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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday 21 November 2013

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

The Speaker read the Prayer and acknowledgement of country.

SURVEILLANCE DEVICES AMENDMENT (MUTUAL RECOGNITION) BILL 2013

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

CEMETERIES AND CREMATORIA BILL 2013

Message received from the Legislative Council returning the bill with amendments.

Consideration of Legislative Council's amendments set down as an order of the day for a later hour.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Notices of Motions

General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) given.

PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURES AMENDMENT (EXTENSION OF PROTECTIONS) BILL 2013

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Paul Lynch, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) [10.04 a.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The object of this bill is to extend the protections from adverse consequences that the Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994 provides for those persons who make disclosures in the public interest about public sector wrongdoing. It does it by a number of ways. It extends those protections to all persons making disclosures, removing the current limitation that only defined public officials can be protected. It expands the type of public sector wrongdoing about which a person can make a disclosure and be protected from adverse consequences. It also extends the requirements to investigate and deal with disclosures about such wrongdoing so as to include the following: scientific misconduct by public authorities or their officers; acts or omissions of public authorities or their officers that create risks to the environment, including the carrying on of activities in an environmentally unsatisfactory manner; and acts or omissions of public authorities or their officers that create risks to public health or safety, or both. It extends the circumstances in which a public interest disclosure made directly to a journalist or member of Parliament will be protected so as to include circumstances when a person could not first report to any other investigating authority or body.

It further protects those who make public interest disclosures against detrimental action being taken or threatened against them in a number of ways. It makes it an offence whenever detrimental action is taken or threatened against a person for reasons that include reprisal for the fact that the person made a disclosure; it allows civil penalties for compensation to be pursued for damages for detrimental action for reasons that include reprisal for making a disclosure; and it allows those civil remedies to be pursued in the Industrial Relations Commission. The bill is an attempt to improve the protections provided to whistleblowers in New South Wales. It incorporates proposals included in legislation and reports from other jurisdictions. That is entirely appropriate granted the age of the New South Wales legislation and the failure of this Government to make any substantial

alteration to the current regime. Indeed, despite the grandiose rhetoric of the Premier and others in his Coalition, this Government has merely nibbled at the edges of current legislation—a point I made in debate on the Public Interest Disclosures Amendment Bill 2013 earlier this year.

The protection of whistleblowers in legislative form has its genesis in the Protected Disclosures Act 1994. That Act is now somewhat dated and would benefit from a rewrite in plain English, frankly. That cannot be done from opposition, but we can take the current legislative provisions and propose improvements based upon them. Since the first introduction of whistleblowing protections in New South Wales much has changed. There has, for example, been the national research project "Whistling While They Work: Enhancing the Theory and Practice of Internal Witness Management in Australia's Public Sector." This involved empirical work in the Commonwealth, New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australian public agencies, including significant survey work. Associated with that was, among other things, the book in 2008 *Whistleblowing in the Australian Public Sector* edited by Professor A. J. Brown, who was the project leader of Whistling While They Work. I should add that I have found the work of Professor Brown, and my discussions with him, particularly helpful in this field.

Whistleblowing is the public interest reporting of illegal, immoral and illegitimate wrongdoing by public officials. It is important at many levels. It is an essential means for rectifying wrongdoing in the public sector. It is not just about identifying specific instances of wrongdoing; it is also about identifying systemic organisational issues and cultures, and ensuring efficient and effective governmental structures in the future. Some of the findings of Whistling While They Work are worthwhile reporting for this debate. The reporting of wrongdoing is a more common and routine activity than is usually understood. Evidence from public employees shows that, in general, whistleblowing is widely recognised as important to achieving and maintaining public integrity. However, there is a significant inaction rate: 29 per cent of employee survey respondents who had observed very serious or extremely serious wrongdoing did not report it. Rates vary between different agencies. One important finding deserves to be quoted:

There is little evidence that employees who report wrongdoing are predisposed to conflict or are likely to be disgruntled or embittered employees, driven to report by perverse personal characteristics.

The main reason for not reporting—unsurprisingly—was a belief that no action would be taken or a fear of reprisal, or that management would not protect them. To quote once again:

These results show that the best ways to ensure that staff will speak up are by demonstrating that if wrongdoing is reported, something will be done and whistleblowers will be supported.

The Whistling While They Work findings contained other useful information: 97 per cent of public interest whistleblowers reported internally to their agency to begin with; only 2.9 per cent reported externally in the first instance; only 9.7 per cent involved an external agency at any stage; less than 1 per cent went to the media at any stage, and that was usually only as a last resort. To quote the report:

The bulk of whistleblowing begins and ends as an internal process ...

Interestingly the report also says this:

Internal and external whistleblowers indicated high levels of organisational citizenship behaviours further challenging the stereotype of an external whistleblower as a disgruntled, organisationally unhappy employee

The report shows it is not inevitable that whistleblowers will suffer from their actions. However, 22 per cent of respondents said they were treated badly by management and co-workers. Another interesting conclusion was:

Contrary to widespread public expectations and the larger logic of whistleblower protection, only one Australian jurisdiction (New South Wales) has legislative provisions dealing with circumstances under which a whistleblower may take a public interest disclosure outside official channels. Even in New South Wales, the provisions are inadequate.

While the research has confirmed that public whistleblowing is statistically infrequent in comparison with internal whistleblowing, it nevertheless does arise—legitimately. Recognition of this fact is of continuing importance to the successful management of whistleblowing as a process, including to the confidence of employees and the understanding of agencies that if authorities fail to act, a further disclosure may well be justified and protected.

I should add that New South Wales is not the only jurisdiction with whistleblower legislative provisions, but the report's point stands. The report called for a number of particular actions, of which one recommendation was:

Legislative action to provide more effective organisation systems and realistic compensation mechanisms, and to recognise public whistleblowing.

Since that report, significant developments have occurred in the Commonwealth and Australian Capital Territory—the Dreyfus report, the Wilkie bill and government legislation in both jurisdictions show what more can be done. This State's legislation has been renamed the Public Interest Disclosures Act. In 2011 the Government introduced with great fanfare amendments to that legislation. The Opposition did not oppose these minor and modest amendments, but they hardly meant a dramatic increase in the degree of protections to whistleblowers. Terminology was changed, the Information Commissioner was added to the Public Interest Disclosures Steering Committee and public authorities had to prepare quarterly reports to the Ombudsman on compliance with legislative obligations.

Earlier this year the Government introduced further equally worthy and just as equally modest amendments that were proposed by the Public Interest Disclosures Steering Committee. These included tweaking the definition of "public official"—something that inevitably will be needed if one adheres to a model of restricting protections to defined public officials. These amendments extended from two years to three years the time in which prosecutions for reprisal actions can be taken, included the Public Service Commissioner on the Public Interest Disclosures Steering Committee, extended protections to whistleblowers whether or not disclosures were made voluntarily, and exempted some public authorities from their public interest disclosure policy requirement to acknowledge receipt of a disclosure and provide a copy of their policy to the whistleblower. Having gone briefly through those two tranches of this Government's amendment, it is worth showing just how minute and modest they were. In the meantime, two things happened.

Significant developments occurred in other jurisdictions that have expanded considerably the types of protection beyond that introduced in this State in 1994. That includes other legislative regimes in other Australian jurisdictions and proposals such as the Dreyfus report at a Federal level. In a sense, other jurisdictions have leapfrogged over the New South Wales position. The second thing is that instances remind us of the inadequacy of present laws. Various revelations indicate a number of situations when public officials did not feel confident in the system to report behaviour we all wish had been reported. In addition, there has been the Campbelltown nurse who has been adversely treated for telling the truth, the circumstances surrounding the current inquiry into the NSW State Emergency Service, and the witch-hunt in the Department of Family and Community Services over the leaking of the Ernst and Young report. The other jurisdictions to which I have referred have a range of features that New South Wales does not. Other jurisdictions provide protections for disclosures that are broader than the subject matter of those protected in this State.

One model provides for protection being given to someone disclosing to a member of Parliament or journalist without reporting elsewhere. The Dreyfus report recommended proceedings for detrimental action being pursued in Fair Work Australia. Other places have a lesser threshold to establish the offence of detrimental action. Protections have been extended explicitly to those who disclose anonymously in other jurisdictions and to those who are not public officials. The current legislation sets out various types of wrongdoing in the public sector about which whistleblowers can make disclosures and, in certain circumstances, be protected from adverse consequences. The types of wrongdoing the legislation originally focused upon were corrupt conduct, maladministration, and serious and substantial waste. The objects clause of the current Act extends also to the disclosure of government information contravention and local government pecuniary interest contravention.

This bill extends those categories further to include disclosures about scientific misconduct by public authorities or their officers and acts or omissions of public authorities or their officers that create risks to public health and safety or to the environment. This expansion modernises the New South Wales regime and is modelled upon provisions or proposals in other jurisdictions and includes a change to the objects clause of the bill and to the bill's long title, and the Environment Protection Agency in the scheme of the bill as an agency to which disclosures can be made and from which protections flow. Logically, provision is made for the Environment Protection Agency to be represented on the Public Interest Disclosures Steering Committee. The categories of whistleblowers to which protections are available are expanded. One of the perennial issues in this area relates to how to define "public official". The Government previously moved amendments to expand this category. As I said in the second reading debate, no doubt the need will arise for further amendments. As soon as we think we have a definitional solution and legislate it, another problem will present itself of yet someone else slipping through the net of protections.

The Dreyfus report grappled with this by proposing a solution that decided whether a disclosure was protected only after the disclosure was made—an approach with manifest problems. An obvious solution is to remove the definitional issue altogether and provide protections to anyone who makes a disclosure. This is the approach of some other jurisdictions. Obviously, this will provide the protections of the Act to those who are

not, in anyone's view, public officials. I do not see any difficulty in that, although it may mean that some adverse consequences visited upon whistleblowers simply are not applicable to people in this category. The criticism of such an approach is that it moves away from the primary focus of protecting public sector whistleblowers. I understand that, but as the wrongdoing to be disclosed remains public sector wrongdoing, the vast majority of whistleblowers will still be public officials. Extending the protections to non-public officials is not undesirable and will avoid people being unreasonably excluded by definitional problems.

The only other criticism is that it will encourage unmeritorious disclosure. That means simply that investigative agencies need to be robust enough to deal with disclosures properly and unmeritorious disclosures accordingly, which should be the case in any event. The other respect in which this bill expands the categories of whistleblowers is by extending the protections explicitly to those who complain anonymously. In a sense, they may well be the category most needing the protection of the regime. If someone is sufficiently apprehensive of the consequences of disclosure to make a disclosure only anonymously, the protections of the regime should be available. This bill modifies the offence of taking detrimental action. At present, the offence is made out if the making of the disclosure was the substantial reason for the detrimental action to be taken. This bill will alter that situation so that an offence occurs whenever detrimental action is taken against a person for reasons that include the fact the person made a disclosure. A similar change is made in relation to civil remedies for compensation. The bill allows also for these civil remedies to be pursued in the Industrial Relations Commission.

Referring briefly to the main provisions of the bill, the bulk of it amends the Public Interest Disclosure Act. These amendments are contained in schedule 1 to the bill. The long title of the Act is amended to reflect the provisions of the bill, as are the objects of the bill. Of course, that reflects the substantial nature of the changes in this bill. Item [4] of schedule 1 amends the definition provisions of the Act, reflecting the expanded range of public misconduct concerning which whistleblowing is protected and involving the Environment Protection Agency. Item [13] of schedule 1 increases the membership of the Protected Disclosures Steering Committee. New section 7A expands the category of those who can make a disclosure to avoid definitional problems. Further amendments consistent with this appear in other sections.

Section 11 is amended to provide for disclosures to the Ombudsman, not just of maladministration but also relating to public health. Section 19 concerning disclosure to a member of Parliament or a journalist is replaced. Under this bill, a whistleblower is protected from disclosure to a journalist or a member of Parliament if official channels have been exhausted or if there are exceptional circumstances. The provisions relating to the exhaustion of official channels largely conform to the present regime. Exceptional circumstances allow a direct disclosure to a journalist or member of Parliament if there is a significant risk of detrimental action to the whistleblower by using normal official channels and if it would be unreasonable to do so. Section 20 is amended by item [33] of schedule 1 to set prosecutions for detrimental action at a more sensible level. New section 20 (1A) provides:

In determining whether a reason that detrimental action was taken or threatened against a person was in reprisal for that person making a public interest disclosure it is sufficient if such reprisal was one of the reasons for taking a threatening detrimental action and it does not matter that there were other reasons for taking detrimental action.

Subsection 1B reverses the onus of proof on the defendant. Section 20AA deals with disciplinary action against a public official involved in detrimental action. Item [35] of schedule 1 provides jurisdiction to the Industrial Relations Court for action of detrimental action. Part 7 is inserted into the Act to deal appropriately with aspects of retrospectivity. Schedule 2 deals with the amendment of other legislation necessarily following from the purposes of the bill. Speaking out against wrongdoing in the public sector—blowing the whistle—is important, critical for the transparency of government and crucial for democratic accountability. It also can be very risky. It is important that laws mitigate the risk to the whistleblower.

The law protecting whistleblowers in New South Wales now looks distinctly moth-eaten. Several lots of amendments were made recently, but not much by way of increasing protections for whistleblowers. Other jurisdictions have strengthened their frameworks and New South Wales has been leapfrogged by those evolutions. We should aim to enshrine in agencies and legislation the principle of "if in doubt, can report".

Whilst this does not propose an entire rewriting of the bill, there are substantial changes that can be introduced to the current New South Wales regime. Disclosable conduct about which whistleblowing is protected should be more broadly defined. It should be made clear that protections extend to disclosures made anonymously. The current New South Wales legislation protects a whistleblower who discloses information directly to a journalist or to a member of Parliament, only if a complicated and lengthy process is followed. Professor A. J. Brown has been critical of this State's "excessively high threshold". Certainly direct disclosures

raise issues concerning procedural fairness, confidentiality and the importance of internal agency disclosure. However, the current legislative process should be improved. A whistleblower should be able to disclose information directly to a journalist or to a member of Parliament where there is a risk of detrimental action and it is unreasonable to be reported normally under the Act. The criminal offence of taking detrimental action against a whistleblower is established currently where the action is substantial reprisal for the disclosure. That is too high a bar. It should rather be established if the disclosure was a contributing factor to detrimental action.

Proceedings for damages for detrimental action should be able to be pursued in the Industrial Relations Commission rather than civil courts. Some jurisdictions have no restrictions about who can claim protections under a scheme. New South Wales legislation restricts the claimed people defined as public officials. That is justified on the basis that those commonly regarded as public officials are more likely to make the most valuable disclosures and need the most protection. While that is certainly true it does not resolve the difficulty of finding a broad and adequate definition. New South Wales legislation was amended earlier this year to try to resolve the problem of categories of whistleblowers falling through the cracks.

The difficulty with such definitions is that neither the Attorney General nor Parliamentary Counsel are sufficiently wise to contemplate every conceivable circumstance that may arise. A better alternative is to avoid the definitional imbroglio altogether. Of course the existing legislative provision on false claims remains. Adequate measures to protect whistleblowers are one part of the integrity framework necessary in a contemporary society. They are, in a sense, part of what John Keane several years ago called monitory democracy. It is important that we get them right and that includes making them efficient and contemporary. That is what this bill aims to do and I commend it to the House.

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

PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT OPERATIONS AMENDMENT (PROSECUTIONS) BILL 2013

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Ron Hoenig, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) [10.21 a.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of the bill is to transfer the power to prosecute serious environmental offences from the Environment Protection Authority to the Director of Public Prosecutions. It arises over the scandalous conduct by the Environment Protection Authority that I referred to on 13 August in respect of the decision of the Land and Environment Court in the case of the *Environment Protection Authority v Hanna* [2013] NSWLEC 41. Members will recall that a serial rubbish dumper who had about eight convictions for rubbish dumping and 22 penalty notices dumped building material containing unbonded asbestos near a school. Rather than the Environment Protection Authority prosecuting the offender for a serious environmental offence that carried a maximum penalty of seven years jail, civil action was taken against this particular offender. Injunctions were obtained. The orders of the court were not complied with and, consequently, Dib Hanna was sentenced to three months suspended sentence for breaches of contempt.

