunteers.

All members are truly grateful to the hardworking volunteers in our electorates. People volunteer not for the accolades or a pat on the back; they do so because they want to assist those less fortunate in our community. Many people move to the Tweed and we often hear heart-wrenching stories about them, such as young mothers living in cars for lengthy periods. We do our best for them but our resources are limited. The Minister recently visited the area and spoke to representatives of both Community Services and Housing NSW. Significant funding has been allocated to my electorate to address this issue. I am proud to have played a part in that government funding, but we still need more. It is difficult to understand how tough it is out on the street until we meet a young mother who has lived in a car for three or four weeks. We need wraparound services and guidance for the homeless in order to make our community stronger. I am proud to be associated with Fred's Place, which is 100 per cent for addressing homelessness in the Tweed.

BALLINA ELECTORATE NON-LETHAL SHARK MITIGATION PROGRAM

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) [12.41 p.m.]: Today I inform the House about the phenomenal community response to the shark encounters that have taken place recently in my electorate of Ballina. Over the past month my community has had a tough time in this regard. Shark attacks have had a big impact on the psyche of my community. People have been emotionally impacted, and they have been sharing their thoughts and fears. My thoughts go to Matt Lee and his family. Matt, who was bitten by a shark last month at Ballina, was critically injured. He is still in hospital. Since then, there have been numerous shark encounters and sightings. Only last week a surfer was bitten at Evans Head, just south of the Ballina electorate. I am very proud of the community response, which has been phenomenal.

I make special mention of the men and women of our emergency services. It has been widely reported in the media that the Westpac life saver rescue helicopter that attended to Matt had only recently started to carry emergency blood supply; that blood was used during the response. Surf life savers, local police and the council have worked together to establish an emergency services response trial. This response involves a risk-based notification system to allow police, lifesavers or council to relay information about sightings to ocean users through air horns and warning flags. A 13SURF hotline has been established to ensure that decision-makers obtain the information they need to respond quickly. Over the past two weeks this system has been used effectively by the use of warnings and short-term beach closures. In particular, I acknowledge Detective Inspector Cameron Lindsay of the NSW Police Force, Ballina mayor David Wright and Surf Life Saving representative Garry Meredith for their support of this response.

Part of the response has been to support surveillance flights over the area, which have been provided by the Air T & G Helicopter Services and funded by Ballina council and Mayor Wright personally. A shark mitigation advisory group has been established and includes experts, ocean users, emergency services and local and State government representatives. The group is hoping that trials of the non-lethal deterrents promised by the Premier will include a trial in the Ballina region, and it has been proposed that the shark summit planned for later this year should be held at Ballina. Ocean users have been looking at solutions. For example, the Ballina Shark Reports Facebook page has attracted more than 4,000 likes,

half of them from locals, within weeks. The site is aimed at getting news about shark sightings to the community as quickly as possible.

The Ballina region is an international tourism destination. It is renowned for its surfing culture and natural environment. It is also home to the Cape Byron Marine Park. We all have an interest in its healthy and biodiverse oceans. The recent shark attacks in Ballina and the wide coverage of Mick Fanning's shark encounter at Jeffreys Bay has put our relationship with sharks front of mind for ocean users, emergency services, law makers and the general public. How do we stay safe whilst respecting sharks in their natural environment? Indeed, the Ballina community is working hard to address this issue. As Mick Fanning said in his interview on *60 Minutes* last Sunday, "We're in their domain". He said also that shooting or killing sharks is "not something I would ever condone". This echoes the view of the majority of Australians who have been asked similar questions. For example, a poll conducted last year showed that 82 per cent of Australians do not support killing sharks but do support protection strategies. I look forward to working with the Government to investigate and implement non-lethal shark mitigation strategies.

Whilst there is no fail-proof technological solution in place at the moment, information and education services have been shown worldwide to be an effective way to allow people to make their own decisions, and this has been the focus of the Ballina response. As a regular ocean swimmer, I am only too aware of the risks but I also know how important feeling connected to our biodiverse and healthy marine environment is to my local community. I again acknowledge and congratulate the Ballina community on the professional, responsible and collaborative way in which they are responding to this challenge.

EDUCATION WEEK 2015

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.46 p.m.]: I was privileged to attend events held during Education Week 2015 at local schools in my electorate of Parramatta, which has the best teachers and students in this State. Education Week affords schools in this State a wonderful opportunity to showcase the outstanding efforts and talents of their students and for families, parents and grandparents to participate in school activities. The theme for Education Week 2015 was "Celebrating Local Heroes". Oatlands Public School hosted a jam-packed day of events for its local community.

I commend Tony D'Amore, the principal of Oatlands Public School, for his leadership and the great work he has done in fostering a wonderful school community. Principal D'Amore recognised all those who help to make his school so great, including the parents and citizens association; Helping Hands before and after school care; the canteen ladies; the classroom helpers; Sharon and John Kim and their family for donating a new shade shelter; David and William Lee and their family for donating valuable resources for kindergarten to year 2; Martin, Janis and Jack and the Parramatta Daybreak Rotary Club for their continued support of the school; as well as the teaching staff, support staff, teacher's aides, office staff and school librarians.

Principal D'Amore recognised two local heroes in particular, namely, John Kim and Mrs Robinson. John Kim, who has attended Oatlands Public School from kindergarten, has demonstrated amazing resilience through adversity and has always maintained a positive attitude. Indeed, he inspired staff and parents to run in a nine kilometre race across Sydney Harbour Bridge and through his encouragement the school has raised more than \$6,000 to support other sick children and their families. John has encountered one of the most difficult things he will possibly ever have to experience. He has never given up and his positive attitude, commitment and resilience towards life and the school continue to inspire everyone. I offer my congratulations to John on receiving this award. Thank you for being a local hero.

Staff member Mrs Robinson is the second local hero. In 1989 Mrs Robinson moved to Oatlands with her husband and young family. Her children were enrolled at the school and she has been a highly valued school community member ever since. In 1991, about 25 years ago, she began volunteering at the

school. She has made school uniforms, has been an active member of the parents and citizens association, at times holding the position of secretary, and has worked tirelessly in the canteen and on fundraising committees. Mrs Robinson has done almost every job that a volunteer can do in a school community. In 1997 she began working as a teacher's aide and now can be found working in the school office four days per week. She still volunteers for barbecues, discos and excursions. She also works in the classroom on her days off. Mrs Robinson never says no. She is the go-to person for whatever needs to be organised, found or made. Mrs Robinson knows the answer to any question. I offer my congratulations to Mrs Robinson on receiving this award. Thank you for being a local hero.

I also had the pleasure of attending Dundas Public School, another great school in Parramatta. I commend the principal, Jan Thurgar, for her work in developing a wonderful school community. Like Oatlands Public School, I was delighted to see so many talented kids and to join the friendly family atmosphere of the school's Education Week events. I recognise the following students for their outstanding achievements and for receiving a Wattle Day award. Receiving this award is a highlight because it celebrates ongoing good work by students. I congratulate Caitlin Rodriguez, Sarah Haswell, Corelle Spagnolo, Bianca Garth, Katherine Liang, Jessica Scarratt, Spencer Holman, Chloe Kim, Amity Hackemer, Brooke Rollo, Rachael Edmonds, Georgia Haddock, Sean Li, Marcel Lister, Zachary Farebrother, Adam Butcher, Aimee Stanton, Matthew Wilton-Speed, Abel Ellis, Kieran Arnott, Lily Hose, Alicia Smart, Rhonda Al Assadi, Harriet Haynes, Violet Seo, Crystal Kondoulis and Leah Sheaves.

As a former teacher, I know the importance that education plays in the future of our society and our future prosperity. Teaching requires ongoing dedication and commitment. It requires a continued focus on students and on the best ways to deliver ever-advancing learning outcomes. Education Week is a great opportunity for families to join with the school to see firsthand the wonderful contributions made by those in our school communities. Our teaching staff are especially important because all the research shows that 60 per cent of a school's impact on student outcomes is delivered by teachers. I know that you, Mr Acting-Speaker (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith), and members on both sides of the Chamber would agree that in the Parramatta electorate we have some wonderful teachers, the best in the State.

BLACKTOWN INTERNATIONAL SPORTS PARK

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) [12.51 p.m.]: I bring to the attention of the House the loss of funding to the Blacktown International Sports Park. Blacktown International Sports Park, located within my electorate, is a world-class sporting precinct and a legacy venue from the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games. Since 2000, the New South Wales Government has made an annual contribution of \$736,000 to the recurrent operating costs of this Olympic venue. Blacktown City Council also contributes \$850,000 to the annual recurrent operating costs. Under then Treasurer Mike Baird, State government funding for this facility abruptly ended, leaving Blacktown City Council to fund this iconic venue on its own. This site of regional, State and national significance must now be wholly funded by Blacktown city ratepayers even though it is a venue for all of Sydney and New South Wales to enjoy.

Each year the Blacktown International Sports Park welcomes over 500,000 athletes and spectators and hosts 4,000 activities and events. The venue provides first-class sporting facilities for athletics, Australian Rules football, baseball, cricket, football, goalkeeping and softball. The Blacktown International Sports Park is currently home to many professional sporting teams, including the Western Sydney Wanderers Football Club, which utilises the sports park as its training and administration headquarters; the Sydney Blue Sox, which plays in the Australian Baseball League competition; and the Lend Lease Breakers, which plays in the Women's National Cricket League and is the long-running and current champion of that league. In Aussie Rules, the park hosts the Greater Western Sydney Giants Academy, including the Giants' reserve team fixtures and numerous statewide and national junior representative carnivals.

Blacktown International Sports Park caters for sports other than football codes. It is the home of elite baseball and softball teams, women's cricket and junior cricket in New South Wales. Blacktown

International Sports Park is a Sheffield Shield match venue and is home to an international soccer goalkeeping academy. Recently, the Australian bid to host the 2022 FIFA World Cup contained a proposed stadium at Blacktown International Sports Park. The park even accommodated Hollywood in 2014 when the feature film *Unbroken*, directed by Angelina Jolie, filmed scenes at the Blacktown International Sports Park Athletics Centre.

These are just some examples of the ability of the sports park to accommodate and facilitate sports from across all areas. The Blacktown International Sports Park is centrally located and is within easy reach of the M4, the M2 and Western rail line. The park is positioned for excellent access by the people of the north-west and the south-west, as well as the neighbouring communities of Parramatta and Penrith, including the Blue Mountains and the Hawkesbury. With a population of 332,000, Blacktown city is the largest city in New South Wales and it is growing, with half of the population being under 30 years of age. Blacktown is the geographic and demographic centre of Sydney and has some 156 languages spoken and 184 nationalities represented in the area.

The loss of funding from the State Government to this iconic facility is a blow to all sporting communities across New South Wales. It is unthinkable that a venue with such a proven track record of providing first-class facilities to sporting groups, both homegrown and international, has been left unsupported by the New South Wales Liberal Government. I urge the Government to support this important Olympic venue and also to support the ratepayers of Blacktown City Council by reinstating the recurrent funding to ensure the successful future of the sports park for many generations to come.

YOUTH FRONTIERS

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) [12.56 p.m.]: Youth Frontiers is a New South Wales government-funded, electorate-based mentoring program that focuses on leadership and civic engagement. It gives students from years 8 and 9 an opportunity to build life skills by working collaboratively with mentors to undertake community projects that will make a difference in their local communities. This program is running in my electorate at Marsden High School, a school that is actively taking up corporate and government programs to extend its students' opportunities. I commend principal Gus Vrolyk and deputy principal Margaret Paczkowski and their excellent team of teachers and support staff for their professionalism and dedication to creating the best learning environment for their students.

I had the pleasure of meeting with three Marsden High students and their mentors who are participating in the program. Raise Foundation was the successful tenderer in the Ryde electorate. Vicki Condon, chief executive officer of the Raise Foundation, and her program counsellor Janeve Friedman are pleased that they are seeing excellent student engagement. It is great to see a program that will make a difference in our community operating in my electorate of Ryde. This program not only aims to develop the students' skills but also has a community project component that allows students to grow further within their community by developing an area they are passionate about.

Students can choose from six community project categories: empowering women and girls, sport, centenary of Anzac, conservation, community harmony, and a general category. The projects are a key component of Youth Frontiers, as they enable students to identify challenges that are important to them and to work with mentors to undertake a community project that addresses the challenges. Learning to follow through on an idea and to implement a project they are passionate about are very important life skills. Also key to Youth Frontiers is that the community projects focus on helping others. This is an indelible mark of true leadership. A total of 16 students from Ryde are participating in the program this year and 14 mentors have given their time to help make a difference in the lives of our young people.

This year's student participants are Josh Gallaway, Zack Hoeta, Hannan Faitrouni, Jessie Smith, Amba Mulcahy, Jacob Bradford, Jayden Hamley, Jamie-Leigh Easter, Bailey Lawler, Blake Fabian, Leslie Lee, Sorn Ven, Emily Ballard, Nathan Ottawa, Robert Lose-Thomas and Cassandra Cherry. To find

volunteers, the school reached out to the community by advertising for mentors in the local papers. Fourteen community-minded, generous people have committed their time and knowledge to mentor the students through the program. Lucy Dahill, Joe Macri, Sarag Callaghan, Nadia Barclay, Mariah Collela, Martin Cowie, Roberta Lazarus, Natasa Pejovic, Michael Rogers, Kathleen Worthington, Richard Raddell, Anna Lake, Bruno Moscaritolo and Shana Hennessey are the students' mentors for this year.

I am confident that excellent personal outcomes and outstanding local benefits will be achieved. I had the opportunity to speak with some students and mentors yesterday. Already I can see the great work being done. Zack Hoeta and his mentor, Joe Macri, are developing a project to help Ermington Public School students with their Thursday Primary School Sports Association [PSSA] program. Josh Galloway and his mentor, Lucy Dahill, approached local restaurants about a food bank aimed at feeding the homeless, which is particularly topical given that this is Homelessness Prevention Week. Hannan Faitrouni and her mentor, Sarah Callaghan, conducted a series of interviews with women who inspire and motivate her to highlight the importance of women's empowerment in our society.

The students will showcase their community projects in September. I am looking forward to seeing the great work being done by students involved in the program. I am continually inspired by youth and their ability to see a need in the community. The community projects allow them to think outside the square and apply their passions. This Government initiative involves years 8 and 9 in the type of mentoring that assists students to become more involved in their community and better equipped for their studies in years 11 and 12. The future is certainly bright for these young people, their mentors and our community.

It is important to note that this program is currently the largest youth mentoring program in Australia. One of the best aspects of the program is that it covers every electorate in New South Wales, with up to 16 students and mentors in each. That means we have 16 ideas in each electorate. Multiply that across all electorates and there will be more than 1,000 ideas coming from students who see the challenges of today and come up with solutions that, in their eyes, address those challenges. This is a great program, and I am very proud to see students at Marsden High School participating in it.

EDUCATION WEEK 2015

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) [1.01 p.m.]: It was a huge privilege recently to celebrate New South Wales Education Week and see the optimistic faces of young students attending schools within my electorate. As Benjamin Franklin once said, "An investment in knowledge pays the best interest." That is Benjamin Franklin the inventor of the bifocal, not the member in the other House—although I am sure he shares that sentiment. I am very lucky to have seven government primary schools and six State high schools within the electorate of Kogarah. While that means I have to attend many end-of-year presentations, it also allows me the opportunity to see a good sample of the tremendous work our educators, parents' associations and principals do to prepare the next generation of Australians. It is not hyperbole to suggest that Australia's future rests on their shoulders.

The scale and size of New South Wales education is truly staggering. There are more children enrolled in New South Wales schools than in the entire New York public school system. Australia spends 8 per cent of its gross domestic product on the school system. The New South Wales Government spends approximately \$11 billion a year on education. It is worth noting that the New York public school system spends more on its education system than we do. Last year New York City spent \$19,000 per student, versus a combined government spend per child in this State of \$15,405. Examples of funding disparities like that led to the implementation of the Gonski education reform plan. The Abbott Government's decision to refuse to honour the Gonski agreement will cost this State \$1.2 billion in funding.

An increase in funding for education would of course have an impact on the country's budget bottom line. Australia's investment in education has already increased by 37 per cent since 2002.

However, we need to look at programs like the Gonski agreement as this country's Marshall Plan. Aristotle is said to have said, "The roots of education are bitter, but the fruit is sweet." To stretch a metaphor, I say that the costs are obviously bitter for the budget bottom line but that the return on this investment will transform Australia's future. The Gonski reforms would mean in practical terms that Australia would become a country that relies on its intellectual capital, rather than on what it digs up from the ground. The Premier recently led the debate about tax reform in this country. He is also in a position to lead the debate about the future of Australian education—

Ms Katrina Hodgkinson: Bring it back to your electorate.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: —as well as in the electorate of Kogarah—and shame the Abbott Government into action. I thank the Parliamentary Secretary for pulling me back into line. This Parliament must take on the challenges in education policy. Children in Shanghai study, on average, for 11 hours a day. Our children have about 2½ hours a day of face-to-face teaching. I am not proposing that our children should do anything like the level of work that children in China do, but for our kids to compete with those from brainy countries we need to spend more and understand that change is important and good for public education.

On Tuesday 28 July I was privileged to attend an Education Week concert at Carlton South Public School. Carlton South Public School has amazing school spirit, evidenced by the enthusiasm of the children who performed and the large group of parents who took time off work to share the day with their children. This 93-year-old school is led by Darren Galea, a principal whose dedication to his students is plain for all to see. I note the hard work of the parents and citizens association and its president, Andrew Karamitos, as well as the hard work of local parent and association member Craig Lindsay. As the child of a public school teacher and as someone who attended public schools, I know the importance of public education to a country like Australia. We should invest in it and protect it, and celebrate the achievements of our public education system.

TAX REFORM

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) [1.05 p.m.]: I recently wrote an opinion piece in the *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* about the real barbecue stopper—tax reform. The Premier's recent call for tax reform is a courageous one. It takes a brave politician to propose publicly an increase in the rate and scope of the goods and services tax [GST], but it is a conversation we must have and I support the Premier in stating that. It might be the most talked about, but the GST is just one aspect of our tax system. When discussing tax reform with residents in my electorate I acknowledge that we need to talk about all forms of government revenue and expenditure. A broad-based consumption tax such as the GST is an economically sound way to ensure the financial viability of the States. Increasing the funding for health and education, increasing the rate of GST above 10 per cent and increasing the scope of the GST must be options on the table.

The changing economic climate, commercial realities and the financial stability of our governments cannot be held hostage by a romantic notion of the GST as it currently exists. We need to look at cutting taxes as well. The first to go must be those taxes that penalise people who contribute to the economy and who are looking to get ahead. Stamp duty is the most obvious of those taxes. It adds tens of thousands of dollars to the average price of a first home and, quite simply, it keeps young Australians out of the housing market. Then there is land tax. For many Australians, an investment property is not a high-end luxury. As a second income stream it can be a sensible insurance policy, and as part of a self-managed super fund it can be a modest nest egg that will assist people to retire without the taxpayer footing the bill.

Politicians often mouth platitudes about the importance of small business to the Australian economy. One cannot hide from the fact that small business is the engine room of our great economy. Payroll tax, however, is a kick in the teeth to hundreds of thousands of small to medium-size businesses

that employ Australian workers. It is an absolute scandal that businesses are penalised for working hard, innovating and making wise decisions to grow and create jobs. Good policy promotes jobs; it does not penalise the job creators. I have often said that fuel excise is in urgent need of review. Motorists already pay GST on petrol, which means they are taxed twice. It is worth remembering that those driving the most miles are not fat cats in luxury saloons but ordinary Australians going to work, running small businesses, collecting the kids and picking up the groceries.

Cutting waste is also important. The private sector provides the best opportunities for increased efficiency and productivity. This must be an ongoing project, but it can never be at the expense of those essential services that only a government can reasonably provide. Any conversation about government revenue and expenditure must guarantee increases in funding for health and education. Our nation's future depends on our getting the tax question right, once and for all. We must create incentives for private investment and provide the conditions for Australians to build sound financial futures for their families. But the nation's future also depends on our Government being able to provide and sustain world-class infrastructure in health and education. We must insist on this as we support our Premier's courageous call for what will be an honest and sometimes difficult conversation.

SOUTH COAST RAIL TIMETABLE

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) [1.09 p.m.]: I inform the House of a very important issue concerning people in the northern suburbs of my community, in particular. I have been raising the issue of ongoing problems with the South Coast train timetable for some time now. However, the countless representations I have made and my requests for meetings seem to have fallen on deaf ears. At the outset, I acknowledge that my colleague the member for Kiama recently met with me and local residents and interest groups to talk about these concerns. I certainly hope that he will take up this issue, which is causing a great deal of frustration for commuters in the northern suburbs of the Illawarra. The area contains the largest commuter population in the region; many people commute each and every day to Sydney, to south-western Sydney and to Western Sydney. These commuters are being forced to use a train timetable that does not meet their needs.

Rather than making a few timetable adjustments, the Government has decided to build a new car park at Thirroul. Whilst a new car park at Thirroul will provide additional car parking spaces, it will not relieve pressure on the train station and the surrounding areas. The car park is some distance from the station but, more importantly, to get where they need to go commuters travelling from the south to the north must pass two existing car parks, one at Woonona and one at Austinmer. This is a critical issue for a community that is heavily reliant on public transport services. The community needs and expects good rail links. My colleague the member for Kiama has just entered the Chamber and, as I said earlier, I acknowledge his efforts in coordinating a meeting with several groups from the electorate in and around the Thirroul area.

It is important that this issue is resolved. I do not want to see continual pressure placed on Thirroul and its surrounds by people who are forced to travel to Thirroul to catch a train, and I do not want public assets to be wasted when commuter car parks already exist at Woonona and Austinmer. Car parks are not cheap assets for any government of any persuasion and the issue of public transport in the northern suburbs of the Illawarra is absolutely critical. The ability of people to get to and from Sydney is finite in that they essentially have two travel options: rail or road. If we make it more difficult for people to use public transport, increasing numbers of commuters will be forced to use their motor vehicle each and every day to get to and from their destinations, particularly Sydney. No government wants that, and neither does the Illawarra region.

We are not asking for much; we are asking for some small but deliberate alterations to the train timetable to allow for a much more efficient and effective use of not only commuters' time but existing infrastructure within the region. People should not be forced to drive past perfectly good commuter car parks to go to Thirroul, fight to find a car space and have extra time added to their commute when they

are already travelling long distances. I thank members for their attention and I urge the Minister for Transport to consider these issues. I will continue to ensure that this issue is raised in this place until we achieve a positive outcome for the people of the northern suburbs of the Illawarra.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Parliamentary Secretary) [1.14 p.m.]: I am delighted to be able to respond to my friend and colleague the member for Keira. I advise the House that, along with the member for Keira, I met with the Thirroul Action Group to discuss its concerns. I gave an undertaking that I would raise those concerns directly with the Minister. I have had two onsite meetings at Thirroul station and inspected the work the Government is doing on car parking there. I am proud to be part of a government that has delivered an additional 125 express services to the South Coast line, but I acknowledge the representations of the member for Keira in ensuring that we do the greatest good for the greatest number of people, which is always a challenge when it comes to public transport.

In relation to access, which the member for Keira also raised, I am very proud to be part of a government that has introduced the Opal card, which provides greater access and ticketing opportunities for people who tap on and tap off. I am very proud that we have delivered major reforms in public transport. I look forward to working with all members of the House, including my friend the member for Keira, in continuing to advance the issues of residents of Illawarra's northern suburbs for the betterment of public transport and to strengthen the system in that area.