There was community outrage in respect of the penalty imposed by Justice Pain, and the Minister introduced amendments to the legislation to strengthen the powers of the Environment Protection Authority, indicating to the House that serial criminal rubbish dumpers would be dealt with in accordance with the full force of the law. The full force of the law was not available to the Government of the day but to the Environment Protection Authority and it failed to bring Mr Hanna to justice, who was in breach of section 115 of the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997, which is one of the most serious environmental offences. I asked the Minister some questions on notice to which I will refer later in my second reading speech. The answers that the Minister gave on advice to the Environment Protection Authority show that the Environment Protection Authority has no understanding of its responsibility or prosecution powers.

Persons who dump asbestos could well be sentencing unsuspecting people to death. The dumping of asbestos such as Mr Hanna did, particularly near a school, could cause unsuspecting people who inhale a fibre to contract symptoms that only arise in 20 or 40 years time, and they may well die. As this House knows, asbestos

is an insidious substance that was used as a standard component of building material and there are strict laws in this State to deal with it. It is immensely dangerous for unbonded asbestos to be sitting in the open air. The law provides that those people who dump it are criminals and it provides a maximum penalty for one offence of seven years jail. The Environment Protection Authority, which is charged with investigating and prosecuting these offenders, should have brought Mr Hanna, who had eight previous convictions and 22 penalty notices, before the court on indictment to be prosecuted and jailed. If the Government wishes to send a signal to people that it will not tolerate this insidious criminal act there must be general deterrence and people must face the criminal justice system. If they are found guilty for dumping a substance such as asbestos, they must go to jail. The Environment Protection Authority failed to prosecute in accordance with its own prosecution guidelines.

This bill amends the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997. It seeks to transfer standing to initiate prosecutions for tier one offences under that Act, its most serious offence provisions, to the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Attorney General respectively. At the outset, I note that the explicit intention of this bill is to separate the investigative functions and the prosecutorial functions of the Environment Protection Authority as laid out in the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997 in respect of tier one offences. The bill removes the prosecutorial function of the Environment Protection Authority only in respect of tier one offences as defined by part 5.2 of the Act. These are serial offences for which section 119 sets out maximum penalties in these terms:

A person who is guilty of an offence under this Part is liable, on conviction:

- (a) in the case of a corporation-to a penalty not exceeding \$5,000,000 for an offence that is committed wilfully or \$2,000,000 for an offence that is committed negligently, or
- (b) in the case of an individual-to a penalty not exceeding \$1,000,000 or 7 years' imprisonment, or both, for an offence that is committed wilfully or \$500,000 or 4 years' imprisonment, or both, for an offence that is committed negligently.

This bill, as I have indicated, will not alter the investigative arrangements already in place. In respect of investigations conducted by the Environment Protection Authority, the bill will impose two duties upon the Environment Protection Authority. First, where the investigation results in the Environment Protection Authority forming a view that a prima facie case exists against the person for an offence arising under part 5.2, a duty is imposed upon the Environment Protection Authority to inform the Director of Public Prosecutions of that fact.

Secondly, where the Environment Protection Authority is unable to determine whether or not there is a prima facie case in respect of an offence under part 5.2, an identical duty will be imposed upon the Environment Protection Authority to inform the Director of Public Prosecutions of that fact also. The powers presently enumerated in the Director of Public Prosecutions Act are sufficient to transfer the entirety of the Environment Protection Authority's prosecutorial functions in respect of tier one offences without consequent amendment to that Act. Section 7 of the Director of Public Prosecutions Act establishes the principle functions of that office.

Pursuant to sessional orders business interrupted and set down as an order of the day for a future day.

CRIMES AMENDMENT (ZOE'S LAW) BILL 2013 (NO 2)

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 14 November 2013.

Mr DARYL MAGUIRE (Wagga Wagga) [10.30 a.m.]: I make a brief contribution to debate on the Crimes Amendment (Zoe's Law) Bill 2013 (No. 2). This bill has been debated over a number of days. I am sure all involved would like this matter to proceed to finality in this place today. I, like other members, have listened intently to the debate. Indeed, that is what our constituents expect of us in considering issues of conscience. I have been lobbied by various interest groups for and against this bill. Many well-recognised organisations and well-respected people have written to me. I have read and considered all that information in detail. One of those organisations, for which I have great respect and strong connections with, is the Wagga Women's Health Centre.

The Wagga Women's Health Centre is a feminist, community-based non-government organisation. It provides a healthcare service that ensures accessibility without financial or cultural barriers to women in my electorate. The types of wellness provided for include emotional, psychological and social, as well as physical. Its services include support, counselling, health education, groups and referrals. It is an important service and its

staff are highly respected. I value their views, but on this occasion we have agreed to disagree. I have decided to support the bill based on comments made by the member for Mount Druitt. His comments made me sit up and listen. Richard Amery is no stranger in this place. He has been a member of this Parliament for a very long time and he is very knowledgeable and well respected. The member said:

... if the bill is defeated it will prevent government, law reformers and Attorneys General from having to address what I consider to be a very difficult area of law. If this legislation is passed I believe it will put pressure on lawmakers, the Attorney General and the Law Reform Commission to address this very difficult, grey area.

For those reasons, I will support the second reading of the bill. The member for Cronulla proposes to move an amendment which will clarify the intent of the bill. I have been provided with a copy of his amendment. It relates to concerns expressed about this legislation being used as a tool to further weaken laws, particularly those dealing with the abortion of fetuses. As I have said, I will support the second reading and I also will support the amendment. I believe the amendment will take away those concerns and enshrine in law the true intent of this bill.

I extend to Brodie Donegan and Nick Ball my sincere condolences. They have had a very tough time and I am sure all members in this place feel for them. They have been very strong sitting through this very long debate. During this debate I have been impressed by the way in which members have considered the information provided by so many organisations and individuals and have presented their cases. I do not want to take up any more time of the House. I commend all members who have contributed to debate on this very difficult issue. I commend also the member for The Entrance for introducing the bill. I wish Brodie Donegan and Nick Ball well and I urge members to vote for the amendment proposed to be moved by the member for Cronulla.

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) [10.36 a.m.]: I begin my contribution to debate on the Crimes Amendment (Zoe's Law) Bill 2013 (No. 2) by humbly acknowledging the scale of the tragedy that has brought us to this debate. Zoe was cruelly taken from her family on Christmas Day, of all days, in 2009. Since that terrible day Brodie Donegan, her partner, Nick, and their families have heroically chosen to share their story, their quest for justice with this House, State, nation and beyond. The tragedy of stillbirth is one that is almost unique in the lingering and pervasive anguish it produces for those who are left to wonder what might have been. It is an issue with which this House, through my predecessor and former Premier, the Hon. Kristina Keneally, is well acquainted. Indeed, Kristina continues to serve as patron of the Stillbirth Foundation.

I commend the Donegan family for the moral courage they have displayed in bringing this issue to the attention of the House despite the pain it must cause them to do so. As I have said on a number of occasions in this place, where the Parliament seeks to intrude into the criminal law, it must do so for a proper and effective purpose. This bill proposes an amendment to the Crimes Act amending the law of grievous bodily harm to create a separate offence in respect of an unborn child. To justify a departure from the status quo, this House must be satisfied of some inadequacy, deficiency or perversity in its present operation. I am not so satisfied.

Before coming to this place, almost the entirety of my professional working life was spent in the criminal justice system of this State. In more than 30 years as a practising solicitor and barrister, as a Public Defender for the State of New South Wales, an acting Crown Prosecutor and counsel assisting some of the most difficult of coronial inquests, I have seen, often in unsettling clarity and proximity, the most heinous, tragic and morally outrageous of crimes. I have seen the pain, suffering, grief and loss of victims. I have seen the cold emptiness of family left behind to mourn an innocent loved one. In order to function effectively, to serve the court and the interests of justice in such circumstances without being deeply affected, damaged on a personal and mental level, it is absolutely critical to bring an objective, dispassionate perspective to bear on the facts.

It is fundamental to the criminal law that objectivity pervades its every function. It is that tradition of the criminal law that I have brought to bear consistently upon my deliberations in this place. I have had the benefit of reading the judgement, the remarks on sentence, of Judge Ellis of the District Court in the matter of *Regina v Hampson* in the New South Wales District Court on 31 March 2011. I am satisfied that His Honour correctly applied all of the principles of sentencing required of him. It should be noted that the Crown made no appeal in this matter. From that fact the House should infer that the Crown did not regard the sentence as manifestly inadequate. In sentencing the offender, His Honour said:

There are two aspects of grievous bodily harm to this case. The first relates to the physical injury occasioned to the victim and the impact that those injuries have had to date and are likely to continue to have. The second is the loss of her unborn child. The psychological impact of both of these matters can clearly and emphatically be gleaned from the victim impact statement. Listening to Mrs Donegan read from her victim impact statement was to see into the heart of her loss in many different ways. In my view the injuries in total, being both the physical and psychological, are such as to fall within the higher end of the range of potential injuries under this particular provision.

His Honour further said:

The court acknowledges that from a purely legal point of view there was no loss of life, but there was a loss of an unborn child. There were significant injuries and the ongoing physical and psychological sequelae of this particular exceedingly dangerous piece of driving are extremely significant and in my view call for the imposition of a full time sentence of imprisonment.

The creation of a separate and additional offence, as is proposed here, is unlikely to operate in practice, as many members have foreshadowed. Where grievous bodily harm to a mother and the destruction of a foetus are effected in the same criminal act, in my view, having looked at the facts in this case, it is not unlikely that the principle of totality, a fundamental basis of modern sentencing, would see results arrived at which are of a largely identical nature. I refer the House to the High Court decision in the matter of *Mill v The Queen* in 1988, in which the court quoted the *Commonwealth Law Reports*, Volume 166, at page 63:

The effect of the totality principle is to require a sentencer who has passed a series of sentences, each properly calculated in relation to the offence for which it is imposed and each properly made consecutive in accordance with the principles governing consecutive sentences, to review the aggregate sentence and consider whether the aggregate is "just and appropriate". The principle has been stated many times in various forms: "when a number of offences are being dealt with and specific punishments in respect of them are being totted up to make a total, it is always necessary for the court to take a last look at the total just to see whether it looks wrong"; "when ... cases of multiplicity of offences come before the court, the court must not content itself by doing the arithmetic and passing the sentence which the arithmetic produces. It must look at the totality of the criminal behaviour and ask itself what is the appropriate sentence for all the offences".

As I have observed, Judge Ellis has, quite properly, given consideration to each of the sentencing principles to which he was required to have regard to in his well-written extemporary sentencing judgement. In view of this, I am not satisfied that some inadequacy, deficiency or perversity is encumbering the present law. Secondly, I have observed that it is likely that this bill, were it to pass into law, would produce an identical or largely similar outcome in respect of sentence on account of the same fundamental principle.

It is for those reasons that I oppose the bill. However, in so doing, I commend the member for The Entrance for bringing this bill to the House. To persuade both the Government and the Opposition to hold a conscience vote in this place is no small feat. In listening to the contributions of other members here and the public statements of the Donegan family, it is clear that the member for The Entrance has been of immense assistance and comfort to them. Although I respectfully disagree with his proposition as a matter of objective legal analysis, I have no doubt that his actions are well intentioned and in the best interest of representative democracy. This bill must demonstrate an impetus to depart from the status quo. I am not satisfied in this regard and, as such, I oppose the bill.

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Parliamentary Secretary) [10.44 a.m.]: I too commend the member for The Entrance and thank him for bringing the Crimes Amendment (Zoe's Law) Bill 2013 (No. 2) to the House. I acknowledge the member's empathy and thank him for the time and commitment he has given to this bill. It would have involved a great deal of work and I am sure he has been on an emotional rollercoaster. I also thank the member for bringing Brodie Donegan to this House to speak to members and answer questions so that we could get an insight into her experience. Over many weeks I have listened to the many speeches in this debate and I have been interested in the different viewpoints expressed by members.

I thank the members for their contributions, many of whom expressed passionate views in relation to the issues in the bill. I also thank the many constituents in my electorate, as well those across the State who have contacted their local members, for expressing their viewpoints on this bill. I am pleased that members of this House will have a conscience vote on the bill. Every day as members of Parliament we face challenges in our lives. We work very hard for our communities and, at times, significant concerns are brought to our attention. However, no other challenging issue I have faced compares to the one before us today. No-one should ever have to suffer the heartache or emotional rollercoaster that Brodie and Nick have had to suffer. No-one should have to experience their loss. I have been saddened by their heartbreaking story.

I support the Crimes Amendment (Zoe's Law) Bill 2013 (No. 2). I recognise the efforts of Brodie Donegan in advocating for this bill. This has been a four-year journey for Brodie, a mother who, when 32 weeks pregnant, was run down by a driver under the influence of drugs near her home on the Central Coast on Christmas Day 2009. As a result, she lost her unborn daughter, Zoe. Zoe was stillborn because the placenta that provided her with oxygen was ruptured by the force of the impact. Her mother, Brodie, was pinned against a tree for three hours. As a father of three very young children, I can only imagine the immense sense of loss and heartbreak felt by both Brodie Donegan and Nick Ball in the wake of this tragedy. My heart goes out to them.

This bill is not just about Zoe. From research, I have found that other children have lost their lives in similar circumstances. Sadly, their families also have been denied the closure and justice that they rightly deserve. My thoughts also go out to those families. This bill seeks to remember a little life lost, a little life that was taken. Zoe Donegan had a name, she had a funeral, and her parents have a death certificate for her. Brodie Donegan received six weeks paid parental leave from her employer. But because of our existing laws, Zoe was listed among the body parts of her mother's injuries. Currently, her death does not count in the eyes of the law. I realise that it is important for laws not to have unintended consequences but I believe these fears are unfounded. As many have recognised, unintended consequences could be a feature of virtually any law. The bill before us anticipates the risks and takes steps to address them.

Under the Crimes Act 1900 grievous bodily harm is a criminal offence committed upon a person and does not include the foetus of a pregnant woman. This bill will amend the Crimes Act 1900 to recognise the existence of the foetus of a pregnant woman that is of at least 20 weeks gestation so that proceedings for certain grievous bodily harm offences may be brought against an offender who causes unlawful destruction or harm to any such foetus as proceedings for grievous bodily harm to the foetus rather than to the pregnant woman. As I said earlier, at 20 weeks an unborn baby is entitled to a birth certificate and a death certificate and I believe that the baby should be entitled to be protected by law from serious offences. I want us to acknowledge the life of Zoe.

Concerns have been raised about consequences for medical practitioners. I make it clear that the bill does not apply to anything done in the course of a medical procedure or by or with the consent of the pregnant woman that causes the destruction of or harm to a foetus. This bill does not represent a slippery slope and will not have unintended consequences. I commend the decision to allow a conscience vote in this House and the robust community discussion that this bill has created. I once again thank community members who contacted me about this issue. I have taken their views into account. I appreciate each and every one of them for sharing their views and the views of the organisations they represent on this significant piece of legislation. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO (Lakemba) [10.51 a.m.]: At the outset of my contribution I acknowledge the tragic loss of Zoe, which was the catalyst for the Crimes Amendment (Zoe's Law) Bill 2013 (No. 2). I express my condolences to Brodie and Nick and all parents who have lost a child in utero in similar circumstance. I also acknowledge the intention and goodwill of the member for The Entrance in introducing this bill. I congratulate him on the manner in which he has conducted the debate on this important issue. Like many members, I have given careful consideration to the issues surrounding this bill. I have talked to many people whose opinions I respect and I have discussed the matter with my family and friends. I have read a significant amount of material and I have explored my conscience and thoughts. In light of that, I have decided not to support the bill.

I have considered the Campbell review, which I will summarise. In 2010 the Hon. Michael Campbell, QC, conducted a review of laws surrounding criminal incidents involving the death of an unborn child. The report on the review was released in October of that year. The review examined whether current provisions of the Crimes Act 1900 provided an appropriate response to criminal incidents involving the death of an unborn child. It was the tragic loss of Zoe Donegan that prompted the Campbell review. Her mother, who is here today, was struck by a drug-affected driver. The incident caused the death of Zoe, whose name is given to this bill. I have also reviewed material from professional bodies such as women's health groups and I have listened to the views of many constituents. As I indicated, I will not be voting to change the existing laws.

Any of us who has confronted the horror and distress of losing an unborn child would want our pain and loss to be recognised. Asking for the law to be changed to acknowledge our loss is completely understandable. However, it is my view that no law enacted by this or any Parliament could codify and properly satisfy parents for the profound loss of their unborn child. Attempting to enact such a law could have an unacceptable impact on the reproductive freedoms of women in New South Wales. I think that risk is not outweighed by the perceived benefits of this bill. The Chief Executive of Family Planning NSW, Ms Ann Brassil, was quoted in the *Sun-Herald* as saying that the "biggest concern" with this bill was "the explicit reference in the bill to the foetus being regarded as a living person". Such an approach is contentious because it raises the question of competition between the rights of the pregnant woman and those of the unborn child. That made me ponder whether it is possible for the law to manage the potential conflicts between two beings living in the one body.

The Australian Medical Association's concerns expressed to the Campbell review in 2010 remain. The Australian Medical Association believes that any further extension of the legislation to create a charge of

grievous bodily harm for a child in utero would have unintended consequences and flow-on effects in other areas of medicine and the law. The current laws recognise the harm caused to a pregnant woman by the criminal actions of another without causing the unintended consequences inherent in this bill before the House. In the current provisions there is no concern about the rights of the mother being superseded by the rights of the foetus, although there may be concerns about the rights of the foetus not being adequately recognised. In the current law there is no need to consider whether the foetus was viable at the time of injury and at what stage in pregnancy the loss of the foetus may amount to grievous bodily harm.

In addition to taking public submissions, the Campbell review also considered the Finlay review of 2003 and previous reviews in Victoria and Queensland. It also looked at the overseas experience, mainly in the United States. The Campbell review looked at the adequacy of the current laws, which were introduced in 2005, to recognise the death or injury of an unborn child through grievous bodily harm provisions in the Crimes Act. The harm is recognised as an injury to the pregnant woman rather than through recognising the unborn child as an entity separate to his or her mother. It was noted that the current laws lead to no issues about at what stage an unborn baby should be recognised. The member's bill tries to get around this by defining it at 20 weeks gestation.

The Campbell report also noted that the Australian Medical Association opposed any legislative amendment or creation of a criminal offence that recognises an unborn child as a legal entity independently of its mother. It submitted that such recognition would create unnecessary complications across several of its members' specialties, including genetics and obstetrics. The Campbell review recommended no change to the current situation. It recommended looking at the victims compensation and motor accidents schemes as ways of further recognising the loss of an unborn child.

Unlike a number of members in this House, I do not have legal qualifications or training. Members have spoken about the bill's potential to create unintended legal consequences. Members on the other side have contradicted that argument and said that the will of the Parliament will be clear and unequivocal and that the intention of the bill will not be challenged in the courts. The fact that members hold such differing views on these critical issues suggests that there is insufficient clarity in the bill. Subsequently, I am concerned that these questions will ultimately be determined in another jurisdiction and that the will of this Parliament as expressed in the bill will not be paramount.

I appreciate the opportunity to make a contribution to debate on this bill by way of a conscience vote. I recognise the deeply held views and positions of all members. However, for the two reasons I outlined earlier—that I do not believe the benefit of codifying the point at which life begins in a legislative sense outweighs the risk to the reproductive freedom of women and that I do not feel that any law we enact in this place can properly or adequately reduce the unmitigated sense of loss a parent would feel in such circumstances—I do not support the bill.

Mr ANDREW GEE (Orange) [10.59 a.m.]: My contribution to debate on the Crimes Amendment (Zoe's Law) Bill 2013 (No. 2) will be brief. The bill has come to this House out of tragic circumstances surrounding a terrible loss by Brodie Donegan and her partner, Nick, of Zoe on Christmas Day 2009. I cannot imagine the pain and profound grief that that loss caused them. I have nothing but respect and admiration for the way they have advocated for legislative changes in this place. The bill has caused much interest and discussion among members of this House and the community at large. The debate and discussion has been carried out in the best traditions of our democracy. I commend the member for The Entrance on the manner in which he has presented the bill to this House and to his fellow members. I certainly appreciated the comprehensive material he made available in support of this legislation.

This bill recognises as a living person the separate existence of the foetus of a pregnant woman that is of at least 20 weeks gestation. As we know, the common law recognises that personhood commences at birth. I certainly appreciate and understand the intention driving the bill. However, having considered the extensive material and arguments both for and against the bill, I have concluded that I am not able to support it. In coming to the conclusion, I examined the current legislation. In 2005 this Parliament passed the Crimes Amendment (Grievous Bodily Harm) Bill 2005 that added to the definitions in section 4 (1) of the Crimes Act, which now provides that offences relating to grievous bodily harm include "the destruction (other than in the course of a medical procedure) of the foetus of a pregnant woman, whether or not the woman suffers any other harm".

That important amendment widened the definition of grievous bodily harm for a number of offences under the Crimes Act. Those offences are extensive and include wounding or causing grievous bodily harm with

intent, discharging a firearm with intent to cause grievous bodily harm, dangerous driving or navigation, causing a dog to inflict grievous bodily harm, and causing bodily injury by way of gunpowder through an explosion. That 2005 amendment had very significant effects on the manner in which offences relating to grievous bodily harm were implemented under our criminal justice system. The issue was considered most recently in 2010 by the Hon. Michael Campbell in his report, "Review of Laws Surrounding Criminal Incidents Involving the Death of an Unborn Child". I read that report thoroughly to inform my own views on this legislation. Mr Campbell concluded unequivocally that "the current offences do allow the justice system to respond appropriately".

My concern with this legislation is that, well intentioned though it may be, it creates a legal anomaly whose ramifications are not clear. It is certainly clear for the purpose of relevant offences that an unborn child is taken to be a living person. As other members who have participated in this debate have said, that is a dramatic change. As legislators, I believe we have a duty to make laws that are clear and consistent. The fact that amendments have been drafted in an attempt to allay fears with respect to the unintended consequences of this legislation highlights to me how potentially piecemeal the law relating to the legal recognition of an unborn child would become if this legislation was passed. The law would not be clear and it would not be consistent. I am also troubled by the fact that this proposed new approach to the law is not uniform across the Crimes Act. Grievous bodily harm is to be the only applicable charge. For example, it is not being introduced for offences relating to murder or manslaughter. Quite clearly it creates a legal anomaly that remains unexplained.

Added to that is the fact that the threshold for recognition of a foetus as a living person is 20 weeks gestation or a body mass of at least 400 grams. Aside from being the definition used with respect to the Births, Deaths and Marriages Act, this threshold seems to be arbitrary and itself has the potential to create angst among people who potentially are affected by this law: for example, when a foetus has a body mass of less than 400 grams. Many organisations, including groups such as the Australian Medical Association, have expressed a view on this bill, some for and some against. I thank them for their input, which certainly has been appreciated and valued by members. As a member of Parliament I welcome hearing diverse opinions on important legislation such as this. It is an important part of the democratic process, and long may it continue. Having considered all the various views on this bill, I am not convinced that the legislation adds sufficiently to the criminal law in this area to justify such a dramatic and anomalous change. As I have said, I am therefore unable to support it.

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Parliamentary Secretary) [11.05 a.m.]: I join my colleagues in debate on the Crimes Amendment (Zoe's Law) Bill 2013 (No. 2). Like many of my colleagues, I have listened to the long debate that has occurred in relation to this bill. I acknowledge Brodie and Nick and the approach they have adopted. It has taken a huge amount of courage for them to traverse such a distance and bring this bill to Parliament. They would not have been able to do that without the support of their local member, the member for The Entrance, who has demonstrated his own personal courage in taking on a contentious issue. If it were not for the member for The Entrance and others in this place demonstrating that sort of courage we would be unable to address issues such as this. I commend the member for The Entrance for his work.

There is no doubt that this has been a difficult bill for many people, including me. My opinion has fluctuated as I listened to the debate, but I have been inspired somewhat by the dignified manner in which this debate has been conducted. It might well serve as a lesson for all members of this Parliament on how to conduct debates in the future. If this style is adopted, we might get through a bit more work and do a few more good things, regardless of any differences of opinion. I suspect that is what the public wants us to do on a daily basis. When considering my position, I suppose I first went back to what I believe in: my principles, family values, how I was raised and my religious beliefs as a Catholic, which often guide me—particularly around the value of life. Unfortunately, that conflicts with positions of law. Another of the responsibilities people give us as members of this place is to create the laws that allow our society and our community to operate.

The basis of this bill is establishing a definition of personhood and that is where my concerns lie. I have absolutely no doubt that the member for The Entrance has made every possible attempt to ensure that he removes some of the contentious issues from the bill. I think he has done an admirable job. However, regardless of his attempts, I think members of this place will be stereotyped in making their decision. This is my third conscience vote as a member of this House and I know that for many members of the Government it will be their first. On the political spectrum that is often referred to in society as the left side or the right side of the ledger, my two conscience votes were split down the middle. I was pro the same-sex adoption debate and when we debated the injecting room in Kings Cross, I opposed that bill. A conscience vote gives members an opportunity to evaluate issues based on exactly what they see.

With that in mind, the existence of personhood prior to birth raises major concerns for me. We are also looking at changing the law and without a shadow of a doubt this change will be interpreted somewhere along the line as conferring personhood. I also believe that courts operate on a desire to find consistency within the law. I am concerned that if this bill is passed, the introduction of a new definition of personhood would lead to a drive for consistency. I believe that is the unintended consequence that people talk about, not so much the implication for reproductive rights—although I know many members in this Chamber have concerns about that. My concern is the change in how the law will be interpreted.

The bill asks us to recognise an unborn child or foetus as a person for the purpose only of charging someone with grievous bodily harm. That probably explains my conflict and why I decided not to support the bill. Regardless of the admirable attempts by members to come up with a solution, I believe the solution before us is not the right one. If we are focusing on giving an unborn child the same rights in law as a person, surely this bill should do that. But it does not. The bill only changes the rights of an unborn child in the context of grievous bodily harm. If we were providing consistency of law to people across New South Wales I would argue that an unborn child, if considered to be a person, should have the same rights as any other person. In the case of Nick and Brodie Donegan, Zoe would have access to the same things. The person who killed Zoe should be able to be charged with the same offences that can apply to others—that is, manslaughter or murder. We have confined the definition to one particular area, and I do not think this House should do that.

I also have concerns about the arbitrary nature of 20 weeks gestation and 400 grams. We are being asked to draw a line in the sand and support a proposition that will be incredibly difficult to apply under other circumstances with any consistency. I agree with the member for Mount Druitt that there is clearly a gap in the law. That issue was also raised by the member for Wagga Wagga. But I do not agree with the member for Mount Druitt that taking a step in this direction will deliver the most appropriate outcome. Clearly there is a gap in the law. People such as Nick and Brodie Donegan should receive justice for the action taken against them and their family. However, I do not believe this law does that; I think it takes a particular circumstance and tries to address it in isolation.

Creating a new definition of "personhood" presents a raft of opportunities to bring other matters before the courts. For me, there is a lack of consistency that we cannot support. The bill creates a grey area, which is unacceptable over the long term as we drive for consistency before the courts. I believe we lack guidelines around sentencing arrangements. We have recognised and acknowledged grievous bodily harm against a foetus. Surely we should also ensure that judges have a clear understanding, whether through guideline sentences or a grid-based system for sentencing, that actions impacting on a foetus as well as an individual can be considered when handing out appropriate punishment or sentences.

For those reasons, while respecting and acknowledging the courage of those who have brought this bill before the House, I am not able to support it. I am not sure where this issue will go from here. The bill may pass, or it may not. Wherever the issue goes, there is clearly a grey area or a breakdown in the law that needs to be fixed. This is one attempt to do that, and the bill may well be passed by this House. But should it fail we need to examine this area and find a way for people like Nick and Brodie to be viewed appropriately through the eyes of the law. The arbitrary nature of the concept concerns me: establishing a new definition of "personhood". The rights of a foetus in utero and the rights of a person in the eyes of the law are not consistent. This bill does not create consistency, and therefore I am unable to support it.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! Before I call the member for Hornsby, I remind members to switch their mobile phones to silent mode. The proceedings of the House have been interrupted too many times this morning by mobile phones and other electronic devices.

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) [11.15 a.m.]: I speak in debate on the Crimes Amendment (Zoe's Law) Bill 2013 (No. 2). Like many other members in this place, I have spent a great deal of time reflecting on the contents of the bill and the events that led to its introduction. I take this opportunity to acknowledge Brodie Donegan and her partner, Nick, for bringing this issue to light. They have been through what no parent should ever go through. Their child, Zoe, was taken away from them by a criminal act that deserved the strongest possible punishment. I place on the public record my deep sympathies to the Donegan family for their awful personal loss and thank them for their ongoing commitment to Zoe and her memory. I also acknowledge the steadfast resolve and absolute dedication of the member for The Entrance in fighting for the Donegan family and all his constituents. The member for The Entrance has gone to great lengths to stand up for his community, and the people of The Entrance should feel privileged to have such a dedicated representative in this place.

As I have mentioned, the traumatic experience of Brodie Donegan is one that no expectant mother should have to endure. When 32 weeks pregnant, Brodie was struck by a car whose driver was under the influence of drugs. Her daughter was delivered stillborn following an emergency caesarean. Subsequently, the driver was charged under section 52A (3) (c) of the Crimes Act for the injuries sustained by Ms Donegan. While she wished for separate charges to be laid against the driver for the death of Zoe, as Zoe was still in utero she was listed as part of Ms Donegan's injuries. I understand that Ms Donegan has suffered significant grief and pain. I am terribly saddened by her story. However, I strongly believe the current law adequately addresses and deals with criminal incidents involving the death of an unborn child.

The Crimes Amendment (Zoe's Law) Bill 2013 (No. 2) proposes to define a foetus at 20 weeks, or 400 grams, as an unborn child taken to be a separate, living person for the purpose of applicable offences. Accordingly, separate provisions can be brought for causing grievous bodily harm to an unborn child, including cases where the harm results in the destruction of the unborn child. At present, an assault resulting in the stillbirth or miscarriage of a foetus has been held to cause the infliction of grievous bodily harm to the pregnant woman. In *R v King* the Supreme Court found that for the purposes of the law of assault, and the element of grievous bodily harm, it is appropriate that the close and intimate physical connection between a mother and her foetus equates to the recognition of the foetus as part of the mother. This formulation was codified in New South Wales and "grievous bodily harm" is defined in the Crimes Act as including the destruction of the foetus of a pregnant woman, whether or not the woman suffers any other harm.

This protection of the rights of a foetus under our current legal framework is sufficient. Through the definition of grievous bodily harm, an offender is culpable for a range of offences under the Crimes Act, including: section 33, intent to cause grievous bodily harm; section 35, recklessly causing grievous bodily harm; and section 52A, dangerous driving occasioning bodily harm. These provisions provide a direct path to the punishment of an offender whose actions have resulted in the death of a foetus. These are serious crimes, and the corresponding penalties appropriately address the gravity of their consequences. Intentionally causing grievous bodily harm carries a penalty of up to 25 years imprisonment, and recklessly doing the same carries a maximum penalty of 14 years. Further, if the mother of the child is injured and the foetus is destroyed, both harms can be taken into consideration as aggravating factors, as outlined in section 21A (g) of the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act.

A judge can take into consideration other injuries and the trauma and ramifications of the harm done to the woman when determining the sentence. The loss of a foetus is not left unpunished. Under the current legal arrangements, it cannot be said that any offenders are escaping appropriate punishment. The definition to distinguish between a foetus that is treated as being part of a woman and an unborn child being treated as a distinct, living person is arbitrary. No medical principle is applied to the definition. Why should a foetus of 19 weeks and six days be treated any differently from one that is 20 weeks? Why should a foetus weighing 399 grams be treated any differently from one weighing 400 grams? Each foetus in utero develops at a different rate; it is unjust and contrary to the rule of law to assign different levels of culpability in each circumstance. As a Catholic I believe life starts at conception. So this arbitrary definition of 20 weeks is completely out of step with my personal view and definition of when life begins. Further, as identified in the 2010 Campbell review, acknowledgement of the destruction of a foetus in this way could downgrade other harms—for example, the loss of reproductive capacity, which some may regard as equally traumatic. This example can be replicated across a number of different issues, adding further unnecessary uncertainty and ambiguity to an already complex area of law.