YMCA NSW YOUTH PARLIAMENT

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson—Parliamentary Secretary) [1.15 p.m.]: In recent years much ink has been spilled about youth engagement with politics. It is clear that the average young person's motivation to participate in the electoral process is declining. According to a youth electoral survey, only 50.2 per cent of young Australians stated that they would vote in a Federal election at age 18 if it were not compulsory. However, it is somewhat encouraging that young people embrace non-electoral forms of participation such as signing petitions, boycotting products, visiting certain political websites and attending demonstrations. Many young people also demonstrate active citizenship through community volunteer work, which increases their likelihood to vote in an election. In that context, I am pleased to highlight the commendable work of the YMCA NSW Youth Parliament. This apolitical program inspires years 10 to 12 students to represent their communities with wisdom and passion.

The Youth Parliament empowers young adults with leadership skills and cultivates political engagement through an annual training camp. Students assume parliamentary roles before spending four days in Parliament House during the July school break. The 2015 Youth Parliament debated and voted on bills they drafted on a wide range of issues relevant to youth, such as domestic violence, mental health and education systems. I was impressed with the efforts of Samuel Lee, the young man nominated to represent the Davidson electorate in the 2015 Youth Parliament. At the age of 16 he has a track record of achievement, having received a full academic scholarship to study at Shore School, as well as a New South Wales Parliament Certificate of Achievement for school leadership and consistently high grades in speech and drama examinations. He is also an avid debater and an active member of several community organisations.

Samuel petitioned the Youth Parliament regarding possible changes to the Gifted and Talented program at St Ives North Public School. He was concerned that limiting the program to students from the local catchment area would inhibit the development of exceptional students and cause undue loss of opportunity. Fortunately, and partly through my intervention, up to half the new year 3 intake of gifted and talented children in 2016 will still be accepted from outside the local area. The Gifted and Talented program provides a compressed and enriched curriculum with less repetition for children who learn faster. It provides a peer network and emotional support as well as teaching efficiencies.

The year 3 intake recognises that early intervention is crucial for highly gifted students to establish and preserve a positive approach to school. The Gifted and Talented Unit at St Ives also allows

subject enrichment for mainstream students who have high ability in a particular area, such as mathematics. These students can sit in on the unit's lessons for that specific subject. Given the many advantages of the unit, consideration might be given to reviewing the availability of similar resources across the State as a matter of broader education policy to cater for our highly gifted students in New South Wales public schools.

Returning to the YMCA program, the positive experience of deliberating on local community issues and campaigning for constituents should reap many personal rewards for Samuel. Hopefully, he will encourage his peers to be involved in political advocacy, creating a growing network of young people who explore the political domain. The Youth Parliament is an excellent forum for young people to voice their opinions on important issues and to gain exposure to the opportunities and challenges of representative government. Many in this place are involved in the Youth Parliament through nominating participants, chairing debates or attending events. I look forward to reviewing further the legislative output of the 2015 Youth Parliament, which no doubt involves valuable input from numerous of our talented youth. I commend the initiative.

TRIBUTE TO MR DON FELTIS AND MR JOHN HIATT

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Trade, Tourism and Major Events, and Minister for Sport) [1.20 p.m.]: I recognise the extraordinary contributions of Mr Don Feltis and Mr John Hiatt to the Penrith Panthers Rugby League Club on their recent retirement from the board. Don had been chairman of the club since 2009, and his retirement brings to an end an involvement that dates back some 60 years. He was chief executive officer [CEO] of the Panthers when the club won its first premiership in 1991 and was also on the board when they saluted again in 2003. Don not only served the Penrith district with distinction through rugby league; he also proudly served the people of this State as a member of the NSW Police Force for 32 years, where he reached the rank of inspector. Don became a member of the Penrith Leagues Club in 1952, at the age of 18 years. Before he turned 20 he had been awarded the National Service Medal. In 1955 he joined the NSW Police Force, stationed first at Redfern, then Wellington, Bourke and Penrith.

Don played rugby league at a number of clubs, including Picton, the Penrith Waratahs, NSW Police, Wellington, Bourke, St Mary's and Richmond until 1970, when he began to focus solely on coaching. He coached teams including the Penrith Waratahs, St Marys, Richmond and Emu Plains until 1981. On his retirement from the NSW Police Force in 1986 he joined the Panthers organisation full time, first as administrator of the junior league operation, then in coaching and development, and finally as CEO. The list of Don's achievements is quite extraordinary. He was made a life member of the club in 1995 and in 2014 he was awarded an Order of Australia Medal for service to rugby league football in New South Wales. He is also a life member of the New South Wales Rugby League, the New South Wales Junior Rugby League and the New South Wales Police Association.

John Hiatt has been a board member of the Panthers since 1996 and a member of the club since 1968. He was a foundation member of the Cambridge Park club, where he served as chairman, and he later became chairman of the Penrith District Junior Rugby League. John has also provided extraordinary service to the horseracing industry, where he is a life member of the Hawkesbury Race Club. He has also been a member of the New South Wales Racing Appeals Tribunal since 1996. John has also served his community with distinction in his professional life as a magistrate and senior deputy State Coroner. He was the recipient of an Order of Australia Medal in 2007 for service to the community through administrative roles in the horseracing industry, as a supporter of rugby league football in the Penrith area, and to the law. I am pleased to note that this month John will celebrate 55 years of marriage to his wife, Joyce—an achievement every bit as meritorious as those I have just outlined.

Both Don Feltis and John Hiatt have provided outstanding service to the Penrith community in a number of areas. The continuing success of the Panthers is a testament to the stewardship of Don and John and the entire board, along with others such as Phil Gould and Warren Wilson. On behalf of the

people of Penrith, I extend my thanks and good wishes to Don Feltis and John Hiatt in their retirement. I have known these gentlemen for a considerable time and commend them for their extraordinary commitment to the Penrith community. There are not enough words to recognise the work they have done. To put it simply, these gentlemen have played an extraordinary role in ensuring that an organisation that now has ripples through our community in so many positive ways will continue to do so for a long time. I think of the success and the jubilation in our community after premierships.

When my mind drifts towards people such as Don Feltis and John Hiatt I think about the extraordinary work that the Panthers on the Prowl organisation does in our community, often taking students from disadvantaged backgrounds or those who have learning difficulties or behavioural challenges and putting them in an environment where they can learn about themselves and grow into extraordinary people. When I think of Don Feltis and John Hiatt I am often reminded of the capacity that exists in our community. These two people selflessly dedicated their lives to our State, as a police officer and as a magistrate. But even after their professional service concluded, their capacity to continue to serve the community through their passion and love for rugby league knows no bounds. It truly is the end of an era with these gentlemen deciding to step down. But I know that at their ripe old ages, which I will not record in *Hansard*, they have plenty of years to sit in the grandstand at Penrith Park and watch the mighty Panthers win many more games, mostly due to their contributions.

Private members' statements concluded.

[Acting-Speaker (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith) left the chair at 1.25 p.m. The House resumed at 2.15 p.m.]

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I welcome to the gallery Mr Stephen Powell, a guest to the House from Oxton in England.

CENTENARY OF FIRST WORLD WAR

The SPEAKER: I remind members that the Centenary of Anzac statements generally coincide with actual events that occurred approximately 100 years ago, in August 1915. The August Offensive of 1915 was one of the most heroic, yet futile episodes of the entire Gallipoli Campaign. From 6 to 9 August the troops of Australia and New Zealand wrote into their nations' histories names that will never fade—Lone Pine, The Nek and Chunuk Bair. Over four days the Anzacs gained some 150 metres of bitterly contested ground across a 300-metre front. For so little area, the cost was 2,000 Anzacs and between 5,000 and 6,000 Ottoman casualties. The battles themselves brought forth the heroic, which will be recorded next week, and the tragic upon which we reflect today.

On 7 August four waves of brave Australians were sent, one after the other, against the strongly entrenched Ottomans in their trenches at The Nek. Each wave of soldiers met almost certain death. Desperate appeals were made to commanding officers after the cutting down of the second wave to halt the heartbreaking sacrifice. They were ignored and the order given—by an Australian commander, not a British one as portrayed in Peter Weir's iconic film—for the third wave to be launched. The officer who had tried to prevent the slaughter reported to his weary men the immortal words, "Sorry lads, but the order is to go." Without hesitation they went. As they did so, Trooper Harold Rush turned to his mate alongside him and said, "Goodbye cobber; God bless you." These words appear on his headstone at the Lone Pine cemetery where he lies with 1,167 of his mates, 471 of them whose names are unknown. But their legacy truly will endure forever.

REPRESENTATION OF MINISTER ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I advise members that the Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education will answer questions today in the absence of the

Minister for Education.

DEATH OF ALBERT JOHN SCHULTZ, A FORMER MEMBER FOR BURRINJUCK

The SPEAKER: It is with regret that I have to inform the House of the death on 14 July 2015 of former member of the Legislative Assembly Albert John (Alby) Schultz, who served as the member for Burrinjuck from 19 March 1988 to 31 August 1998. On behalf of the House, I extend to the families the deep sympathy of the Legislative Assembly in the loss sustained.

Members and officers of the House stood in their places as a mark of respect.

DEATH OF LERRYN WILLIAM MUTTON, A FORMER MEMBER FOR YARALLA

The SPEAKER: It is with regret that I have to inform the House of the death on 26 July 2015 of Lerryn William Mutton, who served as member for Yaralla from 24 February 1968 to 12 September 1978. On behalf of the House, I extend to the families the deep sympathy of the Legislative Assembly in the loss sustained.

Members and officers of the House stood in their places as a mark of respect.

ASSENT TO BILLS

Assent to the following bills reported:

Appropriation Bill 2015
Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2015
Appropriation (Budget Variations) Bill 2015
Fair Trading Legislation (Repeal and Amendment) Bill 2015
Crimes Legislation Amendment (Child Sex Offences) Bill 2015
Small Business Grants (Employment Incentive) Bill 2015
Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2015
Public Health (Tobacco) Amendment (E-cigarettes) Bill 2015

ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE STATE

The SPEAKER: I report the receipt of the following message from the Administrator:

M
J
BEAZLEY
Go
vernment House
Administrator
Sydney, 8 July 2015

The Honourable Justice Margaret Joan Beazley, AO, Administrator of the State of New South Wales, has the honour to inform the Legislative Assembly that, consequent on the Governor of New South Wales, His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley, AC, DSC (Ret'd), being absent from the State, she has assumed the administration of the Government of the State.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE STATE

The SPEAKER: I report the receipt of the following message from His Excellency the Governor:

DAVID
HURLEY

Government House
Governor

Go

Sydney, 9 July 2015

Sy

General David Hurley, AC, DSC (Ret'd), Governor of New South Wales, has the honour to inform the Legislative Assembly that he has re-assumed the administration of the Government of the State.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE STATE

The SPEAKER: I report the receipt of the following message from His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor:

T

F

BATHURST
Go

Government House
Lieutenant-Governor

Sy

Sydney, 22 July 2015

The Honourable Thomas Frederick Bathurst, AC, Lieutenant-Governor of the State of New South Wales, has the honour to inform the Legislative Assembly that, consequent on the Governor of New South Wales, His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley, AC, DSC (Ret'd), being absent from the State, he has assumed the administration of the Government of the State.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE STATE

The SPEAKER: I report the receipt of the following message from His Excellency the Governor:

DAVID

HURLEY
Go

Government House
Governor

Sy

Sydney, 24 July 2015

General David Hurley, AC, DSC (Ret'd), Governor of New South Wales, has the honour to inform the Legislative Assembly that he has re-assumed the administration of the Government of the State.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE STATE

The SPEAKER: I report the receipt of the following message from His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor:

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BATHURST
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Government House
Lieutenant-Governor

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Sydney, 1 August 2015

The Honourable Thomas Frederick Bathurst, AC, Lieutenant-Governor of the State of New South Wales, has the honour to inform the Legislative Assembly that, consequent on the Governor of New South Wales, His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley, AC, DSC (Ret'd), being absent from the State, he has assumed the administration of the Government of the State.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE STATE

The SPEAKER: I report the receipt of the following message from His Excellency the Governor:

DAVID

HURLEY
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Government House
Governor

Sy

Sydney, 2 August 2015

General David Hurley, AC, DSC (Ret'd), Governor of New South Wales, has the honour to inform the Legislative Assembly that he has re-assumed the administration of the Government of the State.

WENTWORTH FALLS BUSHFIRE

Ministerial Statement

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Corrections, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) [2.22 p.m.]: I am sure we are all agreed that at the weekend we saw some unprecedented fire behaviour for this time of year. I would like to take this opportunity to thank members of the NSW Rural Fire Service, Fire and Rescue NSW and the National Parks and Wildlife Service for risking their lives to protect the Wentworth Falls community. The NSW Rural Fire Service was joined by firefighters from Fire and Rescue NSW as well as the National Parks and Wildlife Service to tackle the ferocious blaze at Wentworth Falls in the Blue Mountains following reports of a fire in the Jamison Valley below. The fire was burning in particularly difficult bushland, being fanned by strong and gusty winds, despite the sometimes near-freezing temperatures. More than 200 firefighters were involved in tackling this fire, supported by aircraft, the remote area firefighting crew, tankers and pumpers.

This fire came dangerously close to homes and it was thanks to the courageous efforts of our world-class firefighting crews that no houses were lost. I can confirm that one property did sustain minor damage due to ember attack. At the height of the blaze, firefighters positioned themselves near homes and undertook property protection. As the fire was inaccessible by road, water-bombing helicopters were required to attack the fire for a number of hours on Saturday 1 August 2015. The acting Rural Fire Service Commissioner made a section 44 declaration on Sunday 2 August 2015. Fortunately the Rural Fire Service has now downgraded the fire, which has burnt almost 400 hectares, to advice level. The fire was listed as under control late yesterday. The majority of these firefighters were involved in fighting the devastating fires of 2013, some of whom have suffered property loss themselves. Their selflessness and bravery is truly outstanding.

Yesterday in Wentworth Falls I had the pleasure of visiting firefighters and to pass on my thanks on behalf of the Government for their great work. It is easy to think about people in uniform as superheroes but I was reminded yesterday when I moved amongst various firefighters and volunteers that they are also protecting their own homes. Never has a more selfless task been undertaken than somebody putting their life at risk to protect their community when their own home is potentially at risk. For a fire of this intensity to take hold just two weeks after freezing conditions, it is a stark reminder that New South Wales has some of the most bushfire-prone land in the world.

The need to be prepared and vigilant at all times has never been more apparent. Indeed, as I said yesterday, natural disasters do not always come in season. I know the Rural Fire Service and other fire agencies work closely with communities across the State urging residents to consider their risk and plan for unexpected events such as this. I place on the record my thanks, and the thanks of the Premier, and appreciation on behalf of all members of this House of all those who worked tirelessly over the weekend, and those still on the frontline, protecting lives and properties.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [2.25 p.m.]: As we are all aware, last Friday fires broke out at Wentworth Falls in the Blue Mountains. Watch-and-act alerts were subsequently issued with local residents on standby to evacuate if required. Snowfall blanketed this area only a week before these fires broke out. As the grounds dried up and the winds increased, the fire began to spread. The fire was also burning in difficult-to-access terrain which made things harder on the emergency response personnel. Water-bombing helicopters, ground forces and comprehensive strategic planning were the key components to battling this blaze.

To the surprise of many, the helicopter drops were not as effective as they would have hoped in some areas as they struggled to suppress the fires. Thankfully, the water-bombers managed to control the blazes in the areas of terrain which were inaccessible to the trucks. On Sunday gusty winds flared the fire, however, light rain began falling across the fire ground in the evening. Throughout the course of this operation, fire crews were positioned near homes and residents were on standby in case the fires spread. With more than 300 hectares of bushland being decimated as a result of these fires, no homes were lost. Conditions are now favourable as we speak while hazard reduction strategies are currently underway.

Time, patience, careful planning and just a little bit of luck were crucial components to successfully controlling these fires. The cause of the blaze has yet to be determined, however, we will know more as the investigation continues. It should be recognised that local Rural Fire Service Superintendent David Jones and his team were strategically brilliant while fighting this blaze. Not a single home was lost and the community remained safe throughout the operation—truly a job well done. Superintendent Jones and his crew have certainly done an outstanding job handling this threat. The Rural Fire Service, volunteers, local residents and the various other emergency services personnel have truly given their all throughout these operations.

I acknowledge the amazing contributions and bravery of volunteers from the Blue Mountains, Cumberland, Macarthur, Sutherland and Wollondilly regions; Rural Fire Service Group Captains Mick Metcalf and Greg Corrigan; local councillors who were involved throughout these operations; the National Parks and Wildlife Service that spent two days and two nights working directly with emergency services personnel while providing ongoing assistance; and Blue Mountains Mayor, Councillor Mark Greenhill, and the member for Blue Mountains, Ms Trish Doyle, who also worked closely with the Rural Fire Service throughout this operation. I commend them both for their support to the community during this difficult time.

And, of course, it would be remiss of me not to mention the local residents who live in Hordern Road, Tableland Road, Coronation Drive and Queen Elizabeth Drive who took advice and instruction from personnel on the ground and supported one another throughout this state of emergency. It is truly amazing to see such a strong display of community spirit, resilience and mateship from all those involved. My hat goes off to the Rural Fire Service Deputy Commissioner, Mr Rob Rogers, who went above and beyond all expectations.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Notices of Motions

Government Business Notices of Motions (for Bills) given.

QUESTION TIME

[Question time commenced at 2.32 p.m.]

FORMER DEPUTY PREMIER ANDREW STONER

Mr LUKE FOLEY: I direct my question to the Minister for Trade, Tourism and Major Events, and Minister for Sport. Has the Minister or his department undertaken any investigation into decisions made by former Deputy Premier and Minister for Trade and Investment Andrew Stoner in light of revelations that he was the target of extortionists?

Mr STUART AYRES: As the Premier has made clear in public comments, this is a private matter involving Andrew Stoner. I confirm that neither I, nor my office, nor my department have conducted any investigation into decisions made by Andrew Stoner.

GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

Mr ADAM CROUCH: I address my question to the Premier. How is the Government delivering for the people of New South Wales, and are there any alternative approaches?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I thank the member for his question and for the incredible work he does in his community. He is obviously interested in good policy for the people of New South Wales. It is great to see members of the Opposition back and in full view, because they were in hiding—and I will deal with that in a minute. Government members are proud of the great work we have done during the winter break. I am sure members will be interested to hear of the announcement about and commencement of work on the King Georges Road interchange upgrade. I know that members opposite are not keen about the WestConnex, but it is a critical project that has been commenced 18 months ahead of schedule.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will stop interjecting and making comments so early in question time.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: That is what this Government does in delivering for the people of this State. The Treasurer has also invited expressions of interest in the 99-year lease of TransGrid. Why is that important? It is important because as a result of that process the Government will have the funding it needs to build the infrastructure that this State so desperately needs. The Minister for Transport has also announced a new Sydney bus network that will address some of the challenges arising from the delivery of a critical piece of CBD infrastructure, the light rail.

A number of advances have also been made in the Health portfolio, including with regard to the Northern Beaches hospital and the clinic at Shellharbour. The Government has also announced the provision of a new airstrip at Broken Hill. I know that both members who represent the Newcastle area are excited about the announcement of a new design for the Wickham interchange. That is a great project for the people of Newcastle. I am extremely proud of the announcement about and commencement of the first medical cannabis trial for the terminally ill. I congratulate everyone involved, including those at the University of Newcastle and the Calvary Mater Hospital. It is a fantastic program that will make a huge difference to terminally ill patients. This Government has also put tax reform on the national agenda. It is about time that we had a serious discussion about tax.

It is clear that members opposite have also been busy; they have been hard at it. We should all be thankful for what the Leader of the Opposition has done during the winter break. During the recent Labor Party conference he made an announcement that is critical for the people of this State. He said that the national conference had resolved to commission a review of the party objective with a view to refreshing the language. That was his great winter's work and we cannot overestimate the significance of that resolution.

The SPEAKER: Order! Government members do not need to interject or to make a noise. The Premier has the call.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: That is a critical piece of work from the Opposition. We are so proud. They are trying to work out whether they are socialists. They are not sure, but it is important that they deal with that issue. I note that members opposite have been on a secret expedition to Kiama.

Ms Linda Burney: That was no secret.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Canterbury will resume her seat.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: They had the Kiama conclave. It is fantastic that they are taking a new approach to opposition. Members opposite decided to sit in a room and talk to no-one but themselves. They do not want to meet community groups. I love this. We tried to find out what was going on, but they would not tell us. The member for Canterbury and the member for Maroubra said that nothing was happening. There they were putting on the sunscreen and saying that nothing was happening but they had serious work to do. What was it? They would not tell us. The Leader of the Opposition said it was a retreat and that he and his colleagues were talking amongst themselves about the challenges facing the State and he could not understand the hysteria. Members of the Opposition were simply getting away from their day-to-day pressure to have some thinking time. It is great to know that members opposite are thinking. However, it is even better news that this Government is getting on with delivering for the people of New South Wales and making a difference in the health, education, roads and transport sectors. That is what they want from their Government.

FORMER DEPUTY PREMIER ANDREW STONER

Ms JODI McKAY: My question is directed to the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Justice and Police. Was money paid by former Deputy Premier Andrew Stoner to his blackmailers?

The SPEAKER: Order! I am not sure that is a portfolio matter; however, it generally falls within the public interest.

Mr Michael Daley: He's the Minister for Police, isn't he?

The SPEAKER: Order! I am allowing the question. The member for Maroubra should not start getting cranky when question time has barely begun.

Mr TROY GRANT: I thank the Opposition spokesperson for her question. Neither Andrew Stoner nor the New South Wales police have ever discussed that issue or investigation with me, so I do not know.

ALCOHOL-RELATED VIOLENCE

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier. What is the Government doing to crack down on alcohol-related violence to ensure all patrons can safely enjoy New South Wales venues?

Mr TROY GRANT: I thank the outstanding member for Tamworth for his question. I will refer further to him in a second. The Government is doing a significant amount of work to crack down on alcohol-related violence. The strong and necessary actions we are taking have one aim—that is, to protect our community. We will not allow a few cowboys within the industry to flout the law or jeopardise community safety. Take the case of the Imperial Hotel. Despite ongoing engagement by the Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing and the NSW Police Force with the Imperial Hotel at Erskineville, it has

continued to permit serious drug-related and intoxication offences to take place.

Hotel staff were warned and spoken to, but they continued to allow it. Those offences included a patron licking a spilt drink off the floor of the premises whilst a responsible service of alcohol marshal stood above them laughing and not taking action. Those sorts of lax security standards in addition to open drug dealing inside the premises—including a male patron spooning white powder to a woman's nose in exchange for money—are simply unacceptable. We will not stand for that type of ongoing behaviour. As a result, in late July we closed the Imperial Hotel for a second time. It will remain closed voluntarily until the results of further investigations we are undertaking are completed.

The Government has taken serious action time after time to combat licensed venues that openly flout the law and let their industry down. That includes closing the Royal Hotel in Temora for 28 days after alcohol was served to minors and banning two former Kings Cross bar operators from holding a liquor licence for life after a string of offences, including getting 15-year-olds drunk and then simply kicking them out the door. Those closures and lifetime bans were both a first for New South Wales. They are not the people we want serving alcohol to anyone in New South Wales. I can assure the community that anyone acting like that will lose the privilege of holding a licence.

Liquor laws in this State have never been stronger. This Government supports a common-sense approach to a good night out and supports strong community liquor accords that introduce measures to suit their areas. I congratulate the Newtown local area on its liquor accord. Local police and hoteliers have recently announced a range of measures to be implemented voluntarily on a trial basis over summer. The trial will be very similar to what has been legislated for in Kings Cross. It will include no shots after midnight, no new patrons admitted to venues after 3.00 a.m., no service of alcohol 30 minutes prior to closure, and a code of conduct for patrons developed by staff to promote respect and tolerance.