The proposed provisions are completely unnecessary in order to address this issue. Our current legal frameworks are sufficient. The New South Wales Bar Association, Campbell review, Community Legal Centres NSW, the Australian Medical Association and a host of other organisations recognise the adequacy of current laws and believe reforms are not needed. A number of unintended consequences and flow-on effects will affect other areas of the law—for example, it is important to note that malice is not required to prove manslaughter: I refer to the decision in *Queen v Lavender* (2005) 222 CLR 67. All that the amendment requires is either an unlawful and dangerous act carrying with it an appreciable risk of serious injury or criminal negligence with a high risk that death or grievous bodily harm will follow. Despite the efforts of the member for The Entrance, who introduced the bill, and the member for Cronulla, who has drafted a proposed amendment, unintended consequences are not confined just to abortions and medical procedures.

I ask the House to consider the following two examples. A loving husband is driving his pregnant wife to see her parents. He makes a mistake, but it is a negligent one—or he drinks just one standard drink too many—and crashes the car. His wife is fine but the foetus miscarries. The husband is then charged with

manslaughter and goes to jail. Given the current drafting of the amendment, the woman might not go to jail if she were driving under the same circumstances. Another example is of a woman on holiday who decides to go riding on a dune buggy, take a roller-coaster ride or do some whitewater rafting and is not told of the possible risks to her foetus—they are appreciable risks but not understood by the tour guide or operator. The person responsible may go to jail for manslaughter. I believe the proposal opens the door to a range of unintended consequences that the amendment does not address adequately. In my view, Zoe's law does not add anything to the current law dealing with the death of a foetus in utero. There is no requirement to ensure that those culpable for such harm face prosecution and punishment. As such, I cannot support it.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) [11.22 a.m.]: I will vote to oppose the Crimes Amendment (Zoe's Law) Bill 2013 (No. 2). I do so as matter of conscience, and I shall provide a brief explanation of my thinking on the bill. This bill seeks to provide a remedy in circumstances when an unborn child is killed in the commission of a criminal act. The bill raises complex issues, including the legal concept of a person. The bill was introduced following the most tragic of circumstances and is named after the stillborn child of Ms Brodie Donegan, who was the victim of a motor vehicle hitting her while she was involved in the most innocent of activities—walking. Like so many Australians, I can feel only enormous sympathy for the plight of the Donegan family. I also do not doubt the sincerity of the member for The Entrance in drafting the bill but, in my opinion, the bill proposes a substantial conceptual change to existing law in New South Wales.

In 2010 an extensive review of this area of law was undertaken by the Hon. Michael Campbell, QC, from which he recommended not altering the current law. I share the two primary concerns of the New South Wales Bar Association about the bill. The definition of "unborn child" is arbitrary. The bill treats the foetus differently depending on its length and weight in gestation. As a woman, I also worry about the broader implications and unintended consequences that may arise if the bill receives assent. In my opinion, the bill creates competition between the rights of a pregnant woman and those of the unborn child, as well as the implications of existing laws regarding a woman's right to choose. I note that the member for The Entrance specifically made clear in his speech that Brodie Donegan is pro choice and that "this bill should not encroach upon a woman's right to choose."

The significant extent of the bill's conceptual change to current law means that others may adopt this new definition in respect of other criminal law in New South Wales, regardless of those legitimate points. As far as I am concerned, the current laws, which were reviewed recently, provide adequate protection for the foetus, irrespective of its length or size, and the mother. I certainly respect the views of conscience, which are a mark of this debate, and I am very sorry for the trauma faced by the Donegan family. On balance, having considered many submissions and discussions with people about this bill, as a matter of conscience I must oppose it, primarily because of the conceptual change it advances and the unintended consequences it cannot address.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL (Ku-ring-gai—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) [11.25 a.m.]: I make a contribution to debate on the Crimes Amendment (Zoe's Law) Bill 2013 (No. 2). I do so reflecting on the comments of the member for Heffron, who said this legislation covers a circumstance that no member of this House wants to befall anybody. Judging from the considered contributions to this debate, a conscience vote is clearly appropriate on this sensitive issue. I do not intend to detain the House long. I intend to vote for the second reading of the Crimes Amendment (Zoe's Law) Bill 2013 (No. 2) and, if the amendment moved by the member for Cronulla is successful, I will then vote for the bill's passage through this House. If the amendment is negatived, I will oppose the passage of the bill. Those members, including the member for Shellharbour, who said that in some way this bill will affect the State's abortion laws—laws that I wholeheartedly support and have no intention of ever supporting changing—should be satisfied not simply by the statement of the member for The Entrance, who introduced the bill, but, importantly, also by the amendment foreshadowed by the member for Cronulla.

The amendment makes clear that nothing in this legislation will impact upon those matters. For me the question is simple: If a pregnant woman is injured in some way, the law ought to recognise that fact. This legislation seeks to uphold that simple principle enunciated clearly by the member for Cronulla—more importantly, given recent events across this State. Law is not always about deterrence and punishment; it is also about the rights of victims. Anybody who has met Brodie Donegan or heard her story could not help but be moved. Clearly, if this legislation is passed with the amendment I support, the healing process of those in Brodie Donegan's position can be assisted because of the recognition of potential injury or death to the foetus in utero. For those reasons I indicate that I will support the second reading of the bill to enable its consideration in detail, and I will support the amendment to be moved by the member for Cronulla. However, if the amendment fails, I will oppose the bill.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) [11.28 a.m.]: I too make a brief contribution to debate on the Crimes Amendment (Zoe's Law) Bill 2013 (No. 2). Like many speakers before me, I have wrestled with this issue intensely. Conscience votes always test us—that is their nature and should remain so always. On these occasions each of us, free from the bonds of party political considerations, stands armed simply with personal experience, knowledge and conscience.

I was present for a couple of other conscience votes on the bill relating to stem cell research of embryos and on the bill relating to adoption by same-sex couples. I wrestled with them as much as I have wrestled with this matter but, ultimately, I am pleased with where I landed on those issues. Similarly, I will be pleased with where I land in relation to this bill. When I was the Minister for Police, Brodie Donegan came to see me. No person who hears her story and who meets her could remain unmoved. That being the case, my vote in this place today is not because of that meeting but because of my views in respect of the principles that are at play with respect to this bill. I too will support the bill if the Speakman amendment is passed as the safeguards that are inherent in the bill and in the Speakman amendment are legitimate concerns. We are right to insist on stringent safeguards. As with most of the members who spoke in debate on this bill I am also pro choice.

If I thought this bill pitted the rights of an unborn child against the rights of the mother, I would not support it. I would never support such a proposed law. Rather, this bill pits the rights of an unborn child against the actions of an alleged or potential wrong-doer. The consideration of proposed laws by us, as legislators, is not simply to examine whether the current law has an inadequacy in its exercise. It is not to consider whether there is simply some deficiency or perversity or mischief to be cured in the current law. We have a right, as the people who are gifted with the privilege of passing laws on behalf of the people we represent, to bring bills into this Chamber and to see them enacted. The principle inherent in this bill is whether a child, at 20 weeks old, deserves to have a particular status conferred upon it. For certain purposes that are expressed in this bill, I believe that if a child at 20 weeks gestation suffers grievous bodily harm as a result of dangerous driving, it deserves to have a special status accorded to it.

I reject entirely the incremental principle of the thin edge of the wedge. We should be intelligent enough, discerning enough and conscientious enough to deal with each bill and each issue on its merits, whether it is in this place or whether it is represented in social discussions. I do not agree that just because something happens here today it is inevitable that something else will happen as a consequence tomorrow. I reject that in respect of all legislation. The criminal laws are not just about the adequacy of the present law; they are also about principles such as punishment and deterrence. This law makes a simple statement: If someone is reckless, disrespectful or violent enough to harm a baby at 20 weeks in its mother's womb—that would otherwise be born into this world, all things being equal and no intervening act occurring—that person should be put on notice that he or she is breaking the law, not merely with respect to the baby being a part of the mother, but as some entity that deserves a special status unto itself.

That is the principle that I brought into this place when the stem cell research bill was introduced. It is consistent with how I will vote today. People will commentate on the contributions to debate on this bill by members in this place and in the other place—if it gets there. I remember my vote on the stem cell research bill—the reasons for which I have given an insight to the House—was not about my Catholic religion. I do not walk into this place and foist my religion on anybody, because it is private, but a commentator in a newspaper referred to me as having voted against that bill, which ultimately passed, as a bog-trotting backwards man who, because of my religious beliefs, wanted to consign people with diabetes and other illnesses to a lifetime of misery. I found the speech by the member for Auburn to be the most elucidating, informative and helpful. She approached this issue with the compassion and thoughtfulness with which she approaches all issues in this place. The member for Auburn stated:

This debate should not be reduced to either slogans or put-downs. It is too important for that. I will be quite honest about this. As I listened to the views of many people about this bill and as I moved all over the place I lost a lot of sleep over it. Sadly, I realise that whichever way I vote I risk being stereotyped into two polar positions. Bills like this can quickly divide people and close their hearts to each other. So no matter on which side I sit, I will be with a stereotype with whom I may not even agree. I am very uncomfortable about that.

I am also very uncomfortable about that. The Hon. Luke Foley is suffering from exercising a conscience vote in the other place. He should not be suffering, nor should any person in this place be stereotyped or suffer from illogical and unreasonable arguments, no matter how they vote on this bill today. I will continue to have the utmost respect for every person in this House, regardless of how they vote today. These are difficult issues but they are exciting times because today we will exercise a rare privilege. I thank the member for The Entrance and the Donegans for bringing these considerations into this place.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [11.37 a.m.]: I join other members in speaking briefly in debate on the Crimes Amendment (Zoe's Law) Bill (No. 2) 2013. I express my deepest sympathy to Brodie Donegan and her family. She has been through a horrific experience. The question is complex and I join with the member for Maroubra in recognising that, for a variety of reasons, members in this place find this legislation difficult. I will not take up a lot of the time of the House as most of the arguments have already been well put. However, I have some serious concerns about the bill. First, the bill seeks to infer personhood on a foetus at a particular stage of development. The legal concept of defining a living person is obviously extremely complex. Current laws do not recognise an unborn child as a person and, hence, the terrible circumstances that happened to Brodie occurred.

I thank the member for The Entrance for introducing this bill. The member is trying to deal with a complex issue whilst representing the concerns and personal anguish of his constituent Brodie Donegan. However, the bill takes a different approach to that of the 2003 Finlay review and could lead us to a very problematic area. Both the New South Wales Bar Association and the Australian Medical Association have carefully considered the issue of why 20 weeks gestation was chosen as the defining point in this bill. That marker is difficult to determine and has obvious biological challenges in being that definitive. But the broader question is: Why 20 weeks? I acknowledge that that was the marker picked by Births, Deaths and Marriages. Why did that government agency do that? I cannot see any logic to it except that it suited issues where it is necessary, appropriate and proper to have certain things happen with regard to a foetus that does not make it to full term.

The 20-week gestation and the foetus weighing 14 grams issue is an arbitrary issue. Why does the bill seek to bring that marker into another area of the law? I will be voting against the bill but I reserve my position as to any amendments that may be moved during debate. I again express my condolences to Brodie and her family. I thank all members who have contributed to this debate with a great degree of seriousness. I again thank the member for The Entrance for introducing this bill, which has caused the House to reflect so deeply.

Mr CHRIS SPENCE (The Entrance) [11.43 a.m.], in reply: The Crimes Amendment (Zoe's Law) Bill 2013 (No. 2) has presented challenges, as I understood it would. At the outset I acknowledge the contributions to debate of the members representing the electorates of Liverpool, Dubbo, Blacktown, Mulgoa, Maitland, Monaro, Marrickville, Hawkesbury, Sydney, Northern Tablelands, Fairfield, Campbelltown, Lake Macquarie, Auburn, Gosford, Burringuck, Goulburn, Wallsend, Terrigal, Coogee, Mount Druitt, Coffs Harbour, Cronulla, Macquarie Fields, Port Macquarie, Davidson, Balmain, Murray-Darling, Strathfield, Toongabbie, Manly, Keira, Pittwater, Canterbury, Vacluse, Cessnock, Wollondilly, Wakehurst, Bathurst, Lakemba, Heffron, Wagga Wagga, Orange, Penrith, Hornsby, Shellharbour and Maroubra, and the Premier.

The bill has resulted in rambunctious debate in this Parliament, among a range of women's lobby groups, associations, professional organisations, the media and even individuals who share their own personal views. Since introducing the bill to this House, I have heard it referred to as "a fresh attack on women's rights", a "clear agenda", the "thin edge of the wedge", and a "threat to women's reproductive freedom". In the extreme, the bill has been labelled as "misogyny" and has been touted to "wind back women's control over their bodies [that] will be determined by men". I am open to robust debate but when the debate resorts to sensationalist statements and scaremongering, I find it frustrating and disappointing.

I stated clearly in my second reading speech and many times since the bill was introduced, and I will say it again now, that this bill is not about abortion. It is not about a woman's right to choose. It is not the "thin edge of the wedge". It is not about the health professionals who provide medical services every day to women who find themselves in difficult circumstances and need, indeed who rely on, assistance and support. It is not about impinging on a woman's sovereignty over her own body and it is certainly not any attempt to legislate to control a woman's own actions and choices. This bill is about protecting a woman's right to choose to carry her pregnancy to full term. This is about acknowledging that right being taken away through the serious criminal actions of another.

This bill has been brought to this House through the dedication and commitment of Brodie Donegan, who experienced the tragedy of her unborn daughter Zoe's chance to survive being taken away by a criminal act. Brodie Donegan's right to carry her child to full term was taken away in horrific criminal circumstances. She was denied her right to choose to go full term in her pregnancy. There was no closure for her and no sense of end to her grieving through the required Births, Deaths and Marriages process. Her grief was inextricably linked to the criminal act that caused the death of baby Zoe, and despite a burning desire to have Zoe's life recompensed when she faced the offender some 15 months after the accident there was none.

I have heard many sympathies for her story; for the tragic moment that changed her life and that of her partner, Nick, and daughter, Ashlee, forever. Can it be believed, as many have argued, that the Births, Deaths

and Marriage process should have been enough for her to come to terms with what happened to her on Christmas Day in 2009? Can it be believed, as many have argued, that the current law was enough for her to receive justice for the daughter they would never see grow up as a part of their family that they so desperately wanted? One can argue about tragic circumstances surrounding a woman who, for her own health and fragility of situation, seeks a legal abortion, but in doing so is it right to ignore the tragic circumstances of individuals like Brodie Donegan who deserve to have their loss recognised and acknowledged in the eyes of the law?

As I have said, I have heard many sympathetic voices and members in this place have been respectful of Brodie Donegan's loss. The women's lobby group was sympathetic but it was disheartening that despite displaying sympathy to the intention of the bill, and despite a plea to hold the debate off for two weeks to allow time for alternatives to be found, I have not considered their efforts to be anything but rallying for its emphatic defeat. Some have said that this bill is being rushed through without consultation. I stated at the outset that I was happy to look at any amendments to this bill, which would ensure that interested parties were comfortable with it, while still retaining the integrity of its intention. Brodie Donegan also made herself available to talk to members. There has been ample time since this bill was introduced for consultation but just about every organisation that wrote to me did not bother with consultation. Aside from individual members in this place and the initial meeting with the women's lobby group, no other organisation actually contacted me to consult.