That is the sort of leadership we want to see in local areas through local liquor accords—local solutions to local problems. It is a great example of local people, who know their areas best, looking at the needs of their communities and responding accordingly. I commend the member for Tamworth for his sensational leadership on this issue. The Tamworth Liquor Accord has paved the way and set an example for liquor accords across the State. Under the leadership of Kevin Anderson and Inspector Jeff Budd we are working on a pilot with Tamworth hoteliers to ensure that they can access the specialist privacy training needed to implement an ID scanning system on a voluntary basis. That is not being imposed on them; they are looking to do it voluntarily. Tamworth is an example for the rest of the State of what people can achieve if they work together. I congratulate the member for Tamworth on his leadership.

As we know, the 1.30 a.m. lockouts were implemented across the Sydney central business district as part of a range of strong measures introduced in February 2014. It was good to see the Parliament united on that serious issue. The results are there for us all to see. Members on both sides of the House supported those laws. In addition, the Minister for Health, health professionals, doctors, paramedics and police alike combined to support those laws. They were pioneering laws that included mandatory eight-year prison terms for anyone who fatally punches someone while under the influence of drugs or alcohol, which members on both sides of the House saw value in.

Pursuant to standing order additional information provided.

Mr TROY GRANT: Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research statistics show that in the first 12 months lockout laws contributed to a significant decline in alcohol-related assaults. That pattern is also being seen in Tamworth, where people are doing some great work. There has also been a decline in alcohol-related offences in Wagga Wagga. With more liquor accords and people taking their responsibilities seriously we expect that pattern to continue and community safety will be enhanced. We are seeing good results. As we committed to, the range of laws will be reviewed in February 2016 to ensure that this measure will be successful for years to come.

FORMER DEPUTY PREMIER ANDREW STONER

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: My question is directed to the Premier. Given the answers of his two Ministers to previous questions put to them today, has he or anyone in his Government taken any steps whatsoever to satisfy themselves and the people of New South Wales that no decisions made by former Deputy Premier Andrew Stoner were influenced by the foreign extortionists that the former Deputy Premier has admitted to being extorted by?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: As I have stated, this is a personal matter for Andrew Stoner.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra has asked the question. He will not interject during the answer.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: It is the subject of an ongoing investigation by the NSW Police Force. If the member for Maroubra has any allegations to put, he should put them.

STATE ECONOMY

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS: My question is addressed to the Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations. How is the Government working to strengthen the New South Wales economy and to keep this great State number one?

Ms GLADYS BEREJKLIAN: I thank the member for Holsworthy for her question and acknowledge on record the great job she does on behalf of her constituents. I am pleased to say that over the winter recess our Government was hard at work creating more jobs, building business and consumer confidence, securing investment and building the strongest economy in the nation. Of course, we are also working to deliver on our \$20 billion Rebuilding NSW plan to which the Premier has already alluded. As we have heard, that is unfortunately in stark contrast to the efforts of members opposite. While we were hard at work creating jobs and building confidence in this great State, they were navel-gazing about whether to ditch the socialist objective. We might think it is a no-brainer for Labor, but unfortunately the Leader of the Opposition did not win at the Labor Party conference. Labor delegates decided to kick the issue down the road. Not only did the Leader of the Opposition lose on that introspection—

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJKLIAN: —he also demonstrated an embarrassing lack of self-awareness.

Mr Guy Zangari: Point of order: It is Standing Order 129. Reflections about the Leader of the Opposition have nothing to do with the question that the member for Holsworthy asked.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Treasurer had only just commenced her comments regarding the Leader of the Opposition. I will hear more of what she has to say on that subject.

Ms GLADYS BEREJKLIAN: To the point of order: I was merely demonstrating the contrast between this side of the House and that side of the House. Finally we have a New South Wales Opposition leader who can unite the Labor Party: When he went to conference and said that he was the leader of the largest and most successful State branch, he was booed—he united everybody in that. They could not even get the support of their own party members. We have also heard about what they spent the winter recess doing down in Kiama. I am predicting a promotion for the member for Keira. Why do I say that? Because when the Leader of the Opposition was asked why they were in Kiama he said, amongst other things, "While we've been here we've heard from the member for Kiama—"

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: It is Standing Order 129. There was a question asked of the

Treasurer—

The SPEAKER: Order! It was about the New South Wales economy. The point of order is upheld. The member for Strathfield will resume her seat. The Treasurer will return to the question about what the New South Wales Government is doing for the economy.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I am very pleased to say that we have been working hard, and official data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] has shown that 11,300 jobs were created in New South Wales in June, more than double that of the next highest State. This brings the total number of jobs created to more than 219,000 since we have been in government. What have we been doing during the recent recess? We have received official data from last month which confirmed our policies designed to increase housing supply were bearing fruit, with the ABS stating that housing approvals have reached 20 year highs. And today we have yet more good news, with New South Wales recording the highest retail trade growth amongst the States both monthly and annually.

New South Wales retail sales have grown faster than the national average for 23 consecutive months—again a huge boost that demonstrates the strength of our economy. And, of course, we also had confirmation last month from the CommSec State of the States report that New South Wales was the nation's strongest performing economy, yet again. Let us not forget where New South Wales had fallen when those opposite were in government. Given their performance over the winter break, it is easy to see that nothing has changed for Labor. It is always about themselves when it comes to the Labor Party. It is always about giving themselves a pat on the back. It is never about improving the quality of life of the citizens of this great State. It is never about creating more jobs. It is never about creating more business confidence. It is never about increasing the number of housing approvals. It is always about themselves.

Pursuant to standing order additional information provided.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Unfortunately it is always about themselves. But I should also add that we are pleased to have made substantial progress in delivering on the Government's \$20 billion plan to transform this State. The New South Wales Government has been very pleased with the strong market interest shown to date in TransGrid, which is the first of the three network businesses to be leased. The TransGrid transaction is the first step in the 49 per cent lease of our State's electricity networks, which will also include the partial lease of Ausgrid and Endeavour Energy. Unlike those opposite who are focused on themselves, we are focused on the good people of New South Wales. That is why we are building a stronger economy—

[Interruption]

I would not start if I were the member for Maroubra, or whoever it was. Who was it? It was Comrade Liverpool—he fought hard to keep the socialist objective in there. He won. The Leader of the Opposition finally lost, but Comrade Lynch won.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I am very pleased to inform the House that in the winter recess we confirmed that New South Wales is creating more jobs, housing approvals are at 20 year highs, and our economy is again number one in this nation. We are here to deliver for the good people of New South Wales, unlike those opposite, who are just looking after themselves.

TAFE REFORM

Ms LINDA BURNEY: My question is directed to the Minister for Skills. Given that there are 3,000 fewer Aboriginal students enrolled in TAFE courses this year compared to last year, will he now admit that the Government's shameful reforms to the TAFE system are both unfair and inequitable?

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I thank the member from the opposite side. It is great to hear that TAFE is an important issue, as are opportunities for young people. I share the member for Canterbury's passion to give young people in this State the best opportunity to get the education, training and skills they need for the jobs of tomorrow. The skills reforms that we have introduced in New South Wales through TAFE, VET, and Smart and Skilled are about giving as many young people as possible the opportunity to train.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will cease interjecting. I remind the member for Fairfield and the member for Shellharbour that I have asked for interjections to cease.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: We have opened up more places throughout New South Wales. Across the nation we are seeing a decline in apprenticeships and traineeships; we are seeing a decline in vocational education and training. Some of that is due to a generation of telling young kids that university was the only pathway and that the smart country was only going to be built around university courses. I look at my example: I am a university dropout, and the first to admit it.

Ms Linda Burney: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! So far the Minister has been relevant to the question he was asked, even in the face of interjections from Opposition members. What is the member's point of order?

Ms Linda Burney: I appreciate the Minister's dissertation on his own life. However, there is a point of order. My question was about 3,000 fewer Aboriginal students and whether reforms were unfair and inequitable.

The SPEAKER: Order! So far the Minister has been relevant to the member for Canterbury's question, and I am sure he will get to the essence of the question shortly.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I am happy to confirm and put on the record that I am a university dropout because I decided to do a trade. I started in a trade because I thought the VET pathway was just as important to the career that I wanted. From that I created a business that employs apprentices and trainees.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members who continue to interject will be called to order.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: The key for me and what drives me is the opportunity for young people to get training. During the election campaign we announced a commitment that we budgeted for and have started rolling out: fee-free scholarships throughout New South Wales, with 200,000 new places over the next four years—50,000 this year. In the first four weeks we have had almost 5,000 people sign up to access opportunities for training and education—

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: We put in place the programs—

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Kiama and the member for Hornsby to order for the first time. Members will cease interjecting while the Minister is on his feet answering a question.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: We are looking at our policy settings regarding the investment in opportunities through traineeships, apprenticeships and TAFE, and in relation to what more we can do to make sure young people are enrolling. I am committed to seeing students getting the skills—

Ms Linda Burney: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! I hope this is not the same point of order. Is it on relevance?

Ms Linda Burney: I am sorry, Madam Speaker, but it is the same point of order.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Canterbury does not have to repeat the question.

Ms Linda Burney: It was about 3,000 fewer Aboriginal students. He has not mentioned it yet.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister remains relevant to the member for Canterbury's question. He is talking about TAFE and enrolments generally. I do not have any powers under the standing orders to direct the Minister to answer a question directly, as the member for Canterbury would know. I can only ask that he remains relevant, and that is what he is doing.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Recently I was in Dubbo with the Deputy Premier to relaunch the Indigenous Police Recruiting Our Way [IPROWD] program, which gives young Indigenous people access to training, and career opportunities and pathways. It is a fantastic program. TAFE NSW is doing fantastic things with the Barangaroo Skills Exchange. There will be 500 new apprenticeships. The first apprentice was a young woman who has chosen the vocational education and training pathway for a future career. I am proud of the investment we have put in place to offer opportunities to young people across New South Wales. I was looking recently at the 2010 budget. Then Treasurer Eric Roozendaal said there was a record amount for vocational education and training of \$2 billion.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: In this year's budget alone \$2.3 billion was put into the vocational education and training budget to give as many young people as possible the opportunity to access training and skills, and to make sure we match that to the jobs of tomorrow. I am proud of this investment. I am always happy to work with those who are passionate about young people in this State.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order. There are too many interjections and too many conversations occurring in the Chamber. I am finding it hard to hear answers given by Ministers. And I do not need any interjections while I am addressing the Chamber.

SOCIAL HOUSING

Mrs TANYA DAVIES: My question is addressed to the Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Social Housing. How is the Government cracking down on antisocial behaviour to make social housing safer for its many vulnerable residents?

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will cease interjecting.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I thank the member for Mulgoa for her question and in particular for her support as Parliamentary Secretary. She is effectively the assistant Minister in this portfolio and is doing an excellent job. She has been working with me; meeting various community groups, particularly those interested in social housing and the broader community services issues, and really contributing to this debate and to this Government's moving forward. We have been doing a lot of work. I have heard my colleagues talking about the amount of work that has been going on in recent months. I have also reflected on the vast amount of work that we have been doing in this portfolio.

During the past few months we have visited people in various parts of the State to talk about community services issues, social housing and affordable housing. In that time I have been to Bourke, Wilcannia, Brewarrina, Tweed Heads, Wagga Wagga, St Marys, Redfern, Waterloo, Riverwood, Leumeah, Wollongong and Bonnyrigg—a whole host of places. I have talked to social housing

tenants—those 280,000 people in 140,000 households across our public housing estate. In the short time we have been in government we have done a lot of work with public housing tenants. They have often had a pretty rough trot in life. Often they find their way into public housing after facing great challenges. The one message I keep hearing from tenants is that they want the Government to know that we need more social housing and we need it to be safe. They want their house to be their castle.

I have been doing this on behalf of the Government, and the member for Mulgoa has been there with me. The Premier and others have also been talking to people about these issues. The Leader of the Opposition has been in the job for 189 days according to my quick calculation, and I was a maths and science teacher so I could work that out. I have worked out what the Labor Party has done on social housing. Before I address the question of what the Government has done, I note that, finally, yesterday, after 189 days in office, the Leader of the Opposition put on his own social housing forum. He gave social housing exactly 105 minutes in total. So over 189 days on average the Leader of the Opposition has spent 33.33 seconds per day thinking about social housing. That is what he has done.

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

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: How could he share only that amount of time with the people who actually need it?

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

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: One might think this is just a new phenomenon. But I looked back to see what happened to the public housing estate over the last 10 years of the Labor Government. There were nearly 1,000 fewer houses in public and social housing every year under Labor at the same time as there were 60,000 people on the waiting list. While the Baird Government has been doing a lot of work and talking to stakeholders we have had to address the continued failings of the Labor Party, which talked big on this issue and delivered absolutely nothing. We have been listening. As the member for Mulgoa and my other colleagues know, one of the things that social housing tenants tell us regularly—

Ms Yasmin Catley: Is that they would like a policy.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: They actually said they would have liked a policy from her predecessors. They do not know the member for Swansea yet, unfortunately, so they have not mentioned her. Last week I was at the McKell Building launching a new effort to make sure that residents feel safe. They now have security at the front door. I acknowledge the member for Newtown for coming along to the launch of RedLink—one of the Government's initiatives matching a lot of other work—which is about making sure that services are available to support these tenants. What the tenants tell us is that they do not want drug dealers and they do not want criminals in and around where they are living. So we have taken some simple measures. When Labor was in power the drug dealers had free rein. They were there. Under the Baird Coalition Government we have done a lot to remove those people from the system.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Bankstown to order for the first time. I have asked the member several times to come to order.

Pursuant to standing order additional information provided.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: The member for Canterbury has been interjecting. I think the member should be very careful about what she says because on her watch not much was done. I will not reflect personally on the member, but the Labor Party failed to do very much.

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

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Last week I was at the McKell Building where I had discussions with many

of the tenants. In fact, there were street stalls, music, dancing and a new sense of future for those tenants. They were talking about the fact that they were very pleased that so many of the drug dealers had been arrested over the period that we have been in government.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order. The level of interjection is quite disrespectful.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: We are now going to the next level. We are responding to public housing tenants who are saying they want to feel safe in public housing. The Government should provide more housing, safe housing and services that are needed to support people in public housing. We are working very hard on all those issues. The legislation that we have given notice of today and that we will introduce into this place will make it very clear that if someone is on a charge related to show-cause type offences under the Bail Act that we introduced last year, or if someone possesses or stores firearms then they will find themselves out. It will be quite simple. It will be an absolute requirement for the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT] to remove them.

In other words, if someone does anything serious then they are out. As to the next level of more antisocial behaviour, tenants will be given three chances. I have agonised over this, because I have been listening to tenants and I do not think they are keen for people to be given three chances. But at the moment we are going with that. Tenants will have three chances—three notices within 12 months. If someone continues to commit antisocial offences then they will be moved out of public housing. It is quite simple. This Government is committed to providing more social housing, safer social housing and a much better environment for our public housing tenants. We are serious. Labor spent 15 years not being serious—in fact not even being there.

LEARNING MANAGEMENT AND BUSINESS REFORM PROGRAM

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: My question is directed to the Premier. By which date will the Learning Management and Business Reform [LMBR] software system be operational in all New South Wales public schools?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I thank the member for Rockdale for his question. I understand that those opposite hand questions across to the backbenchers. I would have thought that perhaps he could ask about the Arncliffe pedestrian underpass—something that is relevant to his electorate.

The SPEAKER: Order! If members want to hear an answer, they should remain silent. That is the key.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Yes, the LMBR project has had its challenges. We acknowledge that. We have put in place new governance arrangements, which led to progress being made. It is rolled out to the TAFE system. It is working across a number of pilot schools. The expectation is that it will be implemented across 2016.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Why is it important? It is important because it is providing an opportunity for our schools to make local decisions to empower them in relation to their budget and to look for opportunities. If they need additional educational support and savings are found—they control 70 per cent of the budget—they have the capacity to apply it to educational needs in that school and that community. We think that is a good thing. We are proud of what we are doing in our schools. Obviously this is a significant program that brings its own complexities.

It is not an easy project to roll out. But we are doing everything we can to get it out as quickly as possible to make as much difference as we can to the schools in this State. I wish the Opposition had

focused on those things when it had the Kiama conclave. Government members would rather see them talking about education than the socialist objective. Of all the electorates in the State I would not be having a secret meeting in the member for Kiama's electorate because he knows everything that goes on there.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Kiama will not respond. He will stop pointing and inciting other members.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Even though the Opposition does not want to tell people what happened in the Kiama conclave—

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order: Standing Order 129. I concede that the Premier was relevant for a short while but he has gone far from—

The SPEAKER: Order! He has strayed a little. I ask the Premier to return to the leave of the question. I uphold the point of order.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: What became available to me—and it was fascinating—was the agenda items for the Kiama conclave.

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! I trust the Premier will return to the question shortly. I presume it is the same point of order?

Ms Kate Washington: Yes.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: What I was looking for on the agenda was an education item. I was looking for education and, unfortunately, I could not see it.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order. Madam Speaker, you have issued a ruling and have asked the Premier to return to the leave of the question. The Premier has now flouted your ruling twice.

The SPEAKER: Order! He has not yet flouted my ruling. He will know about it if and when he does. The member for Strathfield will resume her seat.

Ms Jodi McKay: He is still talking about Kiama. He has been asked to return to the leave of the question.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I do not know what they are nervous about. All I know is that at 8.30 a.m. they had breakfast at the table of knowledge. That is where it started. Noreen was not there because she was not invited.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: I am not sure how many times we will have to get up. A ruling has been made. I refer to Standing Order 129. I ask that the Premier respect the ruling that has been made and that he answer the question that was asked.

The SPEAKER: Order! Is the member for Strathfield going to respect the rulings I have made? The Premier has the call. I ask the Premier to return to the leave of the question.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Madam Speaker—

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: There are many rich things that are on this agenda and I look forward to hearing from the Opposition about them. The Government is determined to make a difference across all policy areas, including education, which is why it is proud of what it is doing in education. It is proud of teachers and the work they are doing to make a difference in the lives of our kids. The Government will continue to support teachers in any way it can. The IT project is an important part of that and the Government will do anything it can to roll it out as quickly as it can.

WORKERS COMPENSATION SCHEME

Mr GLENN BROOKES: My question is addressed to the Minister for Finance, Services and Property—

The SPEAKER: Order! Members are showing utter disrespect for a member who is waiting to ask a question. Members will come to order. The Leader of the Opposition will come to order.

Mr GLENN BROOKES: My question is addressed to the Minister for Finance, Services and Property—

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the first time. The member is entitled to ask a question in silence and to be heard in silence.

Mr GLENN BROOKES: My question is addressed—

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the second time. The member is entitled to be heard in silence.

Mr GLENN BROOKES: My question is addressed to the Minister for Finance, Services and Property. How is the Government delivering for the injured workers by fixing Labor's broken workers compensation system?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I thank the member for East Hills for his question. He is the best member for East Hills this Parliament has ever had.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will resume his seat. I will wait until Opposition and Government members come to order. Members will come to order. Pause the clock. A Minister will not answer a question while members are making so much noise. I will wait until there is quiet from both sides of the House. If members interject while I am waiting for silence, they will be out of the Chamber for the rest of the day. The Minister has the call.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I am proud to be part of a Government that is putting people first, that is helping businesses prosper, that is financially responsible and, most importantly, that is delivering on its commitments. Nothing better illustrates the difference between members on this side of the House and members on that side of the House than the management of the New South Wales workers compensation scheme.

The SPEAKER: Order! If members do not come to order they will be placed on calls to order. Opposition members will come to order and cease interjecting.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: After 16 years this Government inherited a scheme that was more than \$4 billion in deficit.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Prospect will come to order. I call the member for Prospect to order for the first time.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Businesses were facing a premium hike of 28 per cent and there were 12,000 jobs at risk. New South Wales had one of the worst return-to-work rates in the country and the most seriously injured workers were not getting the support that they needed. In other words, the workers compensation scheme was failing on all fronts. Today the scheme has been managed back into surplus. Business premiums have been reduced by 17.5 per cent and under the reforms to date they will fall even further.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: More jobs will be created because the cost of doing business in this State will fall. Our return-to-work rate has increased significantly and the most seriously injured workers are now getting more help. In other words, we are now doing well on all fronts. Members opposite always talk about handouts and benefits.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: In the 100-year history of their socialist party, they have never worked out how to pay for something.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will cease shouting during the Minister's answer or they will find themselves out of the Chamber with no further warnings. All members on one or two calls to order are now deemed to be on three calls to order.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: In order to do good, we must do well.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: That is a lesson that Labor has never learnt. Members on this side of the House have learnt that lesson. That is why today we are in a position—

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: —to announce further reforms to achieve our goals of a scheme that is fair, sustainable and customer centric. First, we made an election commitment to deliver any amount above the minimum required to keep the scheme in surplus that will give back to workers and businesses in a two-thirds to one-third split. Today I am pleased to announce that the Government is introducing legislation to meet that commitment. Secondly, it is responding to findings of various parliamentary reports, committees and reviews and structurally separating the regulation and service delivery functions from WorkCover NSW. That means that the customer will now be at the centre of an empathetic process that understands their needs.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Thirdly, a number of benefits are being introduced to better help the most seriously injured workers live with dignity and to provide new financial assistance to help others get back to work and have the dignity of a job. Most importantly, businesses under this reform will also be rewarded with a further premium discount if they provide safer workplaces and assist people to get back to work. In other words, it pays to be safe. I believe the best policy is made by talking to people who are closest to it. That is why this Government has taken the time to meet with injured workers and hear their stories individually and at special forums that have been organised. The Government has met with businesses to hear their concerns about the costs and complexities of the current system. We have talked also with other stakeholders on how we can all do better to improve the outcomes for both workers

and businesses.

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

Pursuant to standing order additional information provided.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The Government has also read and revisited the recommendations of parliamentary inquiries and submissions made by a range of stakeholders. I am confident that these reforms will work. They have been built from the ground up by talking to people at the coalface whose lives are most impacted by the scheme. What those opposite will never understand is that in order to have a fair scheme—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Shellharbour will listen to the Minister's answer in silence. This is not a debate. The member should know better.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: In order to have a fair scheme it needs to be sustainable. Labor will always talk rhetoric. Let the record show that the Liberal-Nationals Coalition has done the most for seriously injured workers in this State. Let it be known also that the Liberal-Nationals Coalition has designed a system that puts the dignity of the worker at the centre of the scheme.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Those on this side of the House have returned the scheme to surplus and fixed the mess that was left by those opposite.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: We have reduced the cost of doing business in this State and we have responsibly managed our finances for the people of New South Wales. The Government is proud to have delivered a workers compensation scheme that is fair, sustainable and customer centric.

Question time concluded at 3.21 p.m.

STATE OF ORIGIN 2015

Personal Explanation

Mr MIKE BAIRD, by leave: I wish to make a personal explanation.

The SPEAKER: Order! I caution the Premier that garments with logos or any other offensive material are not allowed to be worn in this Chamber.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Absolutely.

The SPEAKER: Order! I find the Queensland State of Origin jersey the Premier is wearing to be offensive but it is not an offensive garment. The Premier may proceed.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The Queensland State of Origin jersey should never be seen within the boundaries of this State nor in this Parliament. But this Government keeps its promises. I offer my congratulations to both the Queensland Maroons and Premier Palaszczuk but we will see you again next year.

PARLIAMENTARY CONTRIBUTORY SUPERANNUATION FUND

Membership

Motion by Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS, by leave, agreed to:

That in accordance with section 14 (1) (b) of the Parliamentary Contributory Superannuation Act 1971, the following members be and are hereby appointed as trustees of the Parliamentary Contributory Superannuation Fund: Gregory John Aplin; Michael John Daley; Bradley Ronald Hazzard; Paul Gerard Lynch; and Daryl William Maguire.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Order of Business

Motion by Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS agreed to:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended at this sitting to:

- (1) Permit the consideration, in order given, of both notices of motions accorded priority at this sitting with the following speaking time limits:
 - (a) mover—5 minutes;
 - (b) member next speaking—5 minutes;
 - (c) two other members—3 minutes each; and
 - (d) reply—3 minutes.
- (2) Postpone the commencement of government business until the conclusion of the motions accorded priority.

OMBUDSMAN

Reports

The Speaker tabled, pursuant to section 43 of the Community Services (Complaints, Reviews and Monitoring) Act 1993, the reports of the New South Wales Ombudsman entitled:

- (1) "Report of Reviewable Deaths in 2012 and 2013, Volume 1: Child Deaths", dated 12 June 2015, received 29 June 2015.
- (2) "Report of Reviewable Deaths in 2012 and 2013, Volume 2: Deaths of people with disability in residential care", dated June 2015, received 29 June 2015.

Ordered to be printed.

PARLIAMENTARY ETHICS ADVISER

Correspondence

The Speaker tabled, pursuant to clause 6 of the resolution of the House relating to the Parliamentary Ethics Adviser, the following:

- (1) Copy of correspondence from the Parliamentary Ethics Adviser enclosing advice provided to the Honourable Andrew Stoner, former Minister, regarding Sports Aviation Flight College Australia Ltd, dated 2 August 2015.
- (2) Copy of correspondence from the Parliamentary Ethics Adviser enclosing advice provided to the Honourable Andrew Stoner, former Minister, regarding Slasherteck Pty Ltd, dated 2 August 2015.

OFFICE OF TRANSPORT

Reports

The Clerk announced the receipt, pursuant to section 46D of the Passenger Transport Act 1990, of the reports entitled:

- (1) "Rail Safety Summary Report, Contributing Factors in NSW Rail Incidents 2004—2013", received out of session on 7 July 2015 and authorised to be printed.
- (2) "Rail Safety Investigation Report, Derailment of Trains 5M28 and NP23, Currabubula, 31 January 2014", received out of session on 20 July 2015 and authorised to be printed.

NSW STATE CORONER

Report

The Clerk announced the receipt, pursuant to section 37 of the Coroners Act 2009, of the report by the NSW State Coroner into deaths in custody/police operations for 2014, received out of session on 10 July 2015 and authorised to be printed.

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON LOOSE FILL ASBESTOS INSULATION

Government Response to Report

The Clerk announced the receipt, pursuant to standing order, of the Government's response to the report entitled "Loose-fill asbestos insulation", received out of session on 15 July 2015 and authorised to be printed.

AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT

Report

The Clerk announced the receipt, pursuant to section 63C of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, of the Performance Audit Report entitled "Identifying productivity in the public sector: NSW Health, Department of Education and Communities, Transport for NSW, NSW Police Force, Department of Justice, NSW Treasury", dated July 2015, received out of session on 16 July 2015 and authorised to be printed.

WILD DOG DESTRUCTION BOARD

Report

The Clerk announced the receipt, pursuant to section 11 of the Annual Reports (Statutory Bodies) Act 1984, of the report of the Wild Dog Destruction Board for 2014, accompanied by a statement of reasons for late tabling, received out of session on 17 July 2015 and authorised to be printed.

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Report

Mr Michael Johnsen, as Chair, tabled the report entitled "Legislation Review Digest No. 2/56" dated 4 August 2015, together with minutes of the committee meeting regarding Legislation Review Digest No. 1/56.

Report ordered to be printed on motion by Mr Michael Johnsen.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE REGULATION OF BROTHELS

Membership

The Speaker announced the receipt by the Clerk, pursuant to the resolution of 25 June 2015, of correspondence nominating Ms Jo Haylen and Ms Kathy Smith as Opposition members on the Select Committee on the Regulation of Brothels.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE REGULATION OF BROTHELS

Deputy Chair

The SPEAKER: Pursuant to Standing Order 282 (2) I advise the House that on 17 July 2015 Melinda Jane Pavey was elected Deputy Chair of the Select Committee on the Regulation of Brothels.

PETITIONS

The Deputy-Speaker announced that the following petition signed by more than 10,000 persons was lodged for presentation:

Agency Protection Board

Petition calling on the Government to extend the agency protection period for lottery agents and enshrine the protective measure to support the viability of key community small businesses, received from **Mr Kevin Anderson**.

Discussion on petition set down as an order of the day for a future day.

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

Frame Drive Bridge Closure

Petition drawing attention to the closure of Frame Drive Bridge and calling on the Government to reinstate a functional operational and safe two-lane bridge, received from **Mr Andrew Gee**.

Magistrates Early Referral Into Treatment Program

Petition requesting the Government to implement the Magistrates Early Referral Into Treatment program in Moree to provide magistrates with viable options for the treatment of drug-addicted offenders, received from **Mr Adam Marshall**.

Forster Tuncurry Women's Community Shelter

Petition calling on the Government to implement a viable plan to establish a women's community shelter in Forster Tuncurry, received from **Mr Stephen Bromhead**.

Animal Welfare

Petition requesting that the welfare of animals in breeding facilities in New South Wales be protected by the enforcement of an appropriate licensing system, received from **Mr Adam Marshall**.

The Clerk announced that the following Ministers had lodged responses to petitions signed by more than 500 persons:

The Hon. Rob Stokes—Wellington Gas-fired Power Station—lodged 28 May 2015 (Mr Troy Grant)

The Hon. Adrian Piccoli—Yass High School—lodged 23 June 2015 (Ms Pru Goward)

The Hon. Jillian Skinner—Metford Hospital—lodged 23 June 2015 (Mr Clayton Barr)

The Hon. Dominic Perrottet—Woy Woy Service NSW Centre—lodged 23 June 2015 (Ms Kathy Smith)

The Hon. Niall Blair—Fox Control—lodged 24 June 2015 (Mr Thomas George)

The Hon. Jillian Skinner—Hunter New England Local Health District—lodged 25 June 2015 (Ms Sonia Hornery)

The Hon. Mark Speakman—Plastic Bags Ban—lodged 25 June 2015 (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith)

The Hon. Duncan Gay—Pacific Highway Upgrade Koala Protection—lodged 25 June 2015 (Ms Jodi McKay)

The Hon. Jillian Skinner—Nursing Homes—lodged 25 June 2015 (Ms Trish Doyle)

NSW LABOR

Motion Accorded Priority

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Parliamentary Secretary) [3.35 p.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) Calls on New South Wales Labor to end its period of introspection.
- (2) Decide once and for all whether it is a party of socialism.
- (3) Turn its attention to what really matters to the people of New South Wales, including public transport, health and infrastructure.

[Interruption]

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! I will continue in the manner of the Speaker, who set the tone. Members will be heard in silence. I remind members that many of them are already on three calls to order. I warn members that if they continue in this manner they will be watching

the debate from outside the Chamber. The member for Castle Hill will be heard in silence and the same courtesy will be extended to Opposition members.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: This motion should be supported because it is about time that the people of New South Wales understood exactly what the alternative Premier for New South Wales means. He says one thing and he means another. He originally stated that he was a centrist and that he certainly was not opposed to privatisation and the benefits that that brings to the New South Wales economy. Then he led a campaign, for three months, opposing the privatisation of the poles and wires. Then—surprise, surprise—when the legislation was brought before the New South Wales Parliament in the last session, the Leader of the Opposition led the charge. He even stated for the record, in the debate, that he would not support the privatisation of the electricity poles and wires and that he would maintain the support for keeping this in State ownership. He was reverting to his socialistic ideological roots, which he is famous for.

What did the Leader of the Opposition mean when he said to the people of New South Wales, "No; I firmly support privatisation," and then fronted up to the ALP conference and tried to get a review? He tried to get the word "socialism" extracted from the socialist manifesto that the party has embraced since its conception—which, I think, was in 1921. The Leader of the Opposition has had various positions during the time he has been leader. So on behalf of the people of New South Wales I say, "Please, Leader of the Opposition, just tell us where you stand. Are you a socialist—we know that you probably are—or do you support privatisation?" The Leader of the Opposition has had various positions. I would go as far as to say that the Leader of the Opposition has had more positions than the *Karma Sutra* when it comes to socialism.

Those on this side of the Chamber would really like to know exactly what the Leader of the Opposition means. Unless he is prepared to pick one position he can never, ever expect the people of New South Wales to embrace him as their leader. Therefore, if, as the alternative Premier of New South Wales, he truly believes that people should say what they mean and mean what they say, he should tell us, today, whether he supports socialism. At the conference he tried to support a change to the socialist manifesto that his party has embraced since 1921. What did he achieve at the conference? The Australian Labor Party is going to have a review. That party is going to have a review while the Liberal-Nationals New South Wales Government gets on with the job of delivering for the people of New South Wales.

Look at the work that has happened—which the Premier has outlined—over the winter period. The roll-out of infrastructure has continued. During this term of government \$68.5 billion has been spent on infrastructure. That spending is rolling out on roads, public transport and new hospitals right across this great State. I travelled to Western Sydney to announce upgrades around Prospect Reserve. I travelled to the Blue Mountains to look at Wentworth Falls station, where we are going to put in new lifts. We continue to deliver in all areas of New South Wales.

Contrast that with the work that was undertaken by the Opposition over the winter period. We could not find the Opposition. It is Missing Persons Week. We tried to bring Missing Persons Week forward by a month and a half because we could not find any members of the Opposition; they were nowhere. Then, all of a sudden, they appeared in that beautiful electorate of Kiama. So my question to the Leader of the Opposition is, "What do you stand for—are you a socialist or do you support privatisation?" [*Time expired.*]

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) [3.38 p.m.]: Somebody in the Premier's office needs to be admonished, or worse, for the debacle that is ensuing in respect of this debate. First, that person should be admonished with respect to the chosen subject matter, because, as a rule, if the Government is hardworking and pursuing an agenda that it is proud of, the Government should dominate the floor of Parliament by talking about, promulgating and reminding the people of New South Wales of the hard work that it is doing and of all those things that attend good government. But here we are, in the first debate on

the motion to be accorded priority after the winter recess, when the budget is still fresh off the printing press, debating this sort of meaningless nonsense.

It has been promulgated by the member for Castle Hill, who can devalue a debate—he can devalue this place—almost as quickly as any member I have ever seen. This motion invites the Parliament to turn its attention to what really matters to the people of New South Wales, including public transport, health and education. We have tried today to turn the attention of the Parliament, the Government and the people of New South Wales to the issue of transparency and accountability. It was bewildering that when we asked a couple of questions earlier today about the resignation of the former Deputy Premier Andrew Stoner, who left this place—

Mr Ray Williams: Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance. There was nothing whatsoever in the motion about the previous Deputy Premier. Mr Deputy-Speaker, please bring the member back to the motion.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: To the point of order: The motion was so wide that you could drive the *Titanic* through it. The motion asks the House to turn its attention to what really matters to the people of New South Wales. That is any subject matter that falls within the purview of the Government or this Parliament.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! I ask the member for Maroubra to address the motion. It is quite clearly not the direction that he was heading in.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: The motion calls upon Labor to do certain things.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The motion had nothing to do with questions asked during question time.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: The motion calls on the Opposition to "turn its attention to what really matters to the people of New South Wales". What matters to the people of New South Wales is transparency and accountability. It is a fact that Andrew Stoner resigned in bewildering haste.

Mr Gareth Ward: Point of order: Numerous speakers, including Speaker Murray and Speaker Rozzoli, made it quite clear that attacks on members and former members are inappropriate. I think you should ask the member for Maroubra, who is a good parliamentarian, to come back to the substance of the motion.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: To the point of order: I am not attacking Andrew Stoner.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! I uphold the point of order. A member has the right to make a statement against another member of Parliament by way of substantive motion.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: I am not, Mr Deputy-Speaker. I am wondering why neither the Premier nor his Minister for Justice and Police could answer any questions that relate to this matter.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! We will not get into that debate now.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: On the first day back after the budget break, there is no discussion, question or utterance by any member of the Government about anything to do with the budget. We are discussing this ridiculous motion—and the topic dominated answers given by Ministers and the Premier in question time—on what the Opposition has been thinking about and doing during the break. I will tell members what the Opposition has been doing. We have been talking about bed block and about the petition signed by 1,300 serving ambulance officers begging Minister for Health Jillian Skinner to increase resources to the Ambulance Service of NSW.

That is not important to Government members. They do not want to talk about that today. They do not want to talk about the \$530 million blowout on the Learning Management and Business Reform [LMBR] software system, about the fact that 83,000 fewer people than last year have enrolled in TAFE this year, or about the fact that WestConnex is still just a discussion after four years. There is no mention by the Government about housing affordability, nothing about Aboriginal services and nothing about tax reform. This motion is a joke and it should be treated as such.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Parliamentary Secretary) [3.43 p.m.]: I congratulate the Acting Opposition Whip on his elevation. He is the Gerald Ford of Opposition whips, who has very cleverly made his way up the tree. Who knows—we might find out later on how he did it. Perhaps it was all a conspiracy started by the member for Cabramatta. I look forward to seeing the outcome of that. He is the Francis Urquhart of Opposition. There was movement at the Sebel because the word had got around that the shadow Cabinet from Sussex Street had whimpered into town. They were led by a horse called Foley—a stallion of the Left. When it came to ideas and policies they were utterly bereft. All the cracks had gathered to the fray: "Let us hope we are not discovered; we can only wish and pray."

Ms Linda Burney: Point of order: I am being provoked.

Mr GARETH WARD: Did the member for Canterbury like her stay in Kiama? Did they make nice soy skim lattes for her? Come and spend any time you like there.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! I ask the member for Kiama to direct his comments through the Chair. I draw him back to the leave of the motion.

Mr GARETH WARD: I certainly will. This is an important motion. It asks the members of the Opposition, who came to my beautiful electorate, to cease their introspection. The Premier offered some items that might have been on the agenda at that shadow Cabinet meeting. What was item number one? Was it infrastructure? Was it jobs? No, it was whether or not they should take socialism out of their manifesto. Item number two would have been the member for Shellharbour discussing the toilet at Shellharbour Junction. That is an essential item of government patronage. Item number three would have been Noreen Hay. That is a standing agenda item for the shadow Cabinet. The list goes on. What sort of socialism is Labor committed to? Is it Fabian socialism? Is it market socialism? Is it utopian socialism? Is it market communism? I would like to know what sort of socialism the member for Liverpool is committed to. Every time I walk past his office I cannot work out whether it is the *Internationale* or *The Red Flag* playing.

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance under Standing Order 76. The member for Kiama is clearly off the topic of the debate.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! I refer the member for Kiama to paragraph (2) of the motion.

Mr GARETH WARD: When Labor members were in the Illawarra, did they talk to anyone about issues of substance? Opposition members said that they will oppose the Albion Park Rail bypass—something that will relieve traffic congestion for residents in my electorate. Did Opposition members actually speak to the community? No, they hid themselves away. This is the new tactic of Opposition members: "If we want to win an election, let us not talk to anybody. Let us not talk to voters." Opposition members were caught out by Michael Pignataro of WIN News because they were attempting to sneak in under the cover of darkness. The Opposition came with nothing and left with nothing, other than some nice holiday photos. [*Time expired.*]

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) [3.46 p.m.]: I cannot believe that I am forced to say there are more important things to discuss in this place than the trivial rubbish offered to us by this Government.

Out there in the real world, in places like my community of Rockdale, there are real people with real concerns. People want to know that their children's schools are well resourced and funded, and that their local hospitals have a bed available for them and are able to look after them when they are sick. People want to know that the economy will provide the support that local business needs to borrow and prosper.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Rockdale will be heard in silence.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: This motion by the Government can only be described as an insult to the citizens of New South Wales. I truly doubt whether everyday mums and dads out there, the people who rely on us to do our jobs, have ever heard of a socialist pledge, let alone care whether it is being talked about. We all know it is not cheap to run Parliament. Every minute that we bring together our State's representatives costs a significant amount of money. It is billed straight to the hardworking taxpayers of New South Wales. I cannot believe the incredible disrespect shown by the Government in wasting the time of this House, wasting our State's limited public funds and wasting the time of all members here today.

I left a 30-year career in business to enter this place, and it was not so that I could waste my time listening to childish self-indulgence. I do not know what a socialist pledge is. How am I supposed to go back to my electorate and explain to my constituents that that is what we spend our time in Parliament talking about? Considering recent events, one would think that the Liberal-Nationals Government might be a little more careful about wasting public funds. Perhaps the abuse and misuse of the State's money is now par for the course for Government members.

The Government could discuss today, as a matter of public importance, any one of a thousand topics that really have an impact on people's lives. Instead we have an embarrassing, smug joke. We could be discussing cuts to TAFE. We could be discussing the crisis faced by our paramedics and the Ambulance Service of NSW. We could be discussing the pressing infrastructure needs facing our State. Instead, this motion is the best the Government has to offer. It is a triviality that the Government apparently believes to be of public importance. People in the community expect us to take our jobs seriously. It is high time that Government members took the same approach. [*Time expired.*]

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! I direct the member for Rockdale to remove himself from the Chamber for 10 minutes.

[*Pursuant to sessional order the member for Rockdale left the Chamber at 3.50 p.m.*]

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! I direct the member for Lakemba to remove himself from the Chamber for 10 minutes. I am trying to get the House in order, but members continue to interject.

Mr Jihad Dib: The interjection was a question.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! I have asked the member for Lakemba to remove himself from the Chamber for 10 minutes.

[*Pursuant to sessional order the member for Lakemba left the Chamber at 3.51 p.m.*]

Mr Luke Foley: What are you doing about the member for Oatley? What about him? Are you going to chair both sides?

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! Is the Leader of the Opposition questioning my chairmanship? Is the Leader of the Opposition questioning my rulings?

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Parliamentary Secretary) [3.52 p.m.], in reply: I think everyone needs to take a breath and step back so we can achieve some decorum in the House or we might be a little light on members this afternoon. I have moved previously—and I seek the support of my colleagues in this—to ask a fair question as to where a leader stands. I have raised the question many times in the House before. As I have said previously, all those in representative roles must have the courage of their convictions and stand up for what they believe in. There is nothing I have voted on in this House in which I do not believe or solemnly support.

Mr John Robertson: You wouldn't know.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: I acknowledge the interjection of the member for Blacktown. He has been on the receiving end of this question before when I have asked him where he stands. I therefore ask the current Leader of the Opposition: Where do you stand? You have had a couple of positions on privatisation. You fritter around and say, "We do not support privatisation here", or, "We do not support privatisation there", but do you still maintain your socialist, ideological roots?

Mr David Harris: Point of order: The member for Castle Hill should be addressing his comments through the chair. He is deliberately looking at the Leader of the Opposition and inviting argument.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! I uphold the point of order. I ask the member for Castle Hill to direct his comments through the Chair.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: I am more than happy to do that. As I say once again, we are seeking a response from the Leader of the Opposition as to whether he maintains his socialist, ideological roots and opposes privatisation or whether he firmly believes that the Labor Party should go down a new path and drop its socialist manifesto and embrace some change within the party. That is where the challenges are for the Labor Party at the moment. Members opposite cannot appeal to the Right and they cannot appeal to the Left. They are trying to be centrist but they cannot cling to their old socialist ideologies and try to appeal to the people of New South Wales. It will not work. The Leader of the Opposition has held a couple of positions—as I have said before, more positions than the *Kama Sutra*—when it comes to socialism. We fairly ask the Leader of the Opposition: Stand in front of us today and tell us exactly where you stand.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! I ask the Parliamentary Secretary to direct his comments through the Chair.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: Absolutely, Mr Deputy-Speaker.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! Not absolutely—the member will direct his comments through the Chair.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: I will, Mr Deputy-Speaker. I ask the Leader of the Opposition to state firmly for the record today whether he supports socialism or whether he will continue to oppose privatisation that will deliver so many benefits for the people of New South Wales, such as the \$20 billion in funding. [*Time expired.*]

Question—That the motion be agreed to—put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 49

Mr Anderson

Ms Goward

Mr Provost

Mr Ayres
Mr Baird
Mr Barilaro
Ms Berejiklian
Mr Brookes
Mr Conolly
Mr Constance
Mr Coure
Mr Crouch
Mrs Davies
Mr Dominello
Mr Elliott
Mr Evans
Mr Fraser
Mr Gee
Ms Gibbons

Mr Grant
Mr Gulaptis
Mr Hazzard
Mr Henskens
Ms Hodgkinson
Mr Humphries
Mr Johnsen
Mr Kean
Dr Lee
Mr Maguire
Mr Marshall
Mr Notley-Smith
Mr O'Dea
Mrs Pavey
Mr Perrottet
Ms Petinos

Mr Roberts
Mr Sidoti
Mrs Skinner
Mr Speakman
Mr Stokes
Mr Taylor
Mr Toole
Mr Tudehope
Ms Upton
Mr Ward
Mr Williams
Mrs Williams

Tellers,
Mr Bromhead
Mr Patterson

Noes, 35

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

Mr Greenwich
Mr Harris
Ms Harrison
Ms Hay
Ms Haylen
Ms Hornery
Ms Leong
Mr Lynch
Dr McDermott
Ms McKay
Mr Mehan
Ms Mihailuk

Mr Minns
Mr Park
Mr Parker
Mr Robertson
Ms K. Smith
Ms T. F. Smith
Ms Washington
Ms Watson
Mr Zangari
Tellers,
Mr Lalich
Mr Warren

Pair

Mrs Hancock

Mr Hoenig

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

TRIBUTE TO ADAM GOODES

Motion Accorded Priority

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn—Leader of the Opposition) [4.04 p.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) Expresses its total support for Sydney Swans footballer and former Australian of the Year,

Adam Goodes.

(2) Condemns the relentless booing of Mr Goodes.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! Members wishing to converse should do so outside the Chamber. I remind members that this is an important motion and that the Leader of the Opposition should be heard in silence.

Mr LUKE FOLEY: Today we stand with Adam Goodes. In an AFL career spanning 16 years, Adam Goodes has displayed extraordinary agility and versatility, together with exceptional resilience. Goodes' natural gifts and determination have propelled him to two Brownlow medals and four All Australian selections and, of course, he helped his team, the Sydney Swans, to two AFL premiership flags. In a contribution to a history of the AFL, Goodes wrote:

Aborigines play Australian football with a clear mind and total focus. We are born to play it.

Adam's on-field success is a testament to this athletic birthright. But Adam Goodes is more than simply a talented athlete. Beyond the boundary, Adam is an outstanding ambassador for this nation and for his people. Adam is a proud Adnyamathanha and Narungga man from South Australia. Adam is a wonderful role model for the thousands of Indigenous community leaders who quietly and consistently build their own communities across our country. Adam's appeal transcends racial boundaries. Adam Goodes is a role model not only to Indigenous Australians but to all of us. Last year Adam was named Australian of the Year for his leadership and advocacy in the fight against racism on the sporting field and within society. We must all dedicate ourselves to fighting racism wherever we find it—on our sporting fields, in our workplaces and in our communities. It is shameful that one year after Adam Goodes was named Australian of the Year he has had to withdraw, we hope temporarily, from the sporting field because of the actions of a vocal minority.

Some say that sport and politics do not mix, that athletes should leave their personal beliefs and principles at the boundary line. But in a nation such as ours—a nation where sport permeates our culture, a nation where sport demands national attention and affection—at times sport becomes a broader symbol of our society. This is a time when sport has become a symbol of our society's struggle against racism. Over the past week many Australians have stood with Adam Goodes. Let us hope that the outpouring of support for Adam Goodes at football grounds last weekend marked a turning point. After all of the tumult of recent weeks, Ross Lyon, who as a midfield coach at the Sydney Swans once coached Adam Goodes, put it best last weekend when he said:

So from here, if you continue to boo Adam Goodes, well, you're a racist and you're a bigot.

Today this Parliament, the home Parliament of Adam Goodes and the team he represents, the mighty Sydney Swans, should take a stand and support this great footballer, this great Australian. We should make it clear that this place, Australia's oldest Parliament, stands in total solidarity with Adam Goodes, and that we will have no truck with the ongoing booing of Goodes. We hope that Adam Goodes will return to the field this weekend in Geelong. We wish him well, and all of us, whatever our party politics today, stand together. United we stand with Adam Goodes.