To say that there has been no time for consultation is senseless. Within 48 hours of the introduction of the bill, the Bar Association wrote a letter expressing its opposition. *Audi alteram partem* is a Latin phrase that literally means to hear the other side. The legal fraternity well knows that phrase; it is a fundamental precept of law. Yet the Bar Association ignored this precept. Without contacting me or Brodie Donegan, without any request for a meeting or discussion, the Bar Association unequivocally disapproved of and opposed the bill. I do not consider this to be "hearing the other side". B. T. Sully, QC, T. K. Tobin, QC, W. Dawe, QC, and R. M. Smith, SC, as cosignatories, expressed similar sentiment, noting the Bar Association's letter "is in many ways one-sided. It fails to listen to and give voice to the interests of victims of crimes which involve the loss of an unborn child" and "it fails to do justice to the important issues raised by the legislation and the powerful plea made by the mother, Brodie Donegan, in support of it".

The Bar Association made further comments about the arbitrary nature of the 20-week gestation at which time the proposed legislation would have effect. Governments frequently pass laws, and citizens adhere to those laws. That could also be considered arbitrary. Why is a school speed zone 40 kilometres an hour and not 39 kilometres an hour or 41-kilometres an hour? Why is the blood alcohol limit for driving a vehicle 0.05 and not 0.04, 0.051 or 0.06? We have to draw a line somewhere. In order to create consistency this bill was married up with the provisions of the Births, Deaths and Marriages Act. I do not consider the defined 20-week gestation as being arbitrary. It should be noted that this period, upon commencement of the legal provision enacted by the Births, Deaths and Marriages Act, was not set by me; it was set by others to assist in the grieving process. Tobin et al noted in their letter that the "Background to the present bill supports the need for legislative change. In a sense it is unfinished business, namely the earlier undertakings to give priority to the interests of the victims of crime in cases such as these."

It has been suggested by some members that they would find it difficult if a constituent came to them, having experienced the loss of an unborn child in criminal circumstances at 19 weeks and six days gestation, to explain why the offender could not be charged under the Crimes Amendment (Zoe's Law) Bill 2013 (No. 2). This is the essence of the arbitrary argument that is being perpetuated. It would not be a case of, "Sorry, I am unable to assist you" as has been suggested. The Crimes Amendment (Zoe's Law) Bill 2013 (No. 2) works hand in glove with the existing legislation. In this hypothetical situation, any action taken would be no different to what already exists—and the existing law is heavily defended. At 19 weeks six days gestation, the charge of grievous bodily harm to the mother would still apply under the existing law. That will not change, and neither will the current provisions under the Births, Deaths and Marriages Act. Those would also have no effect in this hypothetical situation as the 20-week or 400-gram qualification already exists.

In the correspondence I have received and the conversations I have had, arguably the predominant concern raised has been the "unintended consequences". I have found that term in itself murky and vague, as the articulation of exactly what those unintended consequences are has not been clear. Much of it seems to stem from concerns that the ability of women in New South Wales to access abortion will be compromised and threatened. A number of statements have been made in this regard. Family Planning NSW, writing to all members of Parliament, said it was concerned about unintended consequences and suggested that pregnant woman may be criminally charged for their actions. The New South Wales Bar Association said, "There is legitimate concern about the broader implications of the bill." Australian Medical Association President, Associate Professor Brian Owler, said:

We don't really know what the consequences are going to be, only that there would be some significant consequences ...

What exactly are "some significant" consequences? During his address to this House, the member for Liverpool said:

Put simply, the claimed exclusionary intent and effect of new section 8A (4) is not good enough.

I draw the attention of members to the current law. It is, without a doubt, widely supported by those opposing this bill, who argue that the current law is sufficient. However, I find this argument to be somewhat contradictory in light of the statements made about the restrictions in new section 8A (4). The current law, also known as Byron's Law, lists in the definition of "grievous bodily harm", "The destruction, other than in the course of a medical procedure, of the foetus of a pregnant woman, whether or not the woman suffers any other harm." Throughout the debate on Byron's Law, to which there was no opposition, members speaking in debate on the bill made extensive comments on the medical procedure exemption, its intention and the issue of its effect on abortion. A significant point was made, and repeated: The intention was that neither abortion nor medical treatments be affected. Members expressed great confidence that the exemption was in "abundant caution" to ensure the medical fraternity was not affected. Bob Debus, the Attorney General at the time, said:

It has never been and is not now the Government's intention that this amendment should affect the present law with respect to the lawful termination of pregnancy ...

Nor is it the Government's intention that doctors or nurses, or indeed any medical personnel performing a medical procedure that involves or results in foetal death ... should find themselves open to a criminal charge. For abundant caution, we have therefore exempted medical procedures from the amendment.

The member for Liverpool also spoke in support of Byron's Law and reiterated the comments of Mr Debus in relation to the medical procedures exemption, as did the then Minister for Justice, John Hatzistergos. The question must be asked: Why is it that the current law's exemption, which extends only to medical procedures, has not caused any hardships or charges, either for the medical fraternity or for pregnant women who procure abortions, and is considered sufficient and fine at law?

Why then in this bill, which exempts not only medical procedures but also the mother absolutely, is there suddenly seen to be not enough protection of women's rights? This bill goes much further in tightening its application than the current law, and yet it is considered not good enough. The speakers in debate on Byron's Law in 2005 had no hesitation in guaranteeing to their satisfaction that the singular exclusion was enough to wipe out any concern that it would affect abortion in New South Wales. Yet if we apply the rationale of this debate to the existing law, why are medical practitioners and mothers not being charged with committing grievous bodily harm to the pregnant woman under existing law? If the exclusions are not enough—if they are not sufficient, if they are inadequate and if they are not tight enough to ensure that women's rights are protected—why does the current law continue to be defended? Why are there no objections to the current law, given that it is far weaker in its protection? I cannot agree with the argument that if this bill is enacted a woman's legal right to access abortion will be threatened. The Greens member of the Legislative Council, Mehreen Faruqi, has been vehemently campaigning against the bill on this very assumption, saying:

However, the exceptions do not meaningfully buffer against the overarching conceptual change represented by the bill.

Moreover, it is outrageous that a woman's legal right to terminate her pregnancy could be threatened by the law telling her that she is at risk of criminal liability until she can prove that she falls into a narrow exception.

There is only a medical procedure exemption in the existing law. This bill proposes greater protections for a woman in exempting her completely—if she is exempt then she is exempt; it is as simple as that. Where exactly in this bill does it say that if a woman seeks a lawful termination she must "prove that she falls into a narrow exception"? The mother is exempt, including anything done by her or with her consent. A medical procedure is exempt. Medical treatments under a further amendment will be exempt. This bill is clear, and its intention is clear: It is not about abortion. It is disappointing, however, that Dr Faruqi would seek to discredit my ability and position to represent and act on behalf of my constituent simply because of my gender. She says:

The unfortunate truth is that this is just the latest in a sustained attack on women's rights. Women occupy only a fifth of Lower House seats and comprise less than a third of the Upper House. Until we all demand that women's bodies and women's rights are not political bargaining chips on the floor of Parliament, we will be playing defence yet again before long.

Kristy Needham, writing for the *Sun-Herald*, echoed Dr Faruqi's gender division in the New South Wales Parliament. She referred to this bill when she said, "A bill critics say opens the door to winding back women's control over their bodies will be determined by men." The member for Sydney also said in his address:

It concerns me that while women make up more than 50 per cent of the population, this bill will be voted on by members of this House of which fewer than a quarter are women.

I can speak for myself, and I am sure that other members in this place would agree that it is offensive to think I am incapable of making a moral, just and responsible decision on this matter by virtue of my gender. I do not

consider women's bodies and women's rights to be "political bargaining chips"; nor do I consider myself unworthy of representing not only Brodie Donegan but also every other female constituent in my electorate in matters that affect them.

We, as members of Parliament, are elected by our constituency to represent them. And I consider it impertinent to suggest that this Parliament could not represent women, and their interests and concerns, simply because women do not hold a majority in this place. It is according to our own conscience that we in this place make the best decision we can on behalf of all constituents in our electorates. In my second reading speech I said that we as legislators have a responsibility to introduce legislation and enact laws for the people we represent, and that from time to time laws would be introduced that not everybody agrees with.

The heartbreaking death of Zoe has left an indelible mark on Brodie Donegan and Nick Ball, and their story has touched many of us. Brodie in particular has been able and willing to tell her story, to answer questions and to assist the media in reporting her personal story along with the debate on this issue as it has taken place. It should not be forgotten, however, that it was not solely Brodie who experienced grief and tragedy at the loss of baby Zoe; as Zoe's father, Nick also went through tremendous grief and mourned as he sought to deal with the shocking injuries sustained by his partner and the stillbirth of Zoe. I would like to put on the record some words from Nick. In his own words, Nick says:

In a few weeks Zoe would have been four years old, if Brodie had not met with a driver that should never have been behind the wheel of a vehicle, high on a cocktail of drugs.

I cannot hold my daughter or see her grow up with her sister Ashlee and her little brother Lachlan. Lachlan will never have the opportunity to know her. One day, when he is older, I will have to explain to him what happened to his big sister, just as I had to do with Brodie and Ashlee, and our family and friends on Christmas day.

I was the first to hold Zoe after she had been delivered stillborn. I held her for several hours, she was perfect in every way and I did not want to let her go. Her death was made far more poignant by the fact that only 24 hours earlier, we had been watching her on an ultrasound and she was given a clean bill of health. Zoe was my second daughter and always will be, despite her not being recognised in criminal law.

When I started approaching Members of Parliament and the media about Byron's Law, and the possibility of changing the current laws, I quickly realised I had a battle ahead of me. My story was met with a short sympathy and good luck. Media attention focused on Brodie, and even to this day I am saddened by a sense of invisibility when it comes to Zoe's life. As her father, I felt voiceless in the loss of Zoe's life and when Brodie was recovered enough she continued her own efforts, where I had failed.

We are thankful for the support of Members of Parliament, particularly those from the Central Coast, who represent our collective community and without whom our efforts would never have got so far.

Although this debate centres on the mother and the loss of an unborn child, Nick's words reflect the grief a father feels for a stillborn child, particularly when it occurs as a result of a criminal act. Nick and Brodie have been resolutely courageous in seeking justice and true recognition for baby Zoe and I have been honoured to work with them and represent them in this place. We have the opportunity to rectify an anomaly in the law and provide an avenue for parents who lose an unborn child through a serious criminal act to receive an appropriate recognition and acknowledgement of their terrible loss.

This bill will ensure that the law recognises and acknowledges in rare cases where the death of an unborn child comes about by the criminal actions of another that merely following the administrative process as set out in the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act is simply not sufficient closure. That process is not adequate to allow parents to truly come to terms with the loss of an unborn child who was so dearly wanted. Members are aware that I will be moving a further amendment to the bill to include medical treatments in addition to the already stated medical procedures. The inclusion of the amendment at line 27 in new section 8A (4) will instil greater surety that this bill will not involve prosecutions in relation to lawful abortion procedures and treatments.

I understand that many members in this place have grappled with making their decision about whether they will support this bill. I commend those who have truly sought to weigh up all sides of the debate and have come to their own decision. I acknowledge that it is difficult for members to make a conscience vote that they consider to be right, weighing up the campaign opposing the bill against the heartfelt intention of and necessity for the proposed changes. Members are aware that the member for Cronulla also will be moving an amendment to the proposed legislation. I thank him for his contribution. He expressed to me the concerns that have been reflected in this debate and in media commentary but also expressed a desire to support the intention of the bill.

Rather than simply making a decision not to support the bill, the member for Cronulla has worked through his own thoughts and formulated an amendment that he believes will remove any doubts in relation to unintended consequences. In his speech to the second reading debate the member for Cronulla explained his

amendment in detail, and I will not repeat his words; however, I am happy to place on record my support for his amendment. Through Brodie Donegan and Nick Ball, this bill has started a dialogue in this place that has in many ways divided members, yet it has encouraged each of us to carefully consider not only our own views but also those of the wider community and the people we represent.

Ultimately, whether or not the Crimes Amendment (Zoe's Law) Bill 2013 (No. 2) is enacted, a conversation has taken place publicly and audibly and it is a conversation we should not be afraid to have. There will always be the vulnerable and needy in our society, there will always be victims, and there will always be a largely unaffected majority who nonetheless care a great deal about the plight of others less fortunate than themselves. This debate has brought to the surface a conversation about who counts in the eyes of the law and who should count. We have had to consider the question of the degree and length we should go to recognise the loss of an unborn child in tragic criminal circumstances.

Brodie Donegan and Nick Ball believe "any baby lost in any horrific and violent way due to someone committing a criminal act should count, should be included, and should be recognised." Not a single member has failed to recognise the tragic act that destroyed baby Zoe's chance of survival. This bill presents an opportunity for us to fill the gap inflicted on Brodie Donegan and Nick Ball when they faced the offender who was directly responsible for the loss of Zoe and yet Zoe did not count in the eyes of the law. We can make Zoe count. We can make it right so that no parent will have to experience the grief that Brodie Donegan and Nick Ball experienced when Zoe was only equal to a broken bone or a torn muscle.

Brodie's injuries have healed; Zoe, however, has not. It is absurd to consider the loss of Zoe, or any similar future loss, as merely an injury. Nothing will bring Zoe back, but without doubt in the future other unborn babies will be destroyed through a criminal act such as domestic violence, dangerous driving or an intentional criminal act. How sad and difficult it will be if this bill is defeated to have to explain why we did not enable a woman to have the loss of her unborn child recognised in the eyes of the law when we had the opportunity. How difficult it will be to say we did not because we were too afraid, we did not want to rock the boat or we were fearful of unintended consequences.

How difficult it will be to say we did not because we were loath to change, because we were the wrong gender, because the voices in opposition said we should not or because we did not want to be pigeonholed. In the first conscience vote in the Legislative Assembly in the Fifty-fifth Parliament we must all weigh up the decision we feel is the right one and cast our vote accordingly. I thank Brodie Donegan and Nick Ball for their enduring commitment to this difficult but wholly worthwhile task in light of the awareness they have raised. I commend the bill to the House.

Question—That this bill be now read a second time—put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 57

Mr Amery	Mr Fraser	Mr Provest
Mr Anderson	Mr George	Mr Roberts
Mr Aplin	Ms Gibbons	Mr Rohan
Mr Baird	Mr Grant	Mrs Sage
Mr Barilaro	Mr Gulaptis	Mr Sidoti
Mr Bassett	Mr Hartcher	Mr Smith
Mr Bromhead	Ms Hay	Mr Souris
Mr Brookes	Ms Hodgkinson	Mr Speakman
Ms Burton	Mr Holstein	Mr Spence
Mr Casuscelli	Mr Humphries	Mr Stokes
Mr Conolly	Mr Issa	Mr Stoner
Mr Constance	Mr Lalich	Mr Toole
Mr Cornwell	Dr Lee	Mr Webber
Mr Coure	Ms Mihailuk	Mr R. C. Williams
Mr Daley	Mr O'Dea	Mr Zangari
Mrs Davies	Mr O'Farrell	
Mr Doyle	Mr Patterson	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Edwards	Mr Perrottet	Mr Maguire
Mr Elliott	Mrs Perry	Mr Rowell
Mr Flowers	Mr Piccoli	

Noes, 31

Mr Barr	Ms Hornery	Mr Robertson
Ms Berejiklian	Mr Kean	Mrs Skinner
Ms Burney	Mr Lynch	Ms Tebbutt
Mr Collier	Mr Marshall	Ms Upton
Mr Dominello	Dr McDonald	Mr Ward
Mr Evans	Mr Notley-Smith	Ms Watson
Mr Furolo	Mr Page	Mrs Williams
Mr Gee	Mr Park	
Mr Greenwich	Mr Parker	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Hazzard	Ms Parker	Mr Ayres
Mr Hoenig	Mr Piper	Mr J. D. Williams

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in detail requested by Mr Chris Spence and Mr Mark Speakman.

Consideration in Detail

The SPEAKER: Order! By leave, I propose to deal with the bill in groups of clauses and schedules.

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.

Mr CHRIS SPENCE (The Entrance) [12.15 p.m.]: I move amendment No. 1 on sheet C2013-126:

No. 1 Page 3, schedule 1 [2], proposed section 8A (4), line 27. Insert "or medical treatment" after "procedure".

I do not intend to speak at length on the amendment. I refer members to my second reading speech and my speech in reply.