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Trade, Tourism and Major Events, and Minister for Sport) [4.09 p.m.]: I quote:

It is about how you choose to give back and make a difference to those around you, your community or your country, that goes outside of just yourself. I believe we are all connected whether we like it or not. We are all equal and the same in so many ways. My hope is that we as a nation can break down the silos between races, break down those stereotypes of minority populations, Indigenous population and all the other minority groups.

Those are the words of a leader. They are the words of Adam Goodes. I grew up in an Aussie rules family. I grew up in a Sydney Swans family, although I did not turn out that way. I grew to admire people who won the Brownlow medal. In my family they were the fairest and best people in the country, not just in a competition. Adam Goodes has shown an exemplary amount of skill on the football field. He has shown leadership amongst his fellow team mates, and that leadership has transcended beyond the boundary. It permeates throughout our country. In 2015 the crimson thread of kinship that unites this country is clearly colour blind, as Adam Goodes has reminded us.

Sometimes we need people such as Adam Goodes to show that we have left the path that was set forth for this nation, that we need to change tack and remind ourselves that it takes discipline and effort. And when we see something that we do not agree with, or something that we know is wrong, we must stop, call it out and stand up to it. Those are the actions of a leader. We all know that Adam Goodes is hurting. We all know that the tradition of booing on an Australian sporting landscape has often been one of admiration, of respect about a player who is doing too good against one's team.

But we all know that in the case of Adam Goodes that is not what the booing has been about. This behaviour has been an insight into the soul of our nation, and we must eradicate it at every opportunity. We were all proud to see 38,000 New South Wales men and women at the Sydney Cricket Ground [SCG] on the weekend showing their respect for Adam Goodes. I watched games where Indigenous players conducted tribal dances and at one game an entire football club wore black, yellow and red as a mark of respect.

Adam Goodes has made his mark by changing the direction our country is taking on racism. He has said we must stand up to racism, we must call it out, but after we do so it is crucial that we come together in kinship. We must guide those who are perhaps mistaken about the direction we are currently taking. We must bring those people on this journey. That is essentially what this nation has been about for not just a few hundred years but a few thousand years. Many of us have come to this great land from across the seas, but there is one culture that binds us together—the Indigenous culture.

Our connection to the land, the spirit that binds us, is in the unique nature of this country. Adam Goodes is the epitome of that spirit and it is crucial that we not only stand with Adam but also support what Adam stands for. He stands up against racism and calls it out. Adam is not a divisive character because he has challenged us. He is a unifying character because he has challenged us. This bloodstained angel has reached into the soul of our nation and shown us a better way. We, together and as individuals, must stand with Adam Goodes.

Ms LINDA BURNEY (Canterbury) [4.13 p.m.]: Adam Goodes is a respectful, thoughtful man. I have spoken to him on many occasions. His victories on the field have been matched by his extensive work in the community, advocating for Indigenous populations through the Goodes-O'Loughlin Foundation which is aimed at empowering the next generation of young Aboriginal leaders. On behalf of the New South Wales Opposition, the Aboriginal community and, I am sure, this Parliament, it would be a wonderful gesture if a copy of the debate on this motion were presented to Adam Goodes as a mark of our respect and our admiration for him. Adam Goodes has done something remarkable for this nation.

The Opposition condemns any racial abuse or bullying of any public figure or private individual. The story of our nation and our State has been one of tolerance of and respect for diversity. To hear a crowd repeatedly booing an Aboriginal man for proudly identifying his Aboriginality is a very low point in our nation's history. The calls from public figures for Adam Goodes to apologise, to be deported or to just be quiet have been extremely distressing. I am not sure where a blackfella would be deported to, but that is beside the point.

Racism is not a trivial matter and no-one should be silent when they see it just because it is a difficult topic to debate. For Aboriginal people it is not uncommon to be shouted down or bullied when

they choose to proudly express their culture. Adam's return to the field, we hope this weekend, will show his great resilience. One thing that has touched our nation, and has certainly touched the Aboriginal community, is that the football paddock has been a place of equality where Aboriginal people can shine—unlike the broader community, particularly in years gone by. That has deeply touched us, particularly Aboriginal players in all codes.

This is a clear case where the line has been crossed. Adam is a proud Aboriginal man who put his head up and people have tried to yell him down. It is a disappointing episode in Australian sport. Whether it is racism combined with the tall poppy syndrome, it really does not matter. In this Parliament today we are calling it for what it is. It is totally unacceptable and it will not be tolerated. Sydney Swans coach John Longmire is looking forward to this weekend's match between the Swans and Geelong because the Geelong club has been supportive of Adam during this time.

On behalf of this Parliament, I congratulate Adam Goodes on his self-reliance, his tolerance, his leadership and what he has done for this nation. We all support Adam Goodes—the Opposition, the Government and all members of this House. Adam, we hold you in high regard, we thank you for what you have done for our nation and we will support you no matter what.

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie—Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education) [4.16 p.m.]: I speak on this motion to express my total support for Sydney Swans player Adam Goodes. Adam Goodes has been a role model for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal players alike and he has a distinguished record. Apart from being a former Australian of the Year, he has won two Brownlow medals and two Australian Football League [AFL] premierships. I agree with the New South Wales Premier when he said last week:

... whichever team we support, surely we can all agree that risking the premature ending of the career of one of the AFL's great players is totally unacceptable.

When extended booing reaches this point, we all agree it has gone too far. I note that Adam Goodes is quoted in today's *Sydney Morning Herald* as saying:

The last week there's been a lot of discussion. A lot of it I haven't read but I've been involved in before. I think those discussions needed to be had. I'm really hopeful that those discussions are behind us now and we can all move on. I think people have had their opinions, they've spoken about the issues and hopefully now we can move forward.

We must, however, move forward together and that is why we must all work together to address the issue of healing, which includes healing from the enduring impacts of generational racism. I am proud to be a member of the Parliament of New South Wales, the first State in Australia to incorporate healing into our policy for Aboriginal Affairs. Our Aboriginal Affairs policy, Opportunity, Choice, Healing, Responsibility, Empowerment [OCHRE], acknowledges that past government policies and practices have impacted on Aboriginal people in ways that disconnected people from their culture and traumatised individuals, families and communities. Healing is a complex and sensitive issue that requires thoughtful and considered discussion.

OCHRE commits our Government to start a conversation with Aboriginal people on the need for healing. It commenced with the statewide healing forum that was held in 2014. Aboriginal Affairs coordinated this event in partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation. It was the first time a conversation about healing had been initiated with Aboriginal people on a statewide basis. It was the first step towards understanding an appropriate role for government in healing. We must be committed to continuing that conversation at both regional and local levels. I again express my support for Adam Goodes and I certainly hope that after today he feels not only the support of this Parliament but also the support of the people of New South Wales. I hope that we see him on the football field in the weeks ahead.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [4.20 p.m.], by leave: We have heard heartfelt words from members in this Chamber. I would like to add the following words to the record—probably the first time they have been recited in this House. When I say them I want all members to think about Adam Goodes, the Australian Football League [AFL] and sport in this country:

Cheer, cheer the red and the white,
Honour the name by day and by night,
Lift that noble banner high,
Shake down the thunder from the sky
Whether the odds be great or small,
Swans will go in and win overall
While her loyal sons are marching
Onwards to victory!

That is the song of those of us who have white and red blood. At the end of the day it does not matter, as we all breathe the same air, we all have the same blood, and we all look at the same sky, sun and moon. We must stand united and say racism stops with me, it stops with you and it stops with us. When I watched telecasts of my beloved Swans in 2015 it was totally unacceptable to see thousands of people—mums, grandpas, grandmas, dads and their children—booing Adam Goodes. What type of message does booing a player send to our sons and daughters in this day and age? Call it for what it is. It is simply racial vilification and it must not be tolerated.

On behalf of this House I say that irrespective of the colour that runs through our veins or the star we were born under we all stand behind Adam Goodes. Number 37 was proudly displayed at the Sydney Cricket Ground last weekend and a replica jersey was shown during a V8 Supercars race. Many AFL players in the last round performed a tribal dance, in particular Lewis Jetta after he kicked his first goal. At the seventh minute in the third quarter the crowd stood and applauded for one minute. That is the Australia that I know, that is the Australia that my children were born in and that is the Australia that we must uphold from now until the end of time.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) [4.22 p.m.], by leave: I commend the New South Wales Australian Labor Party for moving this important motion and I acknowledge the heartfelt contributions of members of the Opposition and the Government. I commend Premier Baird for his comments in support of Adam Goodes and for calling on people to stop booing. I sought leave to speak on behalf of The Greens to show that we also stand in solidarity and support in this Chamber and we stand connected with the community in response to the horrible treatment of Adam Goodes on the field. We in this Chamber join with more than 150 organisations and major newspaper outlets in a growing community response that says that this behaviour is not okay and that we stand with Adam Goodes.

It is unacceptable for Adam Goodes or, indeed, anyone from our community to be faced with racism and hostility for expressing their identity. It is deeply disturbing that Adam Goodes has received this type of racist and hostile treatment for expressing his Aboriginal culture and identity. Adam Goodes is a champion sportsman, a former Australian of the Year and an inspiring role model. Despite these hero-like qualities and achievements, it is clear that, like all of us, he is a human being with feelings. It should be clear to us in this Chamber, if it were not already, that no matter the strength and courage that people show in the community or on the field, racism has a real and serious impact on the lives of people.

The challenge to us as leaders in the community, having been elected to provide the community with guidance and leadership on issues such as this, is to stand up and take responsibility in shaping public opinion and public debate. It is a challenge that all members of this Chamber should accept: to show solidarity and stand with Adam Goodes and all those who face racism and discrimination in our community. We do so by being a part of the growing community that says that racism is not okay, it is never okay. As leaders we need to step up and, as we have today in this debate by saying no to racism,

take back to our electorates in all aspects of our communities the message that racism stops with us.

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn—Leader of the Opposition) [4.25 p.m.] in reply: I thank the Minister for Sport and the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs for their fine contributions. I also thank my Deputy Leader and member for Canterbury, the shadow Minister for Sport and member for Fairfield, and the member for Newtown for their contributions. There is genuine consensus across the House of support for Adam Goodes. Adam Goodes debuted in the Australian Football League in 1999. I remember meeting him in Parliament House at the annual dinner for the Parliament House AFL footy tipping competition, which used to attract tipsters far and wide. I am not sure if the competition is still going; it probably is. A very young Adam Goodes attended with the then media manager of the Sydney Swans as guests at the annual dinner. I recall that Goodes as a young man who debuted that season was full of the innocence of youth. He had come from the country and made his way through the list and had an outstanding inaugural season in the AFL.

I think about what he has been through 16 years on. He has not only distinguished himself as one of the greatest footballers of any code with an array of individual awards and premiership flags to his name; he has also transcended his code and indeed sport and become a leader of Australian society. He is a leader in combating racism and for calling on all Australians to reflect on the darker aspects of the human condition and to rise above it. Adam Goodes is a genuine leader in our society. In the past week we have seen a rallying of Australians from all walks of life in support of him. They are saying, "Enough is enough. Let's stop booing. Let's stand with this great Australian". I am proud that today all members of this Parliament join in that campaign.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! As Deputy-Speaker I also thank all members for the way in which they have supported this motion, the respect that they have shown and, more importantly, their united approach to support Adam Goodes. I am pleased that Madam Speaker is also present in the Chamber and I am sure she will present a copy of the debate on this motion to Adam Goodes.

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

Motion agreed to.

Pursuant to sessional order Government business proceeded with.

HEALTH SERVICES AMENDMENT (AMBULANCE SERVICES) BILL 2015

Bill introduced on motion by Mrs Jillian Skinner, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER (North Shore—Minister for Health) [4.30 p.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Health Services Amendment (Ambulance Services) Bill. This bill makes amendments to the Health Services Act 1997 to delineate better emergency services provided by the Ambulance Service of NSW and to recognise a role for private sector and non-government organisations in providing non-emergency transport for patients. Supported non-emergency transport arises outside emergency situations. It is required when a patient needs medical or other clinical oversight or monitoring during their transportation but does not require urgent transport to a health facility. This can arise in transfers between hospitals and transport to or from a hospital for particular procedures or tests.

The use of ambulance services and vehicles that are designed to respond to emergency

situations is an inefficient use of high-cost specialist emergency services that, in turn, can impact on the efficiency of the service. Levels of training and equipment and other vehicle requirements also will be different when responding to an emergency. This highlights the inefficiency of using emergency vehicles in non-emergency situations. However, at present there is no distinction in the legislation between emergency transport and non-emergency transport that simply requires clinical support. This bill is designed to address these issues.

The proposed amendments, which support a better delineation of services, are not new. They follow on from the Strategic Review of the Ambulance Service of New South Wales conducted by Mr Brendan O'Reilly and from the many ambulance service reviews commissioned by the Labor Government. They also reflect the 2012 Ambulance Reform Plan, which included the utilisation of private providers for existing and future non-emergency transportation and, therefore, revision of the current legislative prohibition. Two of the key objectives of the plan were to establish non-emergency patient transport as a separate service from the urgent, emergency service provided by NSW Ambulance, and to engage a range of providers, including community transport services, the existing ambulance green fleet, local health district transport services and private operators to provide existing and future non-emergency patient transport services. This bill makes changes to support both of those objectives.

The Health Services Act contains no definition of "emergency" or "supported transport". It simply imposes a prohibition on any operator other than the Ambulance Service of NSW providing transport for sick or injured persons for fee or reward. Providers can do so only if they are recognised in the Act or in regulations under the Act, or where the Secretary of the Ministry of Health has given a specific approval. The amendments in the bill retain this prohibition but confine it to emergency services. To this end, it contains a new definition of "emergency ambulance services", which focuses on urgent situations where immediate medical attention is required. Under the amendments, the restrictions outlined will continue to apply to these critical situations and support the Ambulance Services' essential emergency role.

The bill also introduces a definition of "supported non-emergency transport". The definition of "supported transport" covers situations where there is no urgent need for medical assistance but where a person or patient requires transport that includes clinical monitoring or oversight due to their illness or other condition. These services will no longer be covered by the prohibition but will be subject to legislative oversight to support safe and appropriate care, as necessary. In addition, by clearly defining these two types of services where medical, paramedical or other clinical oversight are required, the amendments also make clear that other forms of more generic transport—such as community transport services—will not be caught by the prohibitions or requirements of the Health Services Act.

The definitions have been carefully developed to ensure that they reflect appropriate levels of regulation between emergency, supported and general community transport and are based on legislation already in place in Victoria. In this regard, the bill adds proposed new sections designed to provide light-touch regulation of supported transport. Organisations providing supported transport will be obliged to ensure that the vehicles used are equipped in a manner that ensures patient safety. They will also be required to ensure that clinical care and monitoring is provided in a manner that ensures patient safety. Similarly, hospitals, aged care facilities or other organisations that contract or engage service providers to supply supported transport will be obliged to take reasonable steps to assure themselves that the transport provided is safe and appropriate.

The legislation is also designed to rely, where possible, on existing processes and requirements that are in place to maintain appropriate standards for supported transport. These include general transport safety standards and requirements under State and Commonwealth law and, where the service is being provided under arrangements with NSW Health, detailed standards and specifications must be set contractually. It is important to note that New South Wales does not have a well-established market for supported transport. Therefore, the bill anticipates standards being assured through other mechanisms.

These will be developed through further consultation with the community, health service providers, aged care providers and supported transport providers. This will include, for example, consulting with private health facilities on existing standards under the Private Health Facilities Act to determine whether additional safeguards are required or whether current standards need revision. Consultation will also occur on whether more specific regulations are needed, for example, in respect of maintenance of vehicles, equipment, or training and accreditation of staff. In keeping with the light-touch approach adopted in the bill, while the Ministry of Health will consult on the need for additional regulations, these will be adopted only if a regulatory gap is identified.

The bill includes strong new enforcement powers. The Secretary of the Ministry of Health will be able to make an order prohibiting providers who breach statutory requirements from continuing to provide such services. The Secretary will also be able to place conditions on such service providers. It will be an offence for a person to provide supported non-emergency transport in contravention of a prohibition order. I commend the bill to the House.

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

HEALTH SERVICES AMENDMENT (PARAMEDICS) BILL 2015

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 3 June 2015.

Ms LINDA BURNEY (Canterbury) [4.38 p.m.]: The main purpose of the Health Services Amendment (Paramedics) Bill 2015 is to make it an offence for a person to use the title "paramedic" if they do not hold the required qualifications. The bill will make a distinction between trained, qualified paramedics and those providing other types of care. The bill also provides that someone who is authorised under the legislation of an Australian jurisdiction to be a paramedic is a paramedic in New South Wales. Currently, there is no restriction on the use of the title "paramedic", which is one of the main reasons that the bill has been brought forward.

I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Health Services Amendment (Paramedics) Bill 2015 and say at the outset that the Opposition will support this legislation. The bill seeks to amend the Act to ensure that the title "paramedic" is reserved only for practitioners who hold the relevant qualifications. I am sure other members will speak further in this debate about the importance of giving those who hold the relevant qualifications the right to use their appropriate title. It is also important that when the broader public hear the word "paramedic" they understand that it refers to those practitioners who hold relevant qualifications. Currently, there is little protection for the title "paramedic" and there are legitimate fears that it may be abused. That goes to my previous point about public safety and public understanding.

Paramedics are the front line of our healthcare system. I must emphasise how significant paramedics are. Few members in this Chamber, if any, would not have required the attention of paramedics for themselves or their family members. It is not possible to downplay the crucial and life-saving work that paramedics do in our healthcare system. Like all emergency services personnel, they are required to respond quickly and with calm heads in situations in which the majority of us would falter. As I said, so many of us know of good work that paramedics have done for us, our family members or other loved ones. I think I speak for everyone in this House when I convey our thanks to them.

Every day approximately 3,300 calls are made to 000. That means every 26 seconds a member of the public requires urgent assistance and in many of those cases paramedics will be the ones providing that assistance. We regularly hear stories of young children calling 000 because they cannot wake mum up or they have come home to find a terrible situation. There was a story like that just this week, and we often see other such heart-wrenching stories on television. That speaks volumes about

paramedics and demonstrates how the 000 number is well known by everyone in the community. A total of 26 per cent of all admissions to New South Wales hospitals arrive by ambulance. That means more than a quarter of individuals admitted to hospital relied on the Ambulance Service to get them there quickly and safely.

Not long ago I had the unfortunate experience of spending some time in an emergency ward, where I saw for myself the extraordinary patience, goodwill, good nature and skill of the paramedics as they brought endless people into the ward. Most paramedics in New South Wales are employed by the Ambulance Service of NSW and as such are subject to a range of conditions that help to ensure we have the highest-quality first responders in the world. The conditions include the NSW Health Code of Conduct; conditions imposed under the New South Wales poisons and therapeutic goods legislation, which governs the use of controlled pharmaceuticals such as opiates and other analgesics; and the Code of Conduct for Unregistered Health Professionals, which allows the Health Care Complaints Commission to investigate breaches of the code when ethical standards are compromised.

When we think about that code and those conditions we begin to understand why it is so important to fence off the title "paramedic" and restrict who can use it legitimately. As the Minister correctly pointed out in her second reading speech, the loophole that exists relates to the use of the title "paramedic". Paramedics are some of the most trusted professionals in the State and as such the public must be protected from individuals who seek to exploit the goodwill that comes with the title. That is self-explanatory.

The bill is largely symbolic. I use this opportunity to call on the Government to properly support paramedics who, like many others in our health system, are stretched to the limit. During the election campaign the shadow Minister for Health, the Leader of the Opposition and I met with a number of ambulance workers and paramedics from across New South Wales who were worried about their conditions and the future of ambulance services. Any member of this House who has spoken to a paramedic will have heard about their frustration at being forced to queue at emergency departments while waiting for their patients to be admitted.

We have heard discussions about bed block in the media this week and on a regular basis. During the time I spent at the emergency department I saw just how serious bed block can be and how it ties up the resources of our Ambulance Service. That is particularly relevant in some of our larger hospitals. The reality is that our 3,400 paramedics in New South Wales attend more than one million cases a year, which means that each paramedic in our State will attend 294 emergencies every year. That is remarkable when you think about the types of situations paramedics walk into, the circumstances they have to deal with and the personal burden they will carry from many of their experiences. We owe a great deal of respect and thanks to our paramedics for that.

We know that ambulance response times increased from 9.5 minutes in 2005-06 to 10.8 minutes in 2013-14. It is an established fact that time to treatment is an indicator of outcomes. Particularly in cases involving stroke—which I experienced in a very real way—and heart attack, it is crucial for paramedics to get patients stabilised and to hospital as quickly as possible. Late last month it was reported in the media that more than 1,300 serving ambulance officers had signed a petition calling on this Government to increase resourcing to the service because they care about the outcomes for their patients. Those problems will not be solved by symbolic changes. In cases such as that reported in the media, where an individual in the highest triage category was forced to wait 44 minutes before treatment, we cannot blame the Ambulance Service; we must ask about resources. While the Opposition welcomes the move to recognise officially the title of paramedic in line with South Australia and Tasmania, it does not serve as an adequate alternative to providing proper resources. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) [4.48 p.m.]: Once again I am 100 per cent behind our local paramedics. The Health Services Amendment (Paramedics) Bill 2015 will clarify the distinction between qualified paramedics and those providing other types of care such as first aid or non-emergency patient

transport. The bill will deliver on our election commitment to make it an offence for anyone to use the title of paramedic if they do not hold the required qualifications, which will be set out in the regulations to the legislation. That will help ensure patient safety while giving further acknowledgment to the high level of clinical training required to become a paramedic in New South Wales.

In bringing this legislation before the Parliament we acknowledge the important and vital role of first aiders in our community. They are people who are not qualified to the level of a paramedic but who nonetheless provide first aid to persons in our community, for example, at sporting events, mine sites, within the workplace or in immediate response to an accident or emergency. I for one acknowledge and have a great deal of respect for paramedics in our communities. I am privileged to have accompanied my local ambulance paramedics on a 12-hour night shift on either a Friday or a Saturday night. I saw the dedication, the commitment, the caring and the high level of professionalism on display that night. It was quite a busy night with a number of car accidents, cardiac arrests and some young fellows who were burnt fairly severely down on the beach. The paramedics attended each of those jobs with the same amount of diligence. I was very much in awe of their capability and the way they responded to the wider community. So I think this bill is important.

All first aiders perform a valuable role in our community, and their work and role will not be affected by this bill. That is an important point. We have grown up with seeing St John Ambulance officers at events, particularly sporting events. That is a fantastic organisation with fantastic volunteers. Many events in our wider community could not be held without those volunteers. This bill, however, will ensure that only people who are appropriately qualified, trained or experienced can call themselves paramedics. This is important for patients receiving care and it is also important for those close to the patients who are providing support, such as patients' friends, colleagues or family members.

Paramedics are educated and trained over many years to provide complex health interventions and to administer drugs of addiction. Their training also gives them vital skills to carry out their task in difficult and challenging circumstances so that patients receive optimal treatment. I note that paramedics not only do an excellent job in my area; they regularly travel around the world to attend to other people, particularly during natural disasters. A group went to New Zealand after earthquakes had occurred in that country. They travelled to Indonesia after tsunamis had struck. Several paramedics attended in Nepal when there were significant landslides, earthquakes et cetera. Paramedics not only look after local people but also put their lives on the line to assist around the world.

If a person calls themselves a paramedic, the community has a right to expect that that person has the appropriate qualifications and training. This bill will ensure exactly that. I have been advised that the Ministry of Health has consulted with private paramedic providers, relevant industrial organisations and the Ambulance Service of NSW, all of whom support the bill. I compliment the health Minister on bringing forward this legislation. I have also been assured that the Government will continue to consult all other stakeholders in drafting the regulations that will apply to the bill. Once again, I am 100 per cent for the Tweed, but I am also 100 per cent for all the paramedics of the Tweed.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) [4.53 p.m.]: I am pleased to participate in debate on the Health Services Amendment (Paramedics) Bill 2015 in my capacity as shadow Minister for Medical Research and shadow Minister for Mental Health. As the Deputy Leader of the Opposition outlined in her speech, the New South Wales Opposition will support the bill. This bill proposes to amend the Health Services Act 1997 to rectify a gap in the existing legislation. At present, there is no limitation on the use of the title "paramedic". This has resulted in a position whereby any individual, regardless of their level of medical training, skills and qualifications, could call themselves a paramedic. This bill, once enacted, will make a clear distinction between trained, qualified paramedics and those individuals who provide an equally important but different level of care, such as a first-aid response. The amendments within this bill will make it an offence for a person to use the title "paramedic" if they do not hold the required qualifications.

There are several ways to become a paramedic in New South Wales, including: vocational entry as a trainee paramedic to obtain a Diploma of Paramedical Science through the NSW Ambulance Education Centre in Rozelle; by completing a university or vocational degree relating to paramedical science including on-the-job practical training; or by transferring registration to New South Wales from a neighbouring jurisdiction. All members in this place would undoubtedly agree that the paramedics in our local communities are some of our most highly trained, educated and experienced professionals. In most cases, our paramedics are the life force that makes our health system tick, as they treat the sick and injured on the front line of an emergency, taking them to hospital if required.

To my knowledge, the Ambulance Service of NSW employs approximately 3,400 paramedics. I take this opportunity on behalf of the New South Wales Opposition to place on the public record my gratitude to and admiration for the many hundreds of paramedics who do their invaluable work every day in this State, and particularly in my electorate of Bankstown, by assisting and treating the sick and injured in their time of need. Our community puts a great deal of well-placed trust in the work of our exemplary paramedics, who are doing a fantastic job under what must be sometimes very trying and horrific conditions, particularly given the actions of and budget cuts undertaken by the Baird Liberal Government that have stretched their resources to the limit and significantly increased their workloads.

Sadly, the Premier has run on the board when it comes to prioritising profit over public health, with this Government disgracefully slashing more than \$3 billion from the health system. This has recently placed unbearable pressure on the Ambulance Service of NSW. Many tragic examples of late demonstrate the pressure that is being placed on the Ambulance Service. I would be surprised if anyone would object to that statement, given some of the terrible situations we have heard of recently involving loss of life as the result of an ambulance delay. Many paramedics throughout New South Wales report that they are getting stuck for long periods in emergency departments and are unable to discharge patients because there are no beds for them to go to. Is that not the truth? Is the Government suggesting that the pressure does not exist? Of course the pressure is there, and the resources are not in place to support paramedics. They have no choice but to wait with the patient in distress instead of getting back out into the community to assist and respond to other emergency calls.

This problem is commonly referred to as "trolley block". Sadly, the number of reports and instances of trolley block has been growing throughout New South Wales in recent years. I note that the member for Oatley is in the Chamber. He would know about that—somebody died tragically in his electorate recently. Longer ambulance response times are a growing concern. This year there have been several reports of serious bed block occurring at hospitals in Bankstown, Bathurst, Nepean and Liverpool, and at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and the Prince of Wales Hospital. I was particularly disturbed by reports in September last year of a mother of a two-month-old infant who was forced to give her child mouth-to-mouth treatment in the back seat of her family car while being driven to Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital by her husband because of a backlog of ambulances waiting to discharge patients at the hospital.

In May this year—I note that the member for Port Stephens is in the Chamber—there was a report of a 43-minute delay in an ambulance arriving to treat a two-year-old child from Bobs Farm. The member for Port Stephens met with the Harrison family and paramedics in Port Stephens, who also indicated that there is a great deal of stress on the service in meeting the community's needs. Of course, the family in that case were under incredible pressure because their two-year-old was having seizures. As a parent of three young children, I can only imagine what an horrific choice it is for a parent to make at such a time: Do they wait for an ambulance or do they take the risk and drive to the hospital? This is a dilemma for the Government and for all of us in this place because no parent should be put in that position. As I mentioned earlier, tragically on 9 July this year a 70-year-old man from Hurstville passed away following a 31-minute delay in responding to his emergency call.

The Ambulance Service of NSW is under increasing pressure. This Government has an overwhelming duty immediately to guarantee and prioritise patient safety by taking real action that

supports our hardworking and overworked paramedics, doctors, nurses and allied health workers with increased funding and resources—notwithstanding an increase in the number of paramedics to assist those in need. The Health Services Union has already said there is a shortage of paramedics and that delays in hospitals are leaving patients in Sydney dangerously exposed. I note that the shadow Minister for Health, the Hon. Walt Secord, has highlighted concerns, particularly in recent months. He has exposed the shortcomings of the Minister for Health and her utter lack of vision and understanding of the needs of the Ambulance Service of NSW, in particular.

A statistic that I find particularly concerning—and this was mentioned by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition—is the increase in median ambulance response times in New South Wales from 9.5 minutes in 2005-06 to almost 11 minutes in 2013-14. That is a dramatic increase of two minutes in less than 10 years. It is almost two minutes longer than the response time in Queensland, the Australian Capital Territory, Northern Territory, Western Australia and South Australia. Ill patients are waiting far too long for an ambulance in New South Wales due to this Government's staffing shortages and the \$3 billion worth of cuts to the health system. As the demand for ambulance services and assistance from paramedics only increases—and it will continue to increase year on year—I call on the New South Wales Government to address urgently the concerns of our hardworking paramedics and to support them immediately with the resources they need to do their job.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) [5.01 p.m.]: I speak in support of the Health Services Amendment (Paramedics) Bill 2015. At the outset, I thank the member for Canterbury—which is an interesting thing for me to do—for indicating that the Opposition supports the bill. This bill is quite a discrete, small and sensible step—and one that I think we all support—towards providing protection for the title of paramedic and recognition of the specific qualifications and expertise that that role entails. I am a little disappointed in the contribution of the member for Bankstown. I thought that in this new term of Parliament those opposite might turn over a new leaf. For several years now some members opposite have made the ridiculous assertion that there has been a \$3 billion cut in Health funding. Let me put some facts on the table.

The first budget of the O'Farrell Government increased the Health budget by approximately 5 per cent on spending during the last year of the Labor Government. So when we came to government we spent about 5 per cent more than those opposite had, and we have increased the total spend on Health by more than the rate of inflation every year since. If there had been a \$3 billion cut one would expect to see a decrease in the total spend, but that has not happened. Those opposite can look at the budget papers for each of those years all they want. If they can find a year when the Health budget did not increase in real terms, let alone was cut, they should come and tell me. Those opposite know that their assertions about a budget cut are untrue. Every member of the Labor Party has known all along that it is not true; there was never any \$3 billion cut. The lies that have come repeatedly from some of those opposite discredit all Labor members. Those opposite went away to Kiama. They should have a good look at themselves, turn over a new leaf and stop peddling lies.

Returning to the issue of paramedics, and the Ambulance Service of NSW in particular, I join members opposite in recognising the sterling service and wonderful contribution of paramedics. There are certainly times when paramedics are the people we most look forward to seeing. Surveys conducted each year find that they are amongst the most trusted of all professionals. I pay particular credit to them for the expertise they have gained over the years. The role has certainly upskilled. The paramedics within our Ambulance Service today are qualified to undertake some quite specialised interventions and procedures to keep patients safe until they can receive the specialist care available at hospitals.

I am sure that every family has a story about the Ambulance Service. About eight or nine years ago my son had an accident. He fell off his bicycle and was badly hurt. His bicycle helmet was smashed into a thousand pieces—which, I understand, is what it is designed to do in absorbing the impact—and he suffered a neck injury. So we called for an ambulance. There were some frightening moments while he lay on the ground with a neck injury. We did not know what would happen. The paramedics who attended

showed tremendous professionalism, calmness, expertise, skill and reassurance. Thankfully, my son recovered fully; the neck injury was not as bad as we had feared. But the truth is when the chips are down we need paramedics, and they come. I pay credit to them. Sometimes they have to work under difficult circumstances. Sometimes strange people in the community make life difficult for ambulance crews, fire crews and so on—

Mr Edmond Atalla: And governments.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY: I was thinking particularly of antisocial behaviour; I am not sure where the member for Mount Druitt is coming from with that interjection. I certainly pay credit to paramedics and the work they do for the community. The Government and the Opposition stand together in acknowledging what paramedics do for us. About 3,400 paramedics are employed by the Ambulance Service of NSW, and they constitute the majority of paramedics in the State. They certainly deserve this recognition and the protection of their title to acknowledge what they do for us. I am sorry that this debate has become political; I did not think it would be like that. But I must make a slight correction about ambulance response times.

We all recognise that bed block is a reality. It has been happening for years and addressing it is a continual challenge for governments and hospitals. Every step we take in addressing this issue is a good one. For instance, the vast investment that this Government is making to expand the capacity of the Blacktown Mount Druitt Hospital will contribute greatly to reducing bed block there. It is only by expanding capacity and making a total investment of more than \$700 million that we can address the issue. Of course, it is a slow fix—no-one can build a \$700 million project overnight and we must work incrementally to improve the situation. When this Government came to office the average response time for potentially life-threatening emergency calls was 10.6 minutes in 2010-11. In the previous year it was 10.29 minutes. The figures for the current year are split into two categories, and this is where the member for Bankstown has misled the House slightly.

We now have what we refer to as a priority 1A category and a priority 1 category. The priority 1A response time in 2013-14 was 7.65 minutes. The priority 1 response time was 10.78 minutes, as referred to. Taken together, we see that there has been an improvement in response times. I would like to see them quicker, absolutely. I would like to see an ambulance arrive instantly in a life-threatening situation. But we live in the real world. We have to do the very best we can and we must work continually to improve. But let us not mislead people and pretend that things are not as they are. This Government has invested a great deal in health—more every year. It is working hard to improve the situation. I do not want to politicise a debate about recognising the good work of paramedics, their skills, their expertise, their professionalism and their right to the protection of their identity. I fully support the bill.

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) [5.09 p.m.]: I make a contribution to debate on the Health Services Amendment (Paramedics) Bill 2015. I am pleased that the Opposition is supporting this legislation because it is important for us to recognise the crucial role that paramedics play in the New South Wales health system. It is important to acknowledge the compelling stories and contributions that we have heard from members about the role that paramedics have played in their personal lives. As the Deputy Leader of the Opposition rightly said, paramedics are saving lives every day. It is their job and we cannot thank them enough for what they do for families every day. The bill makes it an offence for a person to use the title "paramedic" if the person does not hold the required qualifications. This is important because currently there is no restriction on the use of the title "paramedic" in the health system. This legislation will make a distinction between qualified paramedics who have undergone the requisite study and training and those who are providing other types of care.

Although the Government is addressing these issues, which the Opposition applauds and supports, it is turning a blind eye to some of the major issues in the New South Wales health system. One of them is the crippling bed block in hospitals across the State, which is putting more strain on a health system that is, at times, stretched to its ultimate breaking point. As the Government takes time to

recognise there is a bed block crisis in New South Wales hospitals, more pressure is being put on our paramedics, which is not fair. Every day I am inundated with concerns raised by members of my community about local hospitals. In a recent community survey sent to residents throughout my electorate, local hospitals were rated overwhelmingly as the most important issue to families in the communities that I represent in this place. It is not uncommon for me to hear stories about patients who are in need of urgent care or who are in chronic pain waiting for up to 12 hours for a bed. As everyone has heard, women are giving birth to babies in car parks. It is not uncommon for me to hear about paramedics outside emergency departments with patients in their ambulances waiting to be discharged.

When paramedics are queueing outside hospital emergency rooms to drop off patients in need of urgent care it means there are fewer paramedics on our roads. When there are fewer paramedics on our roads across the State, we have tragic situations where people are dying because ambulance response times are increasing. This is in addition to patients who are waiting for unacceptably long periods in the State's hospital emergency departments. It is a huge problem in the region of Western Sydney that I represent. The Australian Bureau of Statistics has revealed that patients in Western Sydney still face the longest waiting times in the State's hospital emergency departments. Nepean Hospital, which serves my community, is one of the most overworked emergency departments in New South Wales with four in 10 people waiting more than the national benchmark of four hours for treatment. This is unacceptable.

We know that the Ambulance Service of NSW has sent work instructions to paramedics directing emergency staff to babysit patients in hospital waiting rooms. In the booming region of Western Sydney, we must ensure that our hospitals are adequately resourced to meet the demand of population increases. This region is in the midst of a baby boom and has some of the fastest-selling new release areas in the State. People need to be confident that when they have a sick child or when an emergency occurs—God forbid—they will not be left behind by the health system. The hardworking staff in hospitals such as Nepean Hospital are critically under-resourced and they are being forced to do more with less. There have been cuts of \$3 billion from the State and \$60 billion nationally to Health and hospitals. This is the picture that is before us. There is a bed crisis in this State in our public hospitals. There is a crisis when paramedics are waiting outside hospitals for patients to be discharged. There is a crisis when people who need emergency help do not get it because ambulance response times are increasing.

Whilst the bill acknowledges the important work that paramedics do, as it must, it does not address the fundamental flaws within the health system and the pressures that paramedics—whom we claim to support—are facing every day. It was extremely disappointing, therefore, that the State Government did not allocate funding in this year's budget for its promised upgrade to Nepean Hospital. The hospital is surrounded by new release areas that are growing before our eyes, yet the Government does not think that the population increase warrants an increase in health services. It is unacceptable that the region of Western Sydney, which is shouldering the lion's share of Sydney's population growth, did not warrant a line item in the New South Wales budget. It has been left behind by the State Government.

The Premier and the Minister for Health must realise the crisis situation in some of our State's hospitals and the increased pressure that is being felt by our paramedics who are shouldering the burden. The Opposition supports the bill because it supports the work being done by frontline health professionals. However, the Government could do a lot more to support the important work done by those professionals every day by ensuring more paramedics are on our roads and by funding urgent upgrades to hospitals in this State such as Nepean Hospital.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) [5.16 p.m.]: It is an honour to speak on the Health Services Amendment (Paramedics) Bill 2015. The Baird Government is fulfilling a 2015 election promise by introducing the bill, which proposes to amend the Health Services Act to protect the title "paramedic". Paramedics are considered to be one of the most trusted professions in our State and the bill goes a long way to protect that profession. The level of public recognition is well deserved, given paramedics perform their duty with the utmost professionalism and compassion without expecting recognition in return.

Often people encounter a paramedic after some trauma or under stressful and difficult circumstances, and we must ensure that the most qualified people are there when people need them most. A paramedic is defined in the bill to mean "a person who holds qualifications, or who has received training, or who has experience, prescribed by the regulations", which is expected to include a range of Australian university and vocational paramedic science courses, or a person authorised under the law of another jurisdiction to call themselves a paramedic. South Australia and Tasmania have legislation protecting the title "paramedic".

Under the bill it is an offence for a person who is not a paramedic to hold themselves out to be a paramedic. This Government has a strong and proven record when it comes to delivering on health outcomes for the people of New South Wales. The bill supports this statement. In my electorate of Oatley, people know that the Baird Government is serious about delivering health services. One only has to look at St George Hospital, which is a hub of activity with work well underway in rebuilding one of the best hospitals in the country. Work on the biggest upgrade of St George Hospital in more than 30 years has started already after our community campaign to upgrade the hospital was successful. I was pleased to secure \$307 million to redevelop St George Hospital, which will deliver a brand new seven-storey acute services building that will be built on top of the new emergency department. In October last year the brand new world-class \$41 million emergency department was opened.

Pleasingly, work has commenced on stage 2 of this redevelopment, which will include a new car park and a new hospital entrance on Kensington Street where the old emergency department was opened earlier this month. But it is not only St George Hospital that is benefiting. Over the next four years the Baird Government will spend more than \$5 billion to build and upgrade more than 60 hospital and health services. This will bring the total spend on Health infrastructure to almost \$10 billion since the 2011 election. Indeed, since coming to office in 2011 we have recruited 205 additional paramedics and enhanced aeromedical services, and we are rebuilding ambulance stations that Labor neglected for 16 years.

But there is more to be done. That is why this Government has a \$150 million strategy to ensure that NSW Ambulance facilities are fit for the future. This funding will see priority stations built at Bankstown, Blacktown, Kogarah, Liverpool and Penrith—five in total. I drove past the Kogarah site yesterday and it is well underway. This bill will clarify the distinction between qualified paramedics and those providing other types of care such as first aid or non-emergency patient transport. Most paramedics in New South Wales are employees of the Ambulance Service of New South Wales, which service employs around 3,400 paramedics. Those paramedics are also subject to the code of conduct for unregistered health professionals in New South Wales.

The bill seeks to protect the public further by ensuring that only suitably qualified persons can call themselves a paramedic and, importantly, the required qualifications will be set out in regulations under the legislation. This will ensure that patient safety is paramount and acknowledges the high level of clinical training required to become a paramedic in this State. I have a cousin and other family members who are paramedics. Paramedics are trained over many years. They are highly skilled at assessing patient conditions, administering life-saving drugs and performing procedures to ensure that patients receive optimal care, and this bill recognises that.

If a person calls themselves a paramedic then the community has a right to expect that that person has the appropriate qualifications, training or experience, and this legislation will ensure that. But New South Wales is not alone in wanting this; protection of title is already in place in Tasmania and South Australia. I have been advised that the Ministry of Health has consulted with private paramedic providers, relevant industrial organisations and the Ambulance Service of New South Wales and they, like the Opposition, support the bill.

The Government will continue to consult with these stakeholders in drafting the regulation under this bill.

In conclusion, the bill will make clear the distinction between trained, qualified paramedics and

those providing other types of care, including first aid or non-emergency patient transport. It will make it an offence for any person to use the title "paramedic" if they do not hold the required qualifications. The required qualifications will be set out in regulations under the legislation. This bill will ensure that patients in New South Wales receive the best clinical care and have confidence in the paramedics treating them and their loved ones. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) [5.23 p.m.]: I speak to the Health Services Amendment (Paramedics) Bill, introduced by the Minister for Health. The Minister would like to amend the Health Services Act 1997 to restrict the use of the title "paramedic" and to make it an offence for any person to use the title of "paramedic" if they do not have the required qualification and are not registered by the Ambulance Service of New South Wales. I understand that this is of concern, and I support the bill, but this is a unique opportunity to look at the current system as a whole and at the pressures currently being placed on paramedics. These specialists are being placed in untenable situations, demonstrated by the bed block at emergency departments and the reduced services on our roads. Paramedics need our attention and our support. They need us to relieve the pressure on the health system. They need representation.

On 17 June in the *Newcastle Herald* an article by Donna Page highlighted the current situation. Ms Page wrote about how paramedics were being forced to care for a backlog of patients in the corridors of the John Hunter Hospital emergency department following surges in demand heading into winter. Paramedics must stay with their patients on trolleys until they are triaged, and this can strand them at hospitals for hours when they could be out in the community helping others. On Tuesday 9 June it was reported that up to seven patients, including one who was receiving pain relief and another with a cardiac monitor, waited on stretchers in those corridors following the long weekend. This meant that at one point there was only one ambulance available in the area to respond to 000 calls because so many people were queueing at hospitals. It is irresponsible for the Liberal-Nationals Coalition to allow patients, including those with chest pain, stroke paralysis and other emergency medical situations, to languish for three hours. It is simply not good enough. New South Wales and the electorate of Newcastle deserves better.

Newcastle is the second biggest city in New South Wales. We are talking about the Newcastle area and the greater Hunter area. To have one ambulance available to a city that is the seventh biggest in Australia is a horrendous statistic. To have people waiting for hours in a hospital corridor is not good enough. What if it had been your father, mother, sister or son? The Government needs to tend to these issues. This also followed the chilling news that the John Hunter Hospital has failed to reach the benchmark for treating people in its emergency department within four hours—36 per cent waited longer than the accepted benchmark of 20 per cent. Please do not misunderstand me: I completely empathise with the workers in the health system. Paramedics, nurses, doctors and allied health workers all work incredibly hard and are trying to do their jobs with restricted resources and reduced budgets. They are stretched to breaking point and we need to address these issues. Indeed, we should not only stand behind the definition, which is the essence of this bill, but also properly support our health services and those who work in them.

Currently paramedics across this State are working on their days off to fill gaps in their rosters, and long hours of overtime are being incurred. Paramedics are being forced to wait with patients in ambulances outside emergency departments if no beds are available—trolley block. The Minister needs to address trolley block. For too long this Government has ignored long response times due to limited budgets and resources. These delays are putting the safety of patients at risk. Paramedics should be in the community responding to emergencies rather than sitting outside emergency departments. Every minute counts in an emergency situation. The current practise is putting lives at risk. A tragic incident that recently occurred just outside of Newcastle is a graphic example of this.

Cooper Harrison, a two-year-old boy, had lost consciousness. His eyes were rolling back and his head shook as he suffered repeated seizures. His parents rang for an ambulance. They did not expect it

to take long because the ambulance station is only 10 minutes down the road from their home at Bobs Farm. One can only imagine that his parents went through their personal version of hell as they watched their little boy have intermittent seizures in the 43 minutes they waited for an ambulance to arrive. But that was not the worst of it. When they finally got to the hospital four of the ambulance bays were taken up with other ambulances that could not offload their patients. There was gridlock. It is no secret that over the past few weeks the Ambulance Service of New South Wales has been wracked by delays. Paramedics contend it has been created by a perfect storm of not enough ambulances to meet demand and delays at hospitals across the State too full to admit patients. This means that in some cases ambulances are waiting for hours at emergency departments.

The problem is not going away and the Government must commit to addressing this growing crisis. The prospect of waiting for up to 43 minutes for an ambulance to arrive is not good enough. I have a two-year-old daughter, and thinking about such a delay sends a shiver down my spine. I would be tearing my hair out. Another issue is the policy of "closest vehicle" response. Often when ambulances covering the Bobs Farm area are forced to travel to John Hunter Hospital they are then kept to respond to jobs in the Newcastle built-up area. They are not able to return to the area they are supposed to be servicing.

The Baird Government has stripped so many resources from our paramedics it now appears faster for people to make their own way to the hospital, which will result in speeding, potential accidents and further clogging of the system. We need real solutions to the problem. The problem is that, with a Liberal Government in power in the New South Wales and Federal parliaments, we will not see an end to these problems sooner rather than later. The Abbott Government has cut \$80 billion from the States and that follows \$3 billion cuts to health in New South Wales in the last term.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: Rubbish.

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP: Absolutely. The Premier will not be standing up to Tony Abbott any time soon to request the removal of cuts to the New South Wales Health budget. In fact, he is trying to increase our GST to 15 per cent. Did he not get enough from the \$7 billion stamp duty bonus? What is the point of having a record-breaking surplus if the health system is falling to its knees? What is the good of a triple-A credit rating when children having seizures and people with stroke paralysis are waiting in hospital corridors for treatment? What is the good of being able to show tourists new buildings and upgraded train carriages when our own people are crying out for help? The Labor Opposition understands this. In the last election we campaigned for more funding. We promised to recruit an additional 500 paramedics and increase ambulance resources in the first term, thus reducing the number of paramedics that would need to work in their days off or do excessive overtime.

An investment in the Ambulance Service of New South Wales would speed up response times and would support our dedicated paramedics. A Labor government would invest in frontline health services, unlike the Liberals, who have slashed \$3 billion from the Health budget—shame. Why not invest the record \$2.1 billion surplus in basic health services? Paramedics play one of the most crucial roles in our health system. They are the first responders to homes, workplaces and other places when someone is in urgent need of medical assistance. The Government needs to respond to the health emergency that is playing out in New South Wales. It is time for us to respond to their call for assistance. It is time for the Government to answer the call.