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) [12.16 p.m.]: I do not oppose the amendment. I do not think it has the merits claimed by the mover, but I do not see that it does any particular harm. I do not think it does a lot of good, but I do not think it does any harm.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) [12.16 p.m.]: The amendment moved by the member for The Entrance introduces an additional exclusion from the application of the bill for anything done for the purpose of medical treatment. The bill already excludes medical procedures from its application. Adding "medical treatment" does not allay the concerns of the community or of legal and medical practitioners. As I stated previously, abortion in New South Wales is not, as a given, a medical procedure. Similarly, it is not, as a given, medical treatment. Women are not automatically entitled to an abortion in New South Wales at their request, regardless of whether they believe it is in their best interests.

The Crimes Act 1900 makes it a punishable offence with up to 10 years in prison to procure an abortion. It is lawful only if the woman's doctor believes that it is necessary to avoid serious danger to her life or to her physical or mental health, taking into account medical, economic and social factors. The bill adds a new layer of criminality to this already grey area of the law. By giving a foetus personhood—an unborn child with its own rights—it becomes a person that should be protected from harm. The amendment does not change this. The amendment is futile in addressing the serious risk to women's reproductive rights.

If the bill did not in any way pose a potential risk to safe and legal abortions, it would not be the subject of a conscience vote. The position to be taken would have been decided in Cabinet and shadow Cabinet with briefings available to members from staff of the Department of Attorney General and Justice. This proposed amendment clearly does not change the dangerous risks presented by the bill from introducing foetal personhood into criminal law. As such, the bill remains subject to a conscience vote and remains fiercely opposed by women's organisations, medical practitioner groups and secular legal organisations. I am greatly concerned that the Legislative Assembly has just voted to put women's reproductive rights at risk.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Sydney will return to the leave of the amendment.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH: This amendment does not alleviate the concerns that have been raised and that is why I am opposing it. I hope that our colleagues in the Legislative Council stand up for women's rights and vote down this bill.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [12.18 p.m.]: My contribution to debate on this amendment will be brief because many members already have spoken during debate on the second reading and so have I. I am not in favour of this amendment. I outlined in my earlier speech that this amendment is a fig leaf to cover proposed legislation that fails to meet the test. It fails to meet the test set by the Australian Medical Association; it fails to meet the test set by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists; it fails to meet the test of the Law Society; and it fails to meet the community test. The amendment does not solve the problems that I identified in my earlier speech and the concerns that have been reflected in my electorate. If this amendment did solve the problems, it would be a different story. However, I do not believe that this amendment rectifies the issues that have been raised in submissions presented to Parliament and on that basis I cannot support it.

Question—That the amendment of the member for The Entrance be agreed to—put and resolved in the affirmative.

Amendment of the member for The Entrance agreed to.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.20 p.m.]: I move my amendment No. 1:

No. 1 Page 3, schedule 1 [2], proposed section 8A, line 29. Insert after proposed section 8A (4) the following:

- "(5) For the avoidance of doubt, nothing in this section creates a criminal offence in respect of an unborn child in circumstances which, prior to the commencement of the *Crimes Amendment (Zoe's Law) Act 2013*, did not constitute a criminal offence in respect of the mother of that unborn child.
- (6) Nothing in this section is intended to create any difference between:
 - (a) the nature or total of any imprisonment or other penalties which a court in all the circumstances chooses to impose for:
 - (i) an applicable offence in respect of an unborn child, and
 - (ii) any applicable offence arising out of the same or related circumstances in respect of the mother of the unborn child; and
 - (b) the nature or total of any imprisonment or other penalties which a court in all the circumstances would, prior to the commencement of the *Crimes Amendment (Zoe's Law) Act 2013*, have chosen to impose for the applicable offence in respect of the mother of the unborn child."

The amendment I have moved is identical to the amendment I circulated exactly one week ago, except for a numbering error which has been corrected. In my speech on the second reading I said that the amendment aims to do two things. First, it aims to put beyond doubt that the bill will not criminalise anything that is not presently criminal and it does so by declaring that the bill does not criminalise anything which is not presently criminal. Secondly, the amendment aims to make it clear that a court is not to increase the overall penalty that it would otherwise have imposed before the passage of this bill. I gave reasons in my earlier speech in support of the amendment, and I rely on those reasons.

Ms CARMEL TEBBUTT (Marrickville) [12.22 p.m.]: I speak against the amendment. I do not believe that the amendment moved by the member for Cronulla addresses the key deficiencies of the bill, particularly in regard to the fact that the bill gives legal personhood to a foetus. If this bill is successful, this will be the first piece of legislation in New South Wales that draws a distinction in personhood between a woman and the foetus she is carrying. This amendment does not change that. I understand that the member for Cronulla is seeking to make the bill more acceptable to people who have a range of concerns with the bill. Nonetheless, I do not believe that the amendment does that. In other jurisdictions, recognising the foetus as an independent person has been the first step towards prosecutions of women where they are deemed to have acted contrary to the interest of the foetus they are carrying.

I note that the New South Wales Bar Association has indicated that it does not believe this amendment addresses its previously outlined concerns. The amendment states that the bill will not make anything a criminal offence that is not an offence already. However, as we know, abortion is already a criminal offence in New South Wales, with the question of whether it is lawful depending on the interpretation by the courts of the relevant provisions of the Crimes Act. A law that declares a foetus to be a person, however limited, would be

relevant to how the courts apply the common law test in the future. This is one of the key concerns that women's health groups have raised, as it may impact on women's rights in the future to safe pregnancy termination services. For these reasons, I do not support the amendment.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) [12.24 p.m.]: The amendment moved by the member for Cronulla does not address the fundamental concerns that I and others have with the bill. It remains a bill that gives personhood to a foetus. The amendment attempts to prevent the bill from creating a new offence where an offence did not exist prior to the passage of the bill. The amendment does not prevent the introduction of foetal personhood into criminal law. Access to safe lawful abortions would remain at risk with or without amendment. Abortion law is already a grey area and giving the foetus personhood will add a new layer of criminality.

I also understand from the New South Wales Bar Association that the amendment is unusual and its effect is uncertain, with questionable impacts on future sentencing. The amendment does not change my opposition to the bill and I am not confident that it is good law. I cannot support the amendment. I know that it was designed to address the issue of unintended consequences. Those issues remain, and I ask members who doubt that to read the speech of the member for Hornsby, which was measured and astute and outlined exactly what those unintended consequences are.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [12.25 p.m.]: I speak against the amendment and draw members' attention to the Women's Legal Services NSW correspondence on this matter. This is an important point:

It is our position that the proposed section 8A (5) does nothing to alleviate concerns in relation to the effectiveness of the exceptions for anyone who may be involved in consensual actions with pregnant women, including the pregnant woman. As noted above, abortion is a criminal offence in NSW and the lawfulness of any particular abortion is always open to adjudication by the courts. Similarly, other consensual yet unlawful actions by pregnant women, such as self-administration of prohibited drugs, remain open to scrutiny on a case by case basis.

Women's Legal Services NSW is also of the view that:

... while the proposed section 8A (6) may state that the Bill is not intended to create any differences between sentencing outcomes under the current legislation and those available under the statutory scheme proposed by the Bill, it is not possible or appropriate to attempt to prevent the discretion of the court to sentence as warranted on the facts in an individual case.

I ask that members consider these matters and vote against the amendment.

Question—That the amendment of the member for Cronulla be agreed to—put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 68

Mr Amery	Mr Flowers	Mrs Perry
Mr Anderson	Mr Fraser	Mr Piccoli
Mr Aplin	Mr George	Mr Provest
Mr Ayres	Ms Gibbons	Mr Roberts
Mr Baird	Ms Goward	Mr Rohan
Mr Barilaro	Mr Grant	Mrs Sage
Mr Bassett	Mr Gulaptis	Mr Sidoti
Ms Berejiklian	Mr Hartcher	Mr Smith
Mr Bromhead	Ms Hay	Mr Souris
Mr Brookes	Mr Hazzard	Mr Speakman
Ms Burton	Ms Hodgkinson	Mr Spence
Mr Casuscelli	Mr Holstein	Mr Stokes
Mr Conolly	Mr Humphries	Mr Stoner
Mr Constance	Mr Issa	Mr Toole
Mr Cornwell	Mr Kean	Ms Upton
Mr Coure	Mr Lalich	Mr Ward
Mr Daley	Dr Lee	Mr Webber
Mrs Davies	Ms Mihailuk	Mr R. C. Williams
Mr Dominello	Mr O'Dea	Mrs Williams
Mr Doyle	Mr O'Farrell	Mr Zangari
Mr Edwards	Mr Page	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Elliott	Mr Patterson	Mr Maguire
Mr Evans	Mr Perrottet	Mr Rowell

Noes, 21

Mr Barr
 Ms Burney
 Mr Collier
 Mr Furolo
 Mr Gee
 Mr Greenwich
 Mr Hoenig
 Ms Hornery

Mr Lynch
 Mr Marshall
 Dr McDonald
 Mr Notley-Smith
 Mr Parker
 Ms Parker
 Mr Piper
 Mr Robertson

Mrs Skinner
 Ms Tebbutt
 Ms Watson

Tellers
 Mr Park
 Mr J. D. Williams

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Amendment of the member for Cronulla agreed to.

Schedule 1 as amended agreed to.

Consideration in detail concluded.

Third Reading

Mr CHRIS SPENCE (The Entrance) [12.35 p.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 63

Mr Amery
 Mr Anderson
 Mr Aplin
 Mr Baird
 Mr Barilaro
 Mr Bassett
 Mr Bromhead
 Mr Brookes
 Ms Burton
 Mr Casuscelli
 Mr Conolly
 Mr Constance
 Mr Cornwell
 Mr Coure
 Mr Daley
 Mrs Davies
 Mr Dominello
 Mr Doyle
 Mr Edwards
 Mr Elliott
 Mr Flowers
 Mr Fraser

Mr George
 Ms Gibbons
 Mr Grant
 Mr Gulaptis
 Mr Hartcher
 Ms Hay
 Mr Hazzard
 Ms Hodgkinson
 Mr Holstein
 Mr Humphries
 Mr Issa
 Mr Kean
 Mr Lalich
 Dr Lee
 Ms Mihailuk
 Mr O'Dea
 Mr O'Farrell
 Mr Page
 Mr Patterson
 Mr Perrottet
 Mrs Perry
 Mr Piccoli

Mr Provest
 Mr Roberts
 Mr Rohan
 Mrs Sage
 Mr Sidoti
 Mr Smith
 Mr Souris
 Mr Speakman
 Mr Spence
 Mr Stokes
 Mr Stoner
 Mr Toole
 Ms Upton
 Mr Ward
 Mr Webber
 Mr R. C. Williams
 Mr Zangari

Tellers,
 Mr Maguire
 Mr Rowell

Noes, 26

Mr Ayres
 Mr Barr
 Ms Berejiklian
 Ms Burney
 Mr Collier
 Mr Evans
 Mr Furolo
 Mr Gee
 Ms Goward

Mr Greenwich
 Mr Hoenig
 Ms Hornery
 Mr Lynch
 Mr Marshall
 Dr McDonald
 Mr Notley-Smith
 Mr Parker
 Ms Parker

Mr Piper
 Mr Robertson
 Mrs Skinner
 Ms Tebbutt
 Ms Watson
 Mrs Williams
Tellers,
 Mr Park
 Mr J. D. Williams

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

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

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Bills

Motion, by leave, by Mr BARRY O'FARRELL agreed to:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to permit the introduction without notice and passage through all stages, at this or any subsequent sitting, of the Mining and Petroleum Legislation Amendment (Public Interest) Bill 2013.

MINING AND PETROLEUM LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (PUBLIC INTEREST) BILL 2013

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Barry O'Farrell, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL (Ku-ring-gai—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) [12.46 p.m.]:
I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

To date the Independent Commission Against Corruption has issued three reports arising from Operation Acacia and Operation Jasper, which have unearthed grossly corrupt conduct in relation to the granting of certain coalmining rights at Doyles Creek and Mount Penny respectively. A fourth and final report is expected within weeks. That report will address the additional matters referred to the Independent Commission Against Corruption by Parliament on 23 November 2011 in respect of Doyles Creek, which I asked the Independent Commission Against Corruption to also address in respect of Mount Penny in my letter of 30 January this year. Those matters include what action should be taken by the New South Wales Government with respect to relevant licences and leases; what, if any, amendment should be made to the legislation; and whether the New South Wales Government should commence legal proceedings or take action against any individual or company.

The Government has said consistently that it will wait to receive the advice of the Independent Commission Against Corruption on these matters before considering any specific action with respect to the particular licences and leases under investigation. I had hoped that the report would be available before Parliament rose for the recess. It is now clear that that will not be the case. It is important, therefore, that if it becomes necessary, the Government is in a position to take action on the report of the Independent Commission Against Corruption. Currently, there is no general power to cancel a mining exploration licence in circumstances where the granting of the licence or the licence holder is otherwise somehow tainted by corruption.

Accordingly, the bill I introduce seeks to amend the mining and onshore petroleum legislation to ensure that, if and when it becomes necessary to do so, following the report of the Independent Commission Against Corruption the Government will have a specific power to cancel or refuse to renew a licence or other mining title. It is the intention of the Government to use this special power only where the Independent Commission Against Corruption has determined that serious conduct has affected, in some essential respect, the granting of a licence or the licence holder. It is my expectation that, following the recommendations of Independent Commission Against Corruption, it is likely that further amendments to mining legislation will be necessary.

In that process I also expect that this amendment, and its intent, would be revisited so it can be finetuned to meet the needs of both the public interest and the resources sector. The Government also would consult interested parties about these matters early next year. As I have highlighted previously, our resources industries and their significant capital investments are important to both the State's economy and the employment of family members across New South Wales. I advise the House that the Independent Commission Against Corruption has been informed about our intentions to introduce this bill to help get us through the parliamentary recess. The Independent Commission Against Corruption is supportive of what is proposed.

As I mentioned, the Government will be seeking the expeditious passage of this legislation to ensure that we have the power to act on any Independent Commission Against Corruption recommendations received in respect of Doyles Creek and Mount Penny. These extraordinary measures are needed following extraordinary revelations in the Independent Commission Against Corruption. I thank those opposite for agreeing to give this legislation priority. Hopefully it is a sign that lessons are being learned and, as the public demands, that corrupt practices will be exposed and punished. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) [12.50 p.m.]: I lead for the Opposition in this place in debate on the Mining and Petroleum Legislation Amendment (Public Interest Bill) 2013. The shadow Minister with responsibility for this matter is the Hon. Steve Whan in the other place. The object of the bill is to make the public interest a ground, in addition to other grounds, for making a number of decisions in relation to mining or petroleum rights or titles. In principle, the Opposition has no objection to the proposition that has been put by the Premier. We received a copy of the bill only this morning and were given a briefing on it. We need to have a closer look at the technical details, but in principle the bill sounds entirely proper. Indeed, it sounds similar to what the Opposition has been requesting for some time. I do not anticipate that the Opposition will have any difficulties with the bill.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Motion by Mr Barry O'Farrell agreed to:

That this bill be now read a third time.

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

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Order of Business

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [12.51 p.m.]: By agreement, the House will now deal with committee reports rather than commencing other business.

COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY SERVICES

Report: Outsourcing Community Services Delivery—Final Report

Question—That the House take note of the report—proposed.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) [12.53 p.m.]: As chair of the Committee on Community Services I speak on the committee's report No. 2/55 entitled "Outsourcing Community Services Delivery—Final Report". I begin my contribution by thanking our hardworking committee members: Deputy Chair Mr Kevin Conolly, Mr Tony Issa, Mrs Barbara Perry, and Ms Anna Watson. In order to gather the evidence used to prepare this comprehensive and worthwhile report the committee travelled pretty much all around New South Wales. I also thank the committee secretariat, headed by Bjarne Nordin, for doing an outstanding job in supporting the committee.

Outsourcing as a mechanism for governments to fund services closer to the ground has been carried out since the early days of service provision. It is only more recently that the environment of outsourcing in the delivery of human services has gathered pace and now constitutes a significant part of the work of non-government service providers. The committee decided that a review of the current outsourcing system in the area of human service delivery was timely in order to assist service providers prior to the system bedding down and becoming more extensively developed. As part of the inquiry process, the committee conducted extensive consultations with the non-government organisation sector, service recipients and government funding agencies contracting out services.