Mr GLENN BROOKES (East Hills) [5.31 p.m.]: I speak in support of the Health Services Amendment (Paramedics) Bill 2015. Under the hardworking Minister for Health, the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals have achieved major improvements in health services across the electorates. At the forefront of the health system are our hardworking paramedics, and they are often the first professionals we see when a medical emergency occurs. Paramedics have been voted as having the most trusted profession in Australia. To maintain this level of trust we must restrict the title of "paramedics" to ensure that those operating under the title have been well trained and equipped, and are

fully qualified. Under this bill, "paramedic" will be defined to mean a person who holds qualifications in or has received training prescribed by the regulations, or a person authorised under the law of another jurisdiction to call themselves paramedics.

This bill is not the only action being taken by the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government to assist the hard work that our ambulance service provides. The Baird Government will spend more than \$5 billion to build and upgrade more than 60 hospitals and health services over the next four years. This brings the total amount spent on health infrastructure since forming government in 2011 to almost \$10 billion. This is good news for the people of my electorate, as part of this fund will enable construction to start on the Bankstown ambulance station on Canterbury Road, which services our area.

I think it is important to point out that this bill does not belittle the important work of other first-aiders in our communities. Many, often in a voluntary capacity, provide first-aid care for the sick and injured, comforting and stabilising patients until paramedics arrive. These first-aiders, whether attending to sporting injuries, workplace incidents or a whole range of other events, also provide a great service. For that the community—and, I am sure, the whole Parliament—is grateful. This bill importantly protects the title of "paramedic" and ensures that only those who are appropriately qualified can call themselves paramedics.

Many of us owe a great deal to our paramedics. Even if our lives have not directly been saved by them, I am sure all of us, at the very least, know of loved ones close to us who have been saved by their care. Paramedics were first introduced to the Ambulance Service in 1976. At this time there were only 16 officers who completed the paramedic course. Since this time, the number of paramedics has increased dramatically to more than 3,400. The amount of equipment they have at hand has also increased dramatically, increasing the number of life-saving activities paramedics can carry out on the way to hospital. Whilst the number and abilities of these paramedics continue to grow, so too does this Government's commitment to them. This bill demonstrates that we recognise the important work our paramedics do, and is just a small way to show our thanks. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) [5.36 p.m.]: I support the Health Services Amendment (Paramedics) Bill 2015. Paramedics do an excellent job in our community. In my opinion they work in the most trusted profession. It would be remiss of us to say anything else. This bill is important because it will correctly title "paramedics" and it will define what they are qualified to do. But introducing a bill that changes or clarifies the title will not address the crisis that is currently experienced in the New South Wales health system—particularly in the Ambulance Service. Its members are under enormous pressure due to cuts in the Health budget, which have reduced the number of ambulances available.

Mr Mark Coure: That is rubbish.

Mr EDMOND ATALLA: I am talking from experience. I have been speaking to many paramedics who are frustrated because this Government has not addressed the core issue. Introducing a bill to change a title does not help these paramedics get the resources that they need to fulfil their jobs. The crisis in the ambulance system stems from a bigger crisis in the hospital system. This Government has ignored the core problem—addressing the hospital system to free up paramedics who are engaged in bed gridlock day after day. Earlier this year the Government's solution to the number of paramedics was to say that we will allow our firefighters to address medical situations. It is the craziest thing I have heard in my life.

Mr Mark Coure: First responders.

Mr EDMOND ATALLA: The member for Oatley says "first responders". When I have a heart attack and ring 000, and expect an ambulance to arrive, a firetruck will turn up with a hose. Is that the Government's answer to addressing the problems in the hospital and ambulance systems? The answer is to put resources into the hospital system. Mount Druitt Hospital has only two ambulances to service

83,000 people. The number of ambulances servicing Mount Druitt has dwindled to two, so people have to rely on ambulances coming all the way from the Blue Mountains. That is not good enough.

I have seen this firsthand. During the election campaign, while pre-polling outside Mount Druitt library, The Greens candidate collapsed with what was thought to be a heart attack. We called the ambulance. Twenty-two minutes later, an ambulance arrived from the Blue Mountains. Mount Druitt Hospital was one minute away, and there were no ambulances available to assist someone with a heart attack. We had to wait for an ambulance from the Blue Mountains, and it did not take him to Mount Druitt Hospital because there is no cardiac ward there. The ambulance had to take him to Nepean Hospital, a further 20 minutes away.

The Government should stop playing with people's lives. The reduction in services at Mount Druitt Hospital is putting pressure on neighbouring hospitals. Mount Druitt Hospital opened in 1982 as a fully functional, A1-class hospital. It was a 200-bed hospital. Today, under this Government, the hospital is operating with fewer than 100 beds, no cardiac ward, no emergency ward, no emergency surgery ward and no medical ward. All Mount Druitt Hospital has now is a palliative care ward, a rehabilitation unit and a children's ward. It is misleading for the community of Mount Druitt that, when they front up to Mount Druitt Hospital with an emergency and time is of the essence, they are transported to a neighbouring hospital. That puts pressure on the neighbouring hospitals of Nepean and Blacktown.

I speak from experience. Two weeks ago my mother-in-law suffered a heart attack. We called the ambulance. She was taken to Blacktown Hospital because that is where the cardiac ward is. She received excellent service from the medical staff because they are professionals. But she remained in the emergency department for two days because there were no beds available in the cardiac ward. What happened while she was occupying an emergency bed for two days? There were patients waiting on trolleys because there were no beds in the emergency department. That is disgraceful.

Whilst this bill is commendable, it does nothing to address the ambulance situation. Do not speak to the Opposition; speak to the paramedics. Ask the paramedics what they think about the resources that the Government is providing to them—zilch. The Government is providing no resources to paramedics. Paramedics are doing their best with the resources they have. I cannot emphasise enough that funding the health system is the most critical thing that this Government has to do. The Government cannot escape that. It needs to stop playing Russian roulette with people's lives.

Mr Mark Coure: We have increased spending in health.

Mr EDMOND ATALLA: How has spending in health increased when \$25 billion was cut from the Federal budget and \$3 billion from the State budget? The Government cut \$3 billion in Health spending from the State budget, gave back \$1 billion, then patted itself on the back and said, "Look: We have given you \$1 billion." Spending is going backwards. Do the sums.

Mr Mark Coure: How much have we spent at Blacktown?

Mr EDMOND ATALLA: How much has the Government spent at Mount Druitt? Why add to the pressure on Blacktown when there is a growing community at Mount Druitt? There will be 4,000 people moving into Marsden Park. There is no forward thinking by this Government to address that situation. All we have seen is Government members patting themselves on the back and saying, "Look how good we are," while the health system is collapsing before their eyes. The Government should stop playing Russian roulette with people's lives before it is too late. It should stop putting unnecessary pressure on paramedics and give them the resources they need. This legislation is a good start in defining what needs to be done, but the Government needs to do more. The Government needs to put health ahead of dollars. That has to be the policy. I commend the bill to the House and ask the Government to take note of what paramedics are saying, which is, "We need resources."

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Adam Marshall): Order! Before I call the member for Seven Hills, I remind members of Standing Order 76. In doing so, I will read the object of the bill, which is:

... to amend the *Health Services Act 1997* to prevent a person who does not have recognised qualifications, training or experience from holding himself or herself out to be a paramedic.

During the debate, I, as well as previous Chairs, have extended members a lot of latitude on Standing Order 76. I remind members to respect that latitude and not take it too far, or they will incur the wrath of the Chair.

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) [5.46 p.m.]: I commend the Health Services Amendment (Paramedics) Bill 2015 to the House. It is a pleasure to stand opposite some members of Parliament from Western Sydney. Welcome back. The bill will make amendments to the Health Services Act 1997. I fondly recall that, as a young police officer in Western Sydney, I was fortunate that there was a large ambulance station in the heart of the local area command where I worked. I say "fortunate" because, when attending serious car accidents at three o'clock in the morning, it was comforting and reassuring to me to have experienced paramedics alongside me, not only assisting by doing their job but also giving me support as I attempted to do mine. It is for that reason that I have, ever since those days, held paramedics in very high regard.

Currently in New South Wales the profession of paramedic is well regulated but unfortunately there is still no restriction on the use of the title of "paramedic". This bill will make clear the distinction between trained, qualified paramedics and those providing other types of care, including first aid or non-emergency patient transport. It will make it an offence for any person to use the title of "paramedic" if they do not hold the required qualifications. The required qualifications will be set out in regulations under the legislation. As the Minister for Health said before the election:

This bill is a vote of confidence in the clinical capabilities of our state's paramedics and an acknowledgement of the life-saving role they play in providing out of hospital medical care. The protection of title will also give patients and their loved ones the confidence that when in the hands of a NSW paramedic, they are receiving the very best clinical care.

Most paramedics in New South Wales are employees of the Ambulance Service of New South Wales. There are around 3,400 paramedics employed by the Ambulance Service, which represents 80 to 90 per cent of all paramedics in New South Wales. As I mentioned, paramedics are well regulated in New South Wales. In particular, members of the Ambulance Service of NSW are subject to the NSW Health Code of Conduct. Paramedics are also subject to the code of conduct for registered health professionals in New South Wales. That code sets out a number of standards to protect the safety of the public. This bill seeks to protect the public further by ensuring that only suitably qualified persons can call themselves a paramedic, fulfilling the 2015 election commitment made by the Premier and the Minister for Health.

Under the bill it will be an offence for a person who is not a paramedic to hold themselves out to be a paramedic. A "paramedic" is defined in the bill as a person who holds qualifications or has received training prescribed by the regulations or a person authorised under the law of another jurisdiction to call themselves a paramedic. In addition, the Secretary of the Ministry of Health will be able to authorise persons who have sufficient experience to call themselves a paramedic. This will engage persons currently practising as paramedics but who do not have the prescribed qualifications.

The Liberals and Nationals have a proud record of achievement when it comes to health. Over the last term of government we made our priorities very clear as we transformed the health system in a revolutionary way. Services have improved and the quality of care has risen. In this term the Baird Government intends to start where it left off. We will spend more than \$5 billion to build and upgrade more than 60 hospitals and health services over the next four years. This will bring the total spend on Health infrastructure to almost \$10 billion since 2011. The Government has recruited 205 additional

paramedics since coming to office in 2011, has enhanced aeromedical services and is rebuilding ambulance stations. Response times have improved with the most recent Auditor-General's report showing the median ambulance response time for all potentially life-threatening cases in New South Wales has decreased for the first time in five years.

The Government is committed to saving the lives of those who rely on our health system and it is committed to improving the lives of the people of New South Wales. The Government is committed to building the ambulance stations of the future and improving response times to reflect the dynamic nature of the paramedic profession. Our paramedics provide world-class care and I am pleased this Government is investing in the world-class facilities they deserve. The NSW Ambulance Sydney Metropolitan Infrastructure Strategy will improve response times by reorganising and enhancing infrastructure to better serve paramedics and patients.

This Government is also investing \$150 million in a strategy to ensure New South Wales ambulance facilities are fit for the future. The funding will enable construction to start on the five priority stations at Bankstown, Kogarah, Liverpool, Penrith and, of course, Blacktown, which so many people in the Seven Hills electorate rely upon. This is not about point scoring, it is about outcomes, and this Government has delivered excellent outcomes time and time again for the people of Western Sydney. I know for a fact that every Western Sydney member of Parliament in this place knows that.

This bill will clarify the distinction between qualified paramedics and those providing other types of care, such as first-aid or non-emergency patient transport. The bill will deliver on our election commitment to make it an offence for any person to use the title of "paramedic" if they do not hold the required qualifications. The required qualifications will be set out in regulations under the legislation. This will help ensure patient safety while further acknowledging the high level of clinical training required for a person to become a paramedic in New South Wales. In bringing this legislation before Parliament we acknowledge the important and vital role of first aiders in our community—that is, people who are not qualified to the level of a paramedic but who nonetheless provide first aid to persons in our community, be it at sporting events, mining sites or workplaces or as an immediate response to an accident or emergency.

All first aiders provide a valuable role in our community and it is crucial to note that their work and their role will not be affected by this bill. The bill will ensure that only persons who are appropriately qualified, trained or experienced can call themselves or hold themselves out to be a paramedic. This bill will give patients and their loved ones the confidence that when they are in the hands of a New South Wales paramedic they are receiving the very best clinical care. I commend the bill to the House.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) [5.54 p.m.]: I am proud to support the Health Services Amendment (Paramedics) Bill 2015, which acknowledges the high level of clinical training required to become a paramedic in New South Wales and gives certainty to those who use paramedical services that they are getting the best possible care. I look forward to seeing this legislation being pushed at a national level so there is national registration for paramedics. Many people who are active in the NSW Rural Fire Service, as I am, or in the State Emergency Service or in other groups have worked with paramedics at the scene of car accidents and other unfortunate events and we have seen the quality of their care.

To tell a personal story: Some 30 years ago I was the victim of a criminal assault. The criminals who attacked me fractured my skull, knocked out my teeth and caused other injuries. If not for the paramedics that day—who I never knew; no-one ever knows who these people are that save our lives—who took me to the district hospital and from there to a major hospital for head injuries, I would not be here today. We must respect and acknowledge that type of level of care and determination to look after the people who are their patients. We must ensure funding for these paramedics and we must ensure that the health system supports them.

The electorate of Prospect has Fairfield Hospital in the south in Smithfield and is also serviced by Blacktown, Liverpool and Westmead hospitals. Unfortunately, all those hospitals are experiencing

trolley-block or bed-block as ambulances arrive at emergency departments. That is stopping the work of these paramedics; it means they are tied up time and time again waiting with patients in emergency areas. I think at one stage Blacktown hospital had a waiting time for the admission of some patients of two days—certainly it was more than 24 hours. We hear similar stories about Fairfield Hospital, which is chronically under resourced. The emergency department is not much bigger than the benches in this Chamber and it used to be a walk-in clinic.

A master plan has been agreed for Fairfield Hospital and the green light has been given by the Government but there was not a cent of funding for it in the budget. Not a cent was given to the hand clinic, which was transferred from Liverpool Hospital to Fairfield Hospital, to get it out of demountable facilities. I do not know about anyone else, but if I wanted to have surgery on my hand or if I wanted to consult an expert physician I would not want to go to a demountable building out the back. However, that is what people are facing at Fairfield Hospital. Paramedics are forced to wait with patients and ambulances outside emergency departments in many of these hospitals because there are simply no beds available in the emergency departments or in the wards themselves.

New South Wales paramedics attend more than one million cases a year and there are fewer than 3,500 paramedics. The Government has said that it has increased that number by 250 or so and I commend the Government for that, but we need more. We need more well-trained paramedics and we need a support mechanism to get students through university or other types of training so they can become paramedics. Increasing students' fees will not help them do that. Every day more than 3,500 calls are made to 000 and emergency assistance usually gets dispatched within about 30 seconds. However, the average number of ambulance responses has increased to close to 1.5 per cent in the past 12 months. This means that 26 per cent of all patients presenting in New South Wales in more than 200 hospitals arrive by ambulance—a huge number of people. But staffing shortages and cuts to NSW Health mean patients are often being forced to wait for a very long time in the ambulance before being admitted into an emergency department.

As we all know, paramedics are often at the front line, saving lives and ensuring patients are treated and managed appropriately until the patient can be transported and admitted to a hospital. It must be acknowledged that this is highly stressful work and, unfortunately, sometimes very dangerous work. The increasing incidence of mental health issues amongst our paramedics also needs to be acknowledged and funding provided for their care. The paramedics who work in the New South Wales health system are extremely important but they are also extremely vulnerable. They have to do very stressful work as first responders. It is fantastic that paramedics will be recognised as highly educated people who have had the training that is now required by the Act and I commend the Government for that. In conclusion, I am pleased that the Government is acting to ensure that the critical role that paramedics play in the health system is protected. Apart from the few things I have mentioned in my contribution that need to be pushed further, I believe this bill should be commended. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned on motion by Mr Chris Patterson and set down as an order of the day for a later hour.

Pursuant to sessional order private members' statements proceeded with.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) [6.00 p.m.]: I thank the women of this place for the faith they have placed in me in electing me as the New South Wales representative on the Commonwealth Women in Parliament [CWP] Steering Committee, and I thank our national chair, elected with the support of women from all sides of this Parliament, the Hon. Catherine Cusack, MLC, for her support for my

candidacy for this role. I also thank the Clerk of the House, Ms Ronda Miller, and her team for their support of the recent CWP Conference, which was held in July this year. The conference attracted a number of women parliamentarians from around Australia and, indeed, the world with representatives from Pacific nations such as Bougainville and the Cook Islands joining us.

One theme of the conference was increasing the number of women in Parliament, and a number of strategies were talked about in relation to this. One of those was the Male Champions of Change program. I was happy to see a number of men in this Chamber, including the Leader of the Opposition, put themselves forward to achieving more representation of women across our Parliament. I hope that they are able to provide excellent role models to other men in leadership positions both in this place and in the wider community. The representation of women in the Parliament is an important issue. I note that in the latest election, of the 28 new members elected to this place, 13 were women. That is a result of 46 per cent of the new members, which is getting close to equal representation but which is not quite there yet.

I want to analyse the statistics and put them on the parliamentary record. The good news is that there has been an increase of eight women into this Parliament as a result of those 28 members being elected; indeed, less than 18 per cent of those seats were held by women in the previous Parliament. That is an important achievement. The overall representation of women in Parliament has increased from about 20 per cent in the last Parliament to some 30 per cent in this Parliament. If we look at the contributions of various parties to this debate, it is Labor and The Greens who have done the heavy lifting on this issue, with 100 per cent of new Green parliamentarians and 50 per cent of new Labor parliamentarians in this place being women. Sadly, the Liberal-Nationals Coalition only achieved 25 per cent of new parliamentarians being women, with a total of three new women to this place. But I must note that my sisters from the bush, The Nationals, achieved 50 per cent of their four new parliamentarians elected as women. However, that makes the Liberal Party result even worse, as only one of the eight new Liberal members, or 12.5 per cent, is a woman.

Labor's achievement was even more impressive in that it carried across both this place and the Legislative Council, and involved the election of 22 new members to Parliament, 11 of whom were women. It was part of a sustained effort of mentoring by men and women members of Parliament and party officials, and the creation of an environment within our party that women needed to step up and that they should and will be treated as equals. We can debate whether or not quotas work, but the simple fact is that in my party, the Australian Labor Party, they are working. I was extremely proud to attend Labor's national conference in Melbourne a week ago where Labor committed to achieving 50 per cent representation of women for Labor across Australian Parliaments by 2025.

I thank Federal Senator Deborah O'Neil, Kaila Murnain, Tara Moriarty, Courtney Houssos and members of Emily's List, amongst a number of other women delegates, for their hard work to get this accepted into our platform and, most importantly, Labor's Federal leader, Bill Shorten, for his leadership on this issue. This will be hard work in some Australian parliaments due to another issue identified by the CWP conference last week, and that issue is the pipeline. One task I will be seeking to address in my role on the CWP steering committee in this Parliament is to increase the focus on women in local government, women in local and regional chambers of commerce, women in trade unions and women in community groups as all of these feed into the pipeline which produced women parliamentarians.

I want this Government to establish a joint Ministerial Advisory Council on Women in Local Government, which previously met twice a year to advise the Government on issues in local government for women, both from a representational and an executive perspective. It is clear that that contributed to the increase in the number of women candidates but unfortunately not in the number of actual elected government representatives. In my view, one factor in this is that many Liberal-Nationals members do not run with party branding at local government, which makes it harder for women to run, or to run in winnable positions, for local councils. There is no formal preselection process, and it becomes more of an old boys club that runs as a group of Independents or, as they are often called, "Libdependents". The

policy of not running branded candidates means that when the Liberals say that politics does not belong in local government it means that women do not belong in local government, and I will be working to change that.

TRIBUTE TO CONSTABLE PETER ADDISON AND CONSTABLE ROBERT SPEARS

TRIBUTE TO JOHN ALFRED BEANEY

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley) [6.05 p.m.]: It was my solemn duty and honour to represent the New South Wales Government at the commemorative services to mark the twentieth anniversary of the deaths of Senior Constable Peter Addison, VA, and Senior Constable Robert Spears, VA. These two fine, brave men were murdered on 9 July 1995 by a lone gunman. The tributes at the service were led by the NSW Commissioner of Police, Andrew Scipione, who was supported by the most senior echelons of the NSW Police Force and no more ably than by local Superintendent Paul Fehon.

At 12.35 a.m. on 9 July 1995 constables Addison and Spears were dispatched from Kempsey station and as they arrived in Walker Street, Crescent Head, they came under fire from a drunken gunman dressed in camouflage gear, hiding near a carport. Senior constables Addison and Spears, both aged 36, returned fire as they sought cover behind their four-wheel drive. As Senior Constable Addison tried to call for back-up on their police radio, Senior Constable Spears, a policeman for eight years, was fatally wounded. In a desperate bid to seek help for his friend, Senior Constable Addison ran to a nearby house but it did not have a telephone. As he tried to enter another property while still returning fire, the 14-year veteran was also shot dead by the gunman, who then turned his high-powered rifle on himself. As Commissioner Scipione said:

Human instinct would demand you remove yourself from harm's way in a situation like that, but not these brave officers.

They knew they had to try to stop this gunman who could have gone on to kill or injure others.

They stood their ground, defending themselves and their community from a cowardly assassin.

It is important to note that these deaths led to major reforms for policing in New South Wales, including the transition from revolvers to automatic pistols, ballistic vests, better radio communications and improved tactical training. At the end of the service, which was beautifully conducted by Father Jim Gooley, Commissioner Scipione presented Senior Constable Addison's widow, Liana, and Senior Constable Spears widow, Kathy, with national police service medals in recognition of their late husbands' diligence to duty. It was a moving service and the families were absolutely held in the arms of the New South Wales police family. There were special people at the service, including former detective Allan Sparkes, a personal friend of mine, and Bluey Lyons. It was a beautiful day and a beautiful morning to celebrate the lives of constables Addison and Spears and recognise what they did for their communities.

On another issue in another part of my electorate, on Friday the very best of the Nambucca Valley came together in Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Macksville, to farewell one of the community's favourite sons. The life of John Alfred Beaney was celebrated through a beautiful service officiated by Reverend Father Joseph Formasa. I know that John Beaney was a friend of the member for Lismore, as he was to many people on the North Coast. John Beaney was born in Tenterfield on 27 March 1934, the great-grandson of a convict who was transported at 11 years of age for housebreaking. John was a proud person from Tenterfield. His daughter, Robyn, in her moving eulogy, explained that their family was well versed in the town's enormous history, with the Tenterfield oration by Sir Henry Parkes calling for the federation of the six colonies very much part of their family's history.

Banjo Paterson, who married a Tenterfield girl in 1903, along with Peter Allen were favourites of John through their connection with his birthplace. In his teenage years, his parents, George and Irene,

moved to Grafton. A tragedy that still haunts many on the North Coast was the drowning of 13 young Boy Scouts in 1943. John was meant to be on the boat that day but decided at the last minute to pull out. He said that tragedy had a profound impact on him and from then on he decided that he would live his life to the full, which he did. He was an absolute gentleman.

In 1949 he was living in Kempsey and was terribly affected by the devastating floods in the Macleay Valley. He got word from upriver that the river surge would be enormous so he went door to door begging people to leave their homes and get away. Sadly, many did not and their lives were lost as their homes were swept away. He arrived in Macksville in 1951 to work at a local bank and quickly developed a reputation as someone who worked hard and could be trusted. He later joined John Stanton, the famous campdrafter, and with a shake of hands they became a formidable duo. Their connection stood the test of time, with John Stanton telling the congregation there was never a bad word between them.

I first met John Beaney in 1990, when he was the electorate council chairman for the Coffs Harbour by-election. During a period of political turmoil he stood strong and firm and reassured all of us on the campaign team. He contributed not only to our party but also to polocrosse and the Scotts Head Surf Life Saving Club. He was a gentleman. As his daughter recounted, I can attest to the fact that he was a great supporter of women. He is finally at peace with his magnificent wife, Joan.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): With the indulgence of the House I also extend my sympathy to Robyn and to other members of the Beaney family. As the member rightly pointed out, John became one of the most recognised stock and station agents, together with his partner, John Stanton. Tom Stanton has now taken over that business with, I believe, his two sons who have just stepped in. John Beaney was recognised as a renowned stock and station agent throughout eastern Australia. He devoted his life to the industry and was well recognised for his contribution. Val Gardiner from Tenterfield was a cousin of John's but was more like a sister to him. The family will miss John, but at least he is now at peace.

HEALTHONE SUTHERLAND

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Heritage, and Assistant Minister for Planning) [6.10 p.m.]: I recently had the great pleasure of joining my parliamentary colleague the member for Miranda to open the new \$1.6 million HealthOne facility on the western side of the Sutherland Hospital campus. Earlier this year I toured the facility when it was under construction, and it was during this visit that the Minister for Health unveiled the Baird Government's \$120 million integrated care policy.

Integrated care is about bringing together all aspects of the health system—from acute hospitals, to general practitioners [GPs], allied health professionals, including physiotherapists, dieticians and podiatrists, and other community health providers—to ensure people receive the best health care in the appropriate setting. Integrating health care means that patients receive the care best suited to them, from preventative measures to management of chronic illness. As well as helping to avoid unnecessary hospitalisations, integrated care is a more efficient use of health resources.

Supporting individuals to get the care they need in the right place and at the right time is essential. It not only ensures optimal care but also ensures that we make the most of every cent spent on the health care of the citizens of New South Wales. For many people, the health system is complex and hard to navigate. People can be referred to multiple healthcare professionals—across primary, specialist, hospital and community care—who may or may not have access to the same information to guide the best approach to care for the patient.

To achieve a fully integrated health system, the Government is shifting the traditional focus from the hospital as the centre of health care to a broader focus across the whole of the healthcare system. Last year, the New South Wales Government committed \$30 million a year over four years to enable local

health districts [LHDs] to implement integrated care models. This saw the creation of a Planning and Innovation Fund to provide seed funding for innovative integrated care initiatives at the local level and support demonstrator initiatives across New South Wales. It is important to enable LHDs to drive their own integrated care strategy, in order to effectively engage local health agencies and community partners. There is no one-size-fits-all model; each LHD will have unique local factors that will determine how services should be coordinated and provided.

In addition, statewide infrastructure will be funded as part of the New South Wales Government's commitment to improving patient outcomes through integrated care. This includes the rollout of HealthNet, an electronic health records system; tools to help identify early intervention opportunities; and systems to allow patient feedback. I am very pleased to say that HealthOne Sutherland is a terrific asset for the local community. This facility will be of great benefit to residents who have complex health needs and long-term conditions. It will provide seamless, integrated care to people to prevent illness and avoid hospitalisations by providing better access to health care in the community.

The HealthOne facility at Sutherland is the State's twenty-first such centre dealing with people with chronic illnesses and complex long-term conditions out of hospital. It is in a 300 square metre building that has space for clinical care, patient education and development of skills. Interestingly, negotiations are underway with Legal Aid in Sutherland to provide legal assistance because often people involved in the justice system are suffering from the types of complex health issues that HealthOne will deal with. It is a great facility and I was delighted to have the chance to open it.

CAMBRIDGE PARK HIGH SCHOOL NAIDOC WEEK CELEBRATION

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) [6.15 p.m.]: I acknowledge the superb efforts of Cambridge Park High School in putting together its recent National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee [NAIDOC] assembly and in particular congratulate principal Kay Rigas for her leadership in this fantastic celebration of Indigenous culture. It was a pleasure to attend Cambridge Park High School's recent NAIDOC assembly and to speak to students about the importance and history of NAIDOC Week.

As most members know, NAIDOC has become an important cultural celebration across Australia and in particular in our New South Wales schools, and rightly so. Indeed, NAIDOC is one of the most significant national cultural celebrations in the Australian calendar. The history and the significance of the connection Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have with their lands and waters was celebrated for this year's NAIDOC assembly at Cambridge Park High, in the spirit of this year's NAIDOC theme "We all Stand on Sacred Ground: Learn, Respect and Celebrate."

At the assembly, students were also able to reflect on the history of NAIDOC Week, from its origins in the early Aboriginal rights movement, to the "Day of Mourning" Australia Day protests in 1938, until 1955 when it was decided that there should be a celebration of Aboriginal culture, heritage and achievement in the first week of July each year. This is now celebrated as NAIDOC Week, which highlights the achievements of Indigenous people all over Australia.

At the Cambridge Park assembly we were really lucky to have Penrith Panthers star Jamal Idris attend. He faced off with students in a special quiz about Indigenous culture and history. The kids really participated because they were pitting their knowledge against Jamal's. The assembly also featured presentations about Indigenous culture from my very good friends Western Sydney Indigenous elders Uncle Greg and Uncle Harry. There was also a great dance by a former student of Cambridge Park High School that included great audience participation and didgeridoo playing.

It was fantastic to have the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience [AIME], an incredible organisation many members would know about, play an important role in the assembly. AIME gave a short presentation about the important and transformative work they do working with Indigenous students across Australia. AIME also presented principal Kay Rigas with a special framed AIME hoodie, for which

members are famous, for all her efforts and leadership in organising this innovative and enjoyable NAIDOC assembly.

NAIDOC Week is a time for Australians to be proud of Aboriginal culture and to ensure that the achievements of Aboriginal Australians are recognised and celebrated. I am proud that schools like Cambridge Park High embrace NAIDOC Week fully and recognise the achievements of Aboriginal people. I hope to be able to attend many more NAIDOC assemblies at Cambridge Park High in the future, and I look forward to seeing the fantastic work this school does in celebrating Indigenous culture and history. Once again I place on the record my congratulations to principal Kay Rigas on a fantastic assembly in celebrating this year's NAIDOC Week, and to everyone from Cambridge Park High School who played a role on the day.

POLICE COMPLAINTS SYSTEM

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) [6.20 p.m.]: Justice must be resolved before the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex [LGBTI] community can develop trusting relationships with police to enable effective community policing. The gay-bashing assaults and murders of the late 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s must be investigated with all possible action taken to bring about justice. Male homosexuality in New South Wales was illegal until 1984. Many people lived double lives or lived secret hidden lives for fear of prison, loss of jobs, homes and families. Hate violence was rife. Many LGBTI people and those assumed to be queer were targets of violence and threats, with gangs targeting gay men at known gay beats. I understand that 87 people understood to be gay were killed during that period. While the majority of these crimes appear to have been solved, about 30 remain without resolution. It is tragic that many of these people may have been killed just because of who they were.

Homophobic violence continues today at much reduced levels and less directly. It is now more likely to be online threats or verbal abuse than physical violence. We should remember the great progress that has occurred in law and community attitudes, not least as a result of brave activists who risked their lives and futures for reform. Victims of gay-bashings were not likely to report to police and it took a major community campaign from the Lesbian and Gay Rights Lobby Anti-Violence Project [AVP] to encourage reporting. I commend police gay and lesbian liaison officers Fred Miller and Sue Thompson and the AVP's Bruce Grant, as well as community initiatives such as the Whistle Project which changed the community's response. For decades victims had to report to a homophobic police force that reinforced homophobic laws and attitudes, notwithstanding individuals who were exceptions.

Reports suggest that some violence was perpetrated by police officers and that police covered up or did not properly investigate others. Scott Johnson's death on the northern beaches in the 1980s will be reinvestigated with a third coronial inquest following his family's major emotional and financial investment in seeking justice. Others killed and assaulted deserve the same attention and closure. The NSW Ombudsman tells me that he could do this but he does not have the resources for such a major inquiry. The NSW Police Force LGBTI corporate spokesman Superintendent Tony Crandell briefed me about Operation Taradale, which will review each of these deaths, determine whether they could be gay hate crimes and identify what investigation can be carried out now. I will seek regular updates. I know the community wants to ensure that the police have put in place proper systems and procedures to ensure that bias crimes are now being identified and properly investigated.

Heavy-handed action from a couple of police officers at mardi gras several years ago rekindled fear and distrust within the LGBTI community, highlighting how fragile the relationship remains. I commend former Minister for Police Mike Gallacher and senior police officers who met with me urgently and took action to make sure that this does not happen again, with significant improvements to mardi gras policing since. However, this reinforced the need for a dedicated police complaints system that is thorough and fair, that is seen to be thorough and fair for both police and the community, and that produces improvements to policing. An oversight body could investigate concerns about past LGBTI policing, including a failure to adequately investigate complaints and perpetrating violence, as well as

other community concerns including excessive use of force and concerns about the use of drug detection dogs at events.

We need a clear definition of what constitutes a serious complaint that is referred for independent investigation, with minor matters dealt with promptly at the local level. The police complaints body must have the resources to address individual complaints promptly, investigate systemic problems and enforce action to make sure that the same problems do not recur. In particular, the complaints body must have the resources for super investigations on systemic problems, similar to those now being carried out by the Office of Fair Trading. The Premier asked Andrew Tink to review the police oversight system. I ask that he consult directly with the Redfern Legal Centre, which represents clients with police complaints, and other legal advocates, beyond accepting submissions, as he is doing now with the Police Association of New South Wales.

I note and commend the recent motion moved in the other place by the Hon. Trevor Khan relating to gay hate crimes. We depend on police to keep us safe and to investigate crime. The LGBTI community cannot trust the system until this historic violence has been put to rest. The whole community needs to see that police complaints are properly investigated and that action is taken to redress this violence. Other groups overrepresented in police statistics have made similar calls. This Government must implement an independent police complaints system with the resources that are needed to investigate, ensure action for redress and prevent the same problems from being repeated.

CABONNE AND ORANGE COUNCIL AMALGAMATION

Mr ANDREW GEE (Orange—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.25 p.m.]: Today I lodged a petition on behalf of the Amalgamation No Thank You group in the Cabonne Council area. The group is opposed to an amalgamation between Orange and Cabonne councils. The petition contains approximately 2,600 signatures from around the Cabonne shire. I should state that I do not have a blanket opposition to all forced council amalgamations. Indeed, there may well be good reasons why councils should merge, particularly in heavily populated areas where there is a significant duplication of services in a relatively small geographical area.

However, what might be true for the city might not necessarily be true for the country; one size does not fit all; and each potential merger should be assessed on its merits. In the case of both Orange and Cabonne councils these merits were assessed in the report of Morrison Low dated May 2015. I believe that many residents of Cabonne would like me to raise some of the relevant points, and I do so now. The Morrison Low report states at page 5:

Both Councils can meet the Fit for the Future Benchmarks throughout the period from now until 2023, as there is no funding gap. In addition, each Council is showing an operating performance funding surplus for the modelling period, providing increased discretionary funding if required.

At page 7 the report states:

Both Councils carry low levels of debt, with Cabonne having almost none at all ...

It states further:

... both Councils meet Fit for the Future benchmarks Debt Servicing Ratios ...

I think that is very positive. The Morrison Low report also points out at page 12 that Cabonne will meet all the benchmarks over the period until 2023 with Orange Council projected to meet all the benchmarks over most of the modelling period. At page 18 the report states:

... neither Council has a funding gap between what is spent currently and what we estimate to be

needed.

The costs and savings of a merger are set out on page 9 of the report and the results are that the savings are modest. This reflects the fact that country local government areas often possess very different characteristics to their city cousins. On page 51 the Morrison Low report states that the combination of Orange and Cabonne has limited impact on improving scale and capacity overall. In regard to population growth and forecasts the report states that a key factor in whether a council is fit for the future is whether a local government area has a declining population and, therefore, a declining rate base. Page 24 of the report reveals that both councils are forecast to experience significant growth until 2031, with Cabonne's growth forecast at 24.5 per cent and Orange's growth forecast at 17.4 per cent.

Many Cabonne residents also want me to raise concerns about the impact a potential merger would have leading to the loss of a sense of belonging for village communities, the loss of community generally, the loss of services and infrastructure such as swimming pools, and a loss of representation. In this regard I note that Cabonne residents currently have 12 councillors focusing on their needs. They fear that those councillors' ability to influence key decisions could be diminished and diluted under any merger proposal—real and genuine concerns about which Cabonne communities feel strongly. The relevant parts of the Morrison Low report were contained in my submission to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal and I have sent them also to both the Minister for Local Government and Mr Boxall, Chairman of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal.

I thank the Amalgamation No Thank You group for its community concern and spirit. I have met with it a number of times and I have also attended meetings which it has organised. I think it is important for country communities to discuss issues that affect their representation and the shape of their communities. Overall the discussion and the debate have been conducted in a positive light. It is important for councils to have these discussions so that all the relevant issues can be ventilated. In the case of Orange and Cabonne these issues have been crystallised in the Morrison Low report. I thank all parties for their interest in this topic and I assure the concerned members of Cabonne who have met with me—and also those who have signed the petition—that their voices are being heard in Macquarie Street and will continue to be heard.

Private members' statements concluded.

Pursuant to sessional order matter of public importance proceeded with.

NATIONAL MISSING PERSONS WEEK

Matter of Public Importance

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) [6.30 p.m.]: I draw the attention of the House to an important issue for not only this State but also the nation—National Missing Persons Week. This important week runs until Saturday 8 August. The theme this year is thought-provoking and could be lifesaving, "Follow Your Instincts." The Government and the NSW Police Force are trying to debunk the myth that we must wait 24 hours before reporting someone missing. Sadly, 24 hours may prove too long. In 2014, almost 12,000 people were reported missing in New South Wales. While the majority were located safe and well, 57 are still missing. Those 57 people are in addition to the more than 600 other missing people on the books in this State. We must also consider those who must deal with the daily impact of a member of their family going missing. Research shows that for every person who goes missing, on average 12 people are affected in some way. There is no minimum time frame to report someone missing. In launching Missing Persons Week, Acting Australian Federal Police Commissioner Michael Phelan stated:

There is no minimum timeframe associated with reporting someone missing. The very definition of a missing person is where there are concerns for the safety and welfare of a person, and their

whereabouts are unknown...

A colleague that fails to turn up to work without notice; a parent that doesn't return from a walk; a son that misses a birthday dinner... If a person's disappearance is out of character and you have concerns for their safety and welfare, follow your instincts and report to police immediately.

If anyone feels that someone has done something out of character, they should follow their instinct and report it to the police. Long-term missing persons are the focus of this year's campaign, and two of them have a connection with my electorate of Ku-ring-gai. Stephen Laphorne and Michelle Pope have been missing from West Pymble for more than 30 years. Stephen, who was 21 at the time, and his girlfriend, then aged 18, disappeared from Wyuna Avenue, West Pymble, on 25 August 1978. The couple were believed to be travelling to Michelle's home in Berowra in a lime-green 1977 Bedford CF van. They have never been seen nor heard from since and their vehicle has never been located. Police have been investigating their disappearance for more than 30 years, including the possibility that they have met with foul play. A \$100,000 reward for information about their case was offered in 2005, and it is still being offered today. Their families urge anyone with information to provide it to the police.

As part of this year's campaign, the Australian Federal Police have also launched a partnership with the Outdoor Media Association to profile long-term missing persons on billboards, taxis, bus shelters and digital out-of-home channels Australia-wide. The profiles of missing persons can be viewed at www.missingpersons.gov.au. According to the experts, the reasons for someone going missing are not always identified or known. Young people and people experiencing mental health difficulties are identified as at-risk groups. People who go missing may also need time out. They may be escaping domestic violence, victims of foul play or experiencing dementia-related difficulties. Young people, especially young women aged between 14 and 18 years, account for more than half of those reported missing each year.

Having a loved one go missing is seen as an ambiguous loss. It is often described as the most stressful of losses because it remains unresolved, sometimes for many years. When someone is missing, they can be described as psychologically present but physically absent. My family has experience of this. My father has lived the past 70 years with the pain of his brother having gone missing after the Second World War when the camp in which he was imprisoned was liberated by Russian soldiers. His death was never verified and not knowing cuts through the soul. Every relative of a person who has gone missing deeply yearns for an answer, any answer, something tangible.

In preparing this speech, I read the words of Norman Stanton, the father of Ian Stanton, who went missing more than 10 years ago. Mr Stanton has never stopped searching for his son, who left all his worldly possessions behind him when he walked out of his flat in Bundanoon in May 2003. He tells of how he breaks down and sobs when at times he visits places his son would visit before his disappearance. He even feels as though his son is speaking to him, saying, "I am still with you, dad." Despite a 2007 Coroner's Court finding that Mr Stanton is most likely deceased, his father still holds on to the hope that one day someone, somewhere will notice the small tattoo on his left hand and ask him to contact his family and let them know he is alright.

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) [6.35 p.m.]: I thank the member for Ku-ring-gai for drawing the attention of the House to National Missing Persons Week. This is an important issue for members to discuss. As the mother of a young boy and like so many others, I have watched while experiencing the full range of emotions the coverage of the disappearance of toddler William Tyrell, which has pulled at everyone's heartstrings. I have shed tears while watching his parents plead for someone to come forward with information of his whereabouts. I am sure we would all feel that desperation in their position. We see his little innocent face and his Spider-Man outfit on the nightly news. Like other parents in this place, it hits me extremely hard. Little William's is one of the faces of National Missing Persons Week this year.

As the member for Ku-ring-gai said, National Missing Persons Week is a chance for us to renew the call for members of the public to come forward with any information they may have about the sons,

daughters, wives, husbands, grandparents and other loved ones whom we live without. Their unexplained disappearance means sleepless nights and years of anxiety and fear. Those of us who have not experienced that loss simply cannot understand. As one brother of a missing man said earlier this week, "We are constantly waiting for a phone call."

Someone is reported missing in Australia every 14 minutes, which represents more than 38,000 every year. That translates to an incredible 100 Australians going missing every day. I was stunned by that figure. For every missing person reported, at least 12 people are affected emotionally, psychologically, physically and, of course, financially. Although the majority are found quickly thanks to the amazing work of both the Australian Federal Police and NSW Police Force, hundreds remain missing. That has a devastating impact on families.

I use this opportunity to acknowledge and thank the National Rugby League [NRL] for supporting National Missing Persons Week. Images of missing persons will be displayed on big screens at two NRL matches this week. Anything that we can do to get people to come forward with information is worthwhile. I reiterate the advice offered by the police, who are dealing with these cases each and every day. They are urging people to "Follow Your Instincts." People should not wait 24 hours to contact police because those first few hours can be crucial. Anyone who has concerns should call the police straightaway.

If people are concerned about someone who might be missing and something does not feel right, they should call the police immediately because the first few hours can be crucial in revealing what may become pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. I congratulate the Government and the member for Ku-ring-gai on raising awareness of missing persons through this matter of public importance. I commend the Australian Federal Police and the NSW Police Force for their work in also raising awareness during National Missing Persons Week.

Mr DARYL MAGUIRE (Wagga Wagga—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.39 p.m.]: I thank the member for Ku-ring-gai for bringing the important matter of National Missing Persons Week to the attention of the House. Research shows that for every person reported missing an average of 12 people are affected in some way. A person going missing has an enormous impact on their family, friends and other people they know. It causes a great deal of distress. People of all ages may be affected physically, psychologically, socially and financially. The reasons for someone going missing cannot always be identified or known. Young people and people experiencing mental health difficulties are identified as at-risk groups for going missing. People who go missing may also be needing "time out", escaping violence, victims of foul play or experiencing dementia-related difficulties.

The New South Wales Department of Justice works with families and service providers that are impacted by the loss of someone who goes missing. In fact, it has a special unit known as the Families and Friends of Missing Persons Unit [FFMPU]. Contact with families may occur at any point in the missing person's investigation. FFMPU is not a search agency; it partners with State and Federal police during National Missing Persons Week and throughout the year. Family members and friends may access information, support and counselling from trained staff within FFMPU. Support is provided face to face, over the phone and via email, Skype and social media. Since 2010, FFMPU staff have facilitated more than 50 support group meetings in metropolitan and regional New South Wales which adults and young people have attended. The FFMPU team produces a range of evidence-based publications, always in consultation with family members and service providers. The last four publications, the first of their kind in the world, are available on the website and in hard copy.

The FFMPU was established as a result of lobbying from family members, and in 2015 FFMPU celebrates 15 years of operation. The unit does an incredible job supporting families and friends as they deal with the challenges of not knowing what has happened to a missing loved one. To find out about the Families and Friends of Missing Persons Unit, members of the public can visit www.missingpersonsjustice.nsw.gov.au. Families across cities, towns and villages have been affected by the loss of a loved one. In this National Missing Persons Week I urge all missing persons to make contact

with their families and friends and tell them that they are okay if they are able to. It will relieve a great deal of stress and worry.

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie—Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education) [6.42 p.m.], by leave: I thank the member for Ku-ring-gai for raising National Missing Persons Week as a matter of public importance in the Parliament. Kendall, on the beautiful mid North Coast, is a picturesque, quiet, closely knit community that on 12 September last year was thrown into the national spotlight for all the wrong reasons. It was on that fateful day that then three-year-old William Tyrrell went missing from the front yard of his grandparents' home. Despite a huge search of the Kendall area involving police, State Emergency Service [SES] personnel and hundreds of volunteers and police canvassing everyone in the Kendall community, so far nothing has led to the discovery of young William.

This morning in Port Macquarie the Where's William campaign team used National Missing Persons Week to launch the next phase of the almost year-long search. Along the Pacific Highway billboards have been erected of a young, happy and smiling little boy that ask anyone passing by if they know, "Where's William?" It is that smiling face that is being used as one of the faces of National Missing Persons Week. Like many of the 35,000 people who are reported missing each year in Australia, it would appear that William has simply vanished. But unlike the majority of those 35,000 people, the community of the mid North Coast and in fact thousands of people across the country have rallied together to try to find answers to William's disappearance.

The Where's William Facebook page has attracted more than 15,000 likes, so it is clear that a lot of people want to help. Someone somewhere knows what happened to William Tyrrell. Police, William's family and our community are pleading for anyone with information to come forward and report what they know about his disappearance. Police have spoken to people of interest but to date no-one has been charged with an offence directly related to William. Let us hope that will change with the latest push for information during National Missing Persons Week. On 12 September, to mark the first anniversary of his disappearance, a national campaign will commence that will saturate communities across Australia with posters of William. An information flyer will also be sent to every household between Taree and Kempsey asking, "Where's William?" If anyone has information about the whereabouts of William Tyrrell or in fact any missing person I urge them to contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000. Once again, I thank the member for Ku-ring-gai for the opportunity to join this discussion.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) [6.45 p.m.], in reply: I thank members who have contributed to the discussion on this matter of public importance. The circumstances that have led to the disappearance of William Tyrell are a great tragedy. Members have highlighted the terrible and awful human tragedy that his family is suffering. We all hope that William will soon be found. We have heard during this discussion that swift action is crucial. People should not wait 24 hours if something is wrong. Following our instincts and making contact with the police as soon as we feel something is not right is critical to the speedy recovery of a missing person.

We also heard about the importance of supporting people who have suffered the loss of a close family member and members have spoken about the tragedy that engulfs families when a close family member goes missing. Every Anzac Day my very strong father would be brought to tears thinking of his missing brother and was haunted by thoughts of what may have happened to him. The member for Wagga Wagga rightly drew our attention to the Families and Friends of Missing Persons Unit [FFMPU], which offers support to families of missing persons. I urge anyone who has any information relating to the disappearance of a missing person to please give that information to police. I also urge all missing persons who for some reason have decided to take some time out to contact their family or the police to let them know that they are okay.

Discussion concluded.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 6.48 p.m. until
Wednesday 5 August 2015 at 10.00 a.m.**