The committee's consultation process, which involved four days of public hearings and inspections of urban and rural service organisations, identified many issues of concern to clients, providers and funders. Many relate to the lack of collaborative consultation, the absence of comprehensive and consistent data on which to base decisions, and issues surrounding accountability, workforce capacity, equity and access to services across the State. A major change to existing arrangements recommended by the committee constitutes a fundamental reordering of the current piecemeal approach to outsourcing and involves the creation of a New South Wales office for the non-government organisation human services sector. The establishment of this office, specifically dedicated to coordinate local activities across the sector, will facilitate consultation between funding agencies and service providers and assist in policy development, future planning, capacity building and information provision.

The committee also has recommended greater consistency in the processes involved in applying for and awarding contracts for services. A mechanism for achieving better integration of contract requirements will be through the establishment of an interagency working group to investigate the true cost of providing services, improving services to remote and regional areas, examining the appropriateness of contract duration and the renewal of funding arrangements. These reforms build on earlier recommendations contained in the committee's interim report, which should be read in conjunction with this final report. It is important to stress that government still has a role to play in being the funder and provider in communities where the Government is seen as the last resort. The committee acknowledges that this is essential in those circumstances.

All committee members are committed to improving the quality of life for all recipients of services, and the findings and recommendations contained in the report should enhance the current delivery system and provide greater certainty for clients, service providers and funders alike. The Government has a community service obligation to be ever vigilant and stay focused on providing the best possible service to those in need. This report contains a number of recommendations. I thank the committee members for their input. I thank also those who chose to appear before the committee during the four days of public hearings. There is still a long way to go in outsourcing community service delivery but this report will set the benchmark for how we operate into the future.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) [12.58 p.m.]: I welcome the tabling of the final report by the Committee on Community Services on the outsourcing of community services. In the short time set aside for debate, I will make a few general observations on both the report and the debate that will follow its tabling. This comprehensive report should be read in conjunction with the committee's interim report, which was tabled earlier this year. I am particularly pleased that the report has been informed by the views and experience of Southern Youth and Family Services and the Illawarra Forum. Those two organisations, which are based in the Illawarra region, provide efficiently delivered community services that continue to expand. Indeed, the footprint and service delivery of Southern Youth and Family Services in the Illawarra region was recognised in the annual Illawarra Business Chamber Awards. Chief Executive Officer Narelle Clay is a powerhouse of ideas. She has a professional dedication to young people and the issue of homelessness.

I acknowledge also the contributions of the United Services Union—headed by Secretary Graeme Kelly, who runs a fantastic organisation—the Public Service Association, Local Government NSW, the Public Interest Advocacy Centre and the New South Wales Ombudsman. The submissions of these organisations in particular had a great impact on me as a member of this committee. The Government's submission to the inquiry stated that it was committed to improving services. It also stated:

The Government cannot achieve this crucial goal for the most vulnerable people in society without the support of strong, innovative and flexible NGOs.

Non-government organisations are important in service delivery. First, they provide flexibility in service delivery. Secondly, they are better able to package up services with other services for the target client group. Thirdly, they give value for money. And, finally, they are representative of the clients being targeted by the program. Essentially there are six challenges for not-for-profit non-government organisations involved in outsourcing. The purchase of services contracting may undermine the advocacy role of not-for-profit organisations. The cost of complying with contractual obligations and reporting requirements may cripple the administrative capacity of not-for-profit organisations. The purchase of service contracting arrangements formalises a power relationship that favours the Government. The advantages of contracting a not-for-profit organisation to deliver services can get lost when governments prescribe the processes by which outcomes are achieved. And the biggest challenge for not-for-profit organisations is that they may become overly dependent on government funding, thereby perhaps stifling innovation.

I am concerned about the ability of larger for-profit organisations to deliver community services squeezing out smaller not-for-profit organisations at the local level. One of my greatest concerns is that governments will be tempted to outsource simply to cut costs, especially wages. I tried and failed to have the committee approve an amendment to recommendation 17 in the report, which would have guaranteed the wages and conditions of employees in the event of a transmission of business. There can be instances of false economy when undertaking outsourcing arrangements, especially when there is an impact on wages. It may look cheap for the bean counters to outsource a service to the for-profit sector because private sector wages may be lower, but governments are increasingly forced to reassess outsourcing arrangements to subsidise wages. I will be convening a forum of non-government organisations in the Illawarra region early in the new year to enable an opportunity to discuss this report and its recommendations. I wish also to thank the secretariat for its professionalism during this inquiry process and for the publication of this committee report.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) [1.02 p.m.]: I make a brief contribution in debate on the report of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Community Services entitled "Outsourcing Community Services Delivery—Final Report." We focused on outsourcing in relation to housing, disability and home care, which are three discrete and different entities. As a result, the task before the committee was complex. The field of outsourcing community services to non-government organisations is mixed enough as it is without going into three separate areas of activity. At the outset I recognise the valuable contribution made by both public and non-government community service delivery agencies and personnel. There is an enormous amount of good work going on out there and we took the time to go and look at various activities.

At the same time it is important to recognise that outsourcing can be a valuable mechanism for achieving great outcomes, in partnership with dedicated and altruistically motivated groups. We saw that in many instances, particularly on our trip to Narrabri and Walgett—where people on the ground are doing great things despite facing many hurdles and great challenges. The committee made many recommendations that are all focused on ensuring the community can be assured that the best outcome is being sought by the Government in placing contracts, tenders or services with non-government organisations and that the focus is on achieving the best service delivery. That is what drove committee members and that is what drives the Government in this field. Primarily it is not about cost, although cost has to be a factor in any of these activities. The committee focused primarily on what it would take to achieve the best result for people in need of services.

I believe the committee's recommendations, which are varied, reflect that. They are not simplistic and do not focus on just one avenue. They recognise a residual role for government in some circumstances because of the particularly intense and complex needs that some clients of these services will have or because of needs generated by remoteness or other factors. Nonetheless, the direction towards outsourcing is probably inevitable and in the main it is probably a good thing because of the flexibility in the way that services can be delivered, as noted by an earlier speaker. I commend other members of the committee who participated in a number of ways. We had some robust discussions which I believe contributed to a good result. I welcome the committee's report.

Mr TONY ISSA (Granville) [1.04 p.m.]: It gives me great pleasure to support the report of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Community Services entitled "Outsourcing Community Services Delivery—Final Report." As a member of the committee I learned a great deal about the services that are provided to the community by non-government organisations. The committee received 83 submissions which raised the important issue of a lack of consultation and the absence of data for use by non-government organisations. The final report contains 25 recommendations which address all the issues that were raised in the 83 submissions. I commend all those who took the time to participate in the committee's inquiries. The committee conducted inquiries over a period of four days during April and September when 40 or 50 people were interviewed and made positive contributions that led to the recommendations listed in the report that we are discussing today.

I acknowledge all those non-government organisations that work in partnership with the Government to provide services to the people of New South Wales. I encourage every member to read the committee's report, which reveals the importance of the services provided to the community by non-government organisations. It is important also for the Government to continue to work in partnership with non-government organisations. I thank the secretariat staff, the staff from all those government departments who participated in the committee's inquiries and all those who were involved in consultations. I thank the chairman, who did an excellent job presiding over the hearings of the committee, and I thank also all the committee members. It gives me great pleasure to support this report—a great outcome of the inquiry process.

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) [1.07 p.m.]: I am pleased to speak briefly in debate on the report of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Community Services. I am not a member of the committee but

I think this report, which is crucial, is a reference point for future developments. There is no doubt that there is a trend, which is accelerating, to outsource community service delivery to non-government organisations. There are both challenges and opportunities associated with the provision of community services. This report makes a great attempt at addressing them. It also documents the policy environment, which is dynamic and complex, in which governments and non-government organisations need to work to deliver human services more efficiently, more effectively and in the public interest. We saw earlier this week an example of that in the legislation that came before this House on the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

I have a couple of specific comments to make. As I said, this report is a good reference point. Equally a year or so ago a report was put out by the New South Wales Business Chamber entitled, "Diversity and Contestability in the Public Service Economy", authored by Gary Sturgess. I commend that report to those who are following this debate. In particular I want to comment on recommendation 6 and, to a lesser extent, recommendation 7. The committee report acknowledges that the New South Wales Legislative Assembly Public Accounts Committee, which I chair, recently tabled a report on the efficiency and effectiveness of the Audit Office and referred to a recommendation that there be an amendment of the Public Finance and Audit Act to enable the Auditor-General to audit the accounts of private contractors and other non-government organisations that deliver services on behalf of the New South Wales Government, obviously in the public interest. The report again emphasises the importance of putting an appropriate measure in place whereby the Auditor-General has the authority, not necessarily the obligation, to follow public moneys to non-government organisations to help to ensure that they are spent for the purposes for which they are allocated. I welcome recommendation 6 to the extent that it reinforces the earlier recommendation.

Recommendation 7 refers to an Auditor-General's annual report on the accounts and activities of non-government organisations operating in the housing, home care and disability sector. I welcome that recommendation to the extent that it is seeking to set benchmarks or to monitor those industries. We would not want it to become an obligation on the Auditor-General to audit each and every non-government organisation that would in the normal practice undertake financial audits of their own volition. However, an overview function similar to that which the Auditor-General has in other sectors such as the university sector—and ideally would have in the local government sector—is welcome. The function would be in addition to the Auditor-General's authority to conduct audits in relation to receipt of government funding in the same way that my committee recommended earlier. I commend the report to the House.

Question—That the House take note of the report—put and resolved in the affirmative.

Report noted.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

Report: Follow up of the Auditor-General's 2012 Financial Audit Reports

Question—That the House take note of the report—proposed.

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) [1.11 p.m.]: It is my privilege to present the report entitled, "Follow up of the Auditor-General's 2012 Financial Audit Reports." This is the thirteenth report of the Public Accounts Committee of the Fifty-fifth Parliament and the second one to systematically examine repeat financial audit recommendations of the New South Wales Auditor-General. While it is pleasing to note the marked agency improvement since last year in addressing financial audit recommendations made by the Auditor-General, this report makes three significant recommendations about issues that have not been adequately addressed for many years.

First, and most urgently, the New South Wales Government Digital Security Information Policy requires amendments to ensure that agencies periodically test their disaster recovery plans for financial systems and supporting information technology infrastructure. Government must be able to continue operating efficiently if a disaster were to occur. While agencies are making significant progress in this area overall, there is still scope for improvement in disaster recovery plan testing. When a disaster occurs is not the time to find out that a system does not work. The second recommendation in the report is that the Minister for Regional Infrastructure and Services negotiate a solution to the ongoing controversy between Wentworth Park Sporting Complex Trust and Greyhound Racing NSW over a \$6.5 million loan dating back to 1987.

The committee's third and important recommendation is to transfer health-related funds from special purpose accounts to the Public Contributions Trust Fund by the end of 2013. As a community we need available

funds that are held in special purpose accounts to be transferred as quickly as possible so the money can be better used to deliver necessary health services to the people of New South Wales. I note of the approximately \$750 million in special purpose accounts more than \$200 million sat idle or dormant in the year leading up to 30 June 2012. More attention needs to be given to whether those funds can be released for public health expenditure.

Only about half of all local health districts have undertaken the necessary processes to review the situation. A deadline has been called for and set at the end of this year, which is a revision of the deadline set by the Auditor-General of the middle of this year. We believe that the issue is being addressed but I re-emphasise that this is a repeat recommendation and action must be taken. Finally, I record my appreciation for the assistance provided by the Auditor-General and the audit office staff. My committee members contributed to this report in a positive and constructive way, as did the secretariat staff who particularly assisted in the inquiry process and the preparation of the report. I commend the report to the House.

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS (Murray-Darling) [1.16 p.m.]: It gives me great pleasure to join with the chair of the Public Accounts Committee to speak in this take-note debate. The committee's report entitled, "Follow up of the Auditor-General's 2012 Financial Audit Reports" addresses repeated requests made by the Auditor-General. It is extremely frustrating for the Office of the Auditor-General to be continually confronted with the same situation every time it carries out an audit. As a member of the Public Accounts Committee, it is of real concern that these repeated recommendations have not been adopted by government departments. I believe that government departments should match the commercial world in the way in which they conduct business. That is also the expectation of the Auditor-General.

During his contribution the chairman highlighted the committee's recommendation in relation to the digital security policy. The evidence provided to the committee made it clear that there have been issues with information technology systems in some government departments. People expect government departments to have a high level of back-up security and yet those systems have not been tested. The incident about which we heard evidence caused a great deal of distress to the government agency employees and the people who expected to be able to transact business with the agency. That is not good enough. The Auditor-General has raised the issue on a number of occasions. Government departments should be aware that they have a responsibility not only to their agencies but also to their customers.

The committee's second recommendation relates to the Wentworth Park Sporting Complex Trust \$6.5 million loan, which was probably incurred when Wentworth Park needed to improve its facilities. Today Wentworth Park no longer exists and the debt was transferred to the joint harness racing and greyhound racing organisation. Subsequently, Greyhound Racing NSW was formed as a separate body and the \$6.5 million worth of debt was carried over. This matter must be dealt with. That debt must be written off and the books must be cleared. There is no doubt that for many years this matter has been a source of continual frustration for the Auditor-General.

The transfer of special funds for our hospitals and our health system create real concern. There is probably evidence to support the suggestion that at some point in time funds have been spent on the operating capital of our health system and have been transferred. The fact that the fund remains at \$750 million when the health system is crying out for money dictates that we must recognise the Auditor-General's very important recommendation.

Question—That the House take note of the report—put and resolved in the affirmative.

Report noted.

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 49/55

Question—That the House take note of the report—proposed.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [1.20 p.m.]: I appreciate this opportunity to update the House on the comments made by the Legislation Review Committee in its most recent digest that was tabled on 19 November 2013. This is the forty-ninth digest prepared by the Legislation Review Committee of the Fifty-fifth Parliament. This is also the final digest for 2013. Of the nine bills introduced in the sitting week

commencing 12 November 2013, the committee commented on five of those bills. I now will turn to each of those five bills. The committee made a number of comments on the Crimes (Appeal and Review) Amendment (DNA Review Panel) Bill 2013, which imposes an ongoing duty on the NSW Police Force and other authorities of the State to retain biological material obtained in connection with the investigation or prosecution of certain offences.

The committee noted that the bill requires police to retain relevant biological material only when a person has been convicted of an offence punishable by 20 years imprisonment or more. The Supreme Court can order DNA testing of retained material only for offences punishable by 20 years prison or more or where special circumstances exist. This threshold may mean retention of material, and access to DNA testing, is not available for people wrongly convicted of serious offences that may otherwise attract lengthy custodial sentences: for example, those punishable by a maximum of 14 years prison. The committee referred the matter to Parliament for further consideration. The committee also noted that there was a duty for police to retain relevant biological material only following conviction for an indictable offence. The committee noted that this excluded individuals who were convicted on summary offences from similarly having access to DNA testing. Despite this, the committee noted that if a matter is heard summarily, it significantly limits the length of any prison term that can be imposed. For this reason, the committee makes no further comment.

The committee noted that the Fair Trading Amendment (Ticket Reselling) Bill 2013 introduces significant monetary penalties when persons fail to take reasonable steps to ensure ticketing advertisements posted on their forum comply with certain requirements, or where they fail to remove or correct an advertisement after being notified that it is non-compliant. The committee noted these provisions are intended to protect consumers and to provide redress for event organisers when income is diverted to ticket scalpers who took no part and bore no risk in staging an event. For these reasons, the committee makes no further comment. With respect to the Mental Health (Forensic Provisions) Amendment Bill 2013, the committee noted that the granting of extension orders concerning the status of certain persons as forensic patients may include the detention of that patient for up to five years, which may constitute an unfair deprivation of liberty of that individual. Despite this, the committee also noted that certain safeguards were provided in the bill and, together with the overarching interest in protecting the public, the committee made no further comment.

The bill also provides that a Minister administering the Act can compel a person in connection with the forensic patient to provide any record or information in relation to that patient's behaviour, physical health, or mental condition. Failure to comply can attract a penalty of up to two years imprisonment. Despite the considerably high penalties provided, which may be considered disproportionate to the offence, and the potential impacts on the privacy of the forensic patient, the committee appreciated that administration of a forensic patient scheme requires a level of transparency and ministerial awareness to ensure the scheme's overall integrity. As such, the committee made no further comment. In relation to the Rural Fires Amendment Bill 2013, the committee noted that owners of buildings or structures that fire brigades remove or destroy to ensure the premises are fire safe will be liable for the cost of the removal or destruction. The committee considered that this provision may be deemed unfair. However, given the overall objects of the bill, the committee made no further comment. Lastly, the Travel Agents Repeal Bill 2013 will remove a right for consumers to apply for compensation when they suffer loss because of a travel agent's failure to account for the consumer's cash prepayment to a relevant travel provider. The committee noted the limited circumstances in which this would apply together with alternative remedies available to protect consumers. Given those circumstances, the committee made no further comment.

The digest is a resource available for members to inform themselves of the legislation before Parliament. It exists to identify provisions that warrant sober reflection and any issues that require careful consideration. I advise members who do not yet do so to make use of the material provided by the committee to ensure that informed and comprehensive debates take place on matters of public importance. I thank the committee staff for their diligence and for completing the report within a short turnaround time. I commend the report to the House.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) [1.25 p.m.]: I take the opportunity while addressing the Legislation Review Committee's digest No. 49 of the Fifty-fifth Parliament to acknowledge my fellow committee members for the last time in 2013: the member for Myall Lakes, the member for Parramatta, the member for Rockdale, the member for Swansea; and our colleagues in the other place, Mr David Shoebridge, the Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane and the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps. I take this opportunity also to acknowledge the hardworking committee staff and once again commend them for preparing the digest in a second sitting week. The committee considered nine bills and I take this opportunity to discuss the Fair Trading Amendment (Ticket

Reselling) Bill 2013. The object of the bill is to amend the Fair Trading Act 1987 with respect to sporting or entertainment events being held in New South Wales. The bill will create a new category of unauthorised advertisement with regard to the resale of tickets. If a ticket is to be resold, it must contain information regarding the ticket terms and conditions, it must specify the ticket row and seat number, and it must include a photograph of the ticket. The committee made a comment in relation to the creation of new penalties:

The Bill introduces significant monetary penalties where a person fails to take reasonable steps to ensure ticketing advertisements posted on their forum comply with certain requirements, or where they fail to remove or correct an advertisement after being notified that it is non-compliant. The Committee notes these provisions are intended to protect consumers and to provide redress for event organisers, where income is diverted to ticket scalpers who took no part and bore no risk in staging an event. For these reasons, the Committee makes no further comment.

The committee also commented on the Travel Agents Repeal Bill 2013 that will repeal the Travel Agents Act 1986 and deal with transitional and savings matters with regard to the closure of the Travel Compensation Fund. The report states:

The repeal of the Travel Agents Act 1986 and the Travel Agents Regulation 2011 will remove a right for a consumer to apply for compensation where they have suffered loss because of a travel agent's failure to account for the consumer's cash pre-payment to the relevant travel provider. However, the Committee notes the limited circumstances in which this right applies. The Committee also notes that consumers can still pursue remedies against travel agents under various other laws intended to protect consumers. The Committee therefore makes no further comment.

Consumers currently are able to access the Travel Compensation Fund only if their travel agent operates within the framework of the legislation. However, due to a whole range of online transactions, people who purchase tickets in that manner no longer have access to that compensation fund. The committee also considered the Mental Health (Forensic Provisions) Amendment Bill 2013. The committee commented on the requirement to comply with a Minister's order to provide any report, information or document under possession or control that relates to the behaviour, physical or mental condition of any forensic patient. I take this opportunity to commend, as always, the digest to the House. I wish the staff and my fellow committee members the very best for Christmas and express the hope that they enjoy the holidays. I also take this opportunity to thank the committee for moving a motion this week that all of our committee meetings next year will be held at 1.30 p.m. I am delighted that the motion was passed and I hope a rescission motion will not be moved at next year's first committee meeting, which will be held at 1.30 p.m. I am delighted to close the chapter on that ugly period of having 8.30 a.m. meetings. I am delighted that from now on we will have 1.30 lunchtime meetings.

Question—That the House take note of the report—put and resolved in the affirmative.

Report noted.

MOTOR DEALERS AND REPAIRERS BILL 2013

Message received from the Legislative Council returning the bill with amendments.

Consideration of Legislative Council's amendments set down as an order of the day for a later hour.

RURAL FIRES AMENDMENT BILL 2013

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

[The Assistant-Speaker (Mr Andrew Fraser) left the chair at 1.30 p.m. The House resumed at 2.15 p.m.]

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I welcome and acknowledge the presence in the gallery of His Excellency Mr Vele Trpevski, Ambassador of the Republic of Macedonia, and Mr Majkl Sibinovski, First Secretary at the Embassy of the Republic of Macedonia, guests of the member for Monaro.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Notices of Motions

Government Business Notices of Motions (for Bills) given.

QUESTION TIME

[Question time commenced at 2.20 p.m.]

MR ROGER MASSY-GREENE APPOINTMENT

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: My question is directed to the Treasurer. This secret document from the Premier's office, prepared by Peta Seaton, shows—and I quote—"The Treasurer ... approved Mr Massy-Greene's engagement as a consultant to the Treasury." How can the Treasurer justify personally awarding his political donor, Mr Roger Massy-Greene, a \$150,000 consulting contract for just three months work on top of his \$200,000 per annum position as chairman of Networks NSW?

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I love the pace at which Opposition members move. There was an article yesterday and they are here in question time 24 hours later. What pace! I have to say the Leader of the Opposition—and it is the last day of sittings, so give him some credit—is out of material, has nowhere to go and does not know what to say, which is usual when one thinks about it. In answer to the question about the secret plan, I will be very clear—and this is spectacular. The plan is so secret that on 9 October 2012—14 months ago—there was a question on notice from Eddie's avatar, Walt Secord. It was said in relation to that that Mr Massy-Greene undertook the role of chairman-elect of the new electricity distribution corporation from 27 March 2012 to 30 June 2012.

It was approved by Cabinet—something that is very different from those opposite. Approval by Cabinet? No, no, no, forget about Cabinet. This was approved by Cabinet and, on top of that, the rate was determined by Treasury. He came in as chairman-elect because he had advice on how we were going to structure the business. There was no chairman, no chief executive officer. He was an executive chairman. It is pretty simple to understand. He helped to put the structure together, on a rate, and then he became chairman. What has he done under his leadership in relation to electricity? Let us have a look. We said, "We hope that you can find \$400 million in savings." What does that do? Taking savings from logistics business takes dollars from electricity bills and puts downward pressure on prices. That is what we did. We asked him to find \$400 million; he found \$2.5 billion.

For the first time in decades, electricity prices are declining. The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal said it expects electricity to rise 1.8 per cent next year. We are seeing reform in the electricity sector. It is always fantastic to have available things such as this document, and when searching for comments on electricity reform sometimes one goes to former Federal Treasurers. We have another Labor Treasurer with some views on the Leader of the Opposition. We could not have that, could we? Maybe we do. The Leader of the Opposition has criticised Roger Massy-Greene for his electricity reform and the results he is delivering.

Mr John Robertson: Point of order—

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

Mr John Robertson: My point of order is relevance under Standing Order 129. The question is about the process, not about Mr Massy-Greene or his capacity. The question is about the Treasurer's justification for appointing him to a position.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat. The Treasurer is being relevant to the question asked. There is no point of order.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: It so secret that no-one knows about it, yet 14 months ago it was on the parliamentary record and approved by Cabinet. Another Federal Treasurer has commented on the Leader of the Opposition's approach to electricity reform. Members may have heard of this former Federal Treasurer: Paul Keating. I have heard of Paul Keating.

Ms Carmel Tebbutt: He's a better Treasurer than you.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: That is the opinion of the member for Marrickville.

Ms Carmel Tebbutt: He doesn't rate you much.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: If the member for Marrickville thinks he is a good Treasurer, she might like his comments. The member for Marrickville has just endorsed Paul Keating by saying he is a very good Treasurer.

Ms Carmel Tebbutt: I said he's better than you.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Obviously, she endorses these comments. He wrote a very friendly letter to the Leader of the Opposition. He said:

Let me tell you, if the Labor Party's stocks ever get so low as to require your services in its Parliamentary leadership, it will itself, have no future.

That is why the member for Marrickville is getting the heck out of here.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: He said:

Not a skerrick of principle or restraint have you shown. You have behaved with the reckless indifference to the longevity of the current Government and to the reasonable prospects of its re-election.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: Apart from the fact the Minister is not being relevant to the question, Standing Order 73 prevents this sort of personal attack.

The SPEAKER: Order! I am familiar with that standing order.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: They are not my words.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. They are not the Minister's words.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: He said:

It may be a novel concept for you, let me say that the conscientious business of governance can never be founded in a soul so blackened by opportunism.

Paul Keating has a lovely turn of phrase. He continued:

The people of New South Wales may have their problems—

Dr Andrew McDonald: Point of order: The Minister has had his fun.

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

Dr Andrew McDonald: My point of order is relevance under Standing Order 129. The question was about Roger Massy-Greene and had nothing to do with the letter from the former Federal Treasurer.

The SPEAKER: Order! I am sure the Treasurer will return to the leave of the question.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I shall conclude. Things are pretty clear when Paul Keating, who is acknowledged by those opposite as an icon, says to the Leader of the Opposition:

I am ashamed to share membership of the same party with you.

The Leader of the Opposition comes in here and politicises good people making a real difference to this State. He does that in his interests, not in the interests of New South Wales, and that is the reason his leadership is under threat. Everyone in this Chamber wonders whether he will still be the leader when the House returns in the New Year. I can tell everyone that on the back of this sort of approach we will be looking at a new leader and whoever it is will do a better job.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. Members will come to order.

STATE ECONOMY

Mr ANDREW CORNWELL: My question is addressed to the Premier. How is the Government making the New South Wales economy number one again?

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: What a great question from the member for Charlestown—

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: —in the lead-up to Christmas when, of course, consumer confidence is so important to retailers, especially those at the fabulous Charlestown Square—I attended the opening.

Ms Noreen Hay: Hands off their public holidays then.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I say to the students from North Haven Public School and St Marys Tamworth in the gallery, ignore the member for Wollongong. Do not end up bitter and twisted. Always stay happy and focused and have a great life—unlike the member for Wollongong. It is a great time of year also for families who hope to spend some time together knowing the economy is in safe hands and that their jobs are being protected. Households, workers and businesses across this State can rest assured that thanks to the efforts of the Treasurer, the Minister for Finance and Services, and the Minister for Trade and Investment the State's economy is in good hands. Of course, that was confirmed last month when Standard and Poor's reaffirmed our triple-A credit rating, making us one of only two States in the country to retain the highest rating.

Mr John Robertson: If you still want negative outlook.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. The member for Macquarie Fields will come to order. The member for Monaro will come to order. Government members will come to order.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: Negative outlook? How would the Leader of the Opposition say someone was on negative outlook with his ratings?

Mr Guy Zangari: Because they think you're incompetent.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: We just wish that Labor had used the skills of Eddie Obeid to manage the State's economy. If it had done so, we would live in the land of milk and honey. But we should remember that the last act of Eddie Obeid in this place was to ensure that his man, the Leader of the Opposition, was elected to that position. Let us not be diverted by the front-page story in the *Sydney Morning Herald*—on four occasions—alleging corruption by Eddie Obeid. He did absolutely nothing in Cabinet.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: The ANZ economic report states that New South Wales is leading the national economy, which is something that has not happened for more than a decade. That means a tick for the Treasurer, the Minister for Finance, and the Minister for Trade and Investment. This is a Government that has restored responsible fiscal management to the State by focusing on key priorities that students from St Marys in Tamworth would well understand. One should not spend more than one is earning, otherwise students in year 6 will have to pay off the debt in 20 or 25 years time. Under Labor, expense targets were blown out every year for 16 years. Every year it spent more than it had budgeted to spend.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: We have made the hard decision that families and small businesses across the State have made and that is to live within our means.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: That includes the 2.5 per cent wages cap, not just for public sector workers, but for everyone from Her Excellency the Governor, members of Parliament, to the lowest paid workers across the State. As a result, the State's accounts that were released last month confirm a modest surplus for last year. In addition to controlling expenses, we have renewed the balance sheet. As the Treasurer said yesterday, our practice of recycling assets and unlocking the value of State assets has ensured that we can put money into infrastructure projects where better services were needed for people across the State but also where money was needed to grow the State's economy.

As the Treasurer said yesterday, the Victorian Labor Party is now proposing the same policy in its forthcoming election campaign. It is a sensible policy that was pioneered by our Treasurer, but it was opposed root and branch by Opposition members. Whether it is WestConnex, the rail links or the proposed light rail for Newcastle that we are building from the proceeds of assets, the Opposition has opposed it every inch of the way. As Labor's 16 years in office reflects, it is not interested in rebuilding the State. Its only interest is getting into power for the sorts of reasons that we see played out in the Independent Commission Against Corruption on a weekly basis. We are also determined to ensure that we create additional jobs. [*Extension of time granted.*]

I accede to that request only because the member for Charlestown has done this year what we want him to do, which is to add to the State's population, and we thank him. Thanks to our sound economic management, we have been able to hire 5,000 extra nurses, police and teachers across the State. Labor left a \$30 billion infrastructure backlog. Thanks to our sound financial balance sheet, we are building infrastructure. The two biggest transport projects in the nation are underway in this State: WestConnex and the North West Rail Link. We have provided significant payroll tax relief to businesses across the State. Almost 94,500 new jobs have been created in New South Wales since we came to office. Sound economic management is not a process; it is not an outcome. Challenges continue to exist. The last Federal budget forecast an increase in unemployment. There is global uncertainty. Growth is expected to slow in China and the eurozone is expected to remain weak.

There is more work to be done and we will do it. The New South Wales economy is always susceptible to external shocks. The most serious is the shock of the member for Blacktown becoming Premier of the State. Labor's policies would add a \$3 billion deficit to the State's finances, which would have to be paid off by our young people. In contrast, this Government will not take its foot off the economic pedal. It will control expenses, reduce the burden on businesses and reinvest in the key drivers of economic growth. We are securing opportunities but, more importantly, we are securing jobs for people across this State.

MR ROGER MASSY-GREENE APPOINTMENT

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: My question is addressed to the Treasurer. Electoral returns show donations to his campaign from Roger Massy-Greene include \$15,000 through Eureka Capital Partners and \$5,000 from Duvose Limited as trustee for the Massy-Greene Family Trust. Did the Treasurer declare his conflict of interest before personally awarding Mr Massy-Greene a consulting contract with the New South Wales Treasury worth a whopping \$150,000 for only three months work?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: All conflicts have been declared.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The member for Maroubra has come to this place to talk about appointments. Even though the member for Maroubra is a middle manager's hero, I would have thought he had more sense. But, no, he has bowled it up. If he wants to go through donation returns to see what is on them, there might be one that is a little bit interesting. It particularly relates to the member for Maroubra, who raised this point. Who do members think might have given \$100,000 to the Maroubra campaign? It was the Health Services Union.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: My point of order is Standing Order 129. Apart from refusing to answer the question, I would love the Treasurer to table a document that reflects his comments. Put it on the table.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: He is a little bit sensitive.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I raise the subject of Michael Williamson for a minor reason.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: On the eve of the election, who was appointed—

Mr John Robertson: Point of order: I refer to Standing Order 129, relevance. This is not about other appointments. This is about a conflict of interest and the appointments that the Treasurer made. As much as he tries to avoid answering the question, it reinforces it is dodgy, dodgy, dodgy.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will not debate the matter. There is no point of order. I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the second time.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: It is like being lectured on ethics by the mob. He enters a meeting. "Oh, by the way, here is \$3 million if you do this." "I am not going to tell anyone about that. Why would I?" That is business as usual under the Leader of the Opposition. I will not hear from the Leader of the Opposition in relation to this issue.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I think it is interesting that Michael Williamson was appointed as State warder on election eve. I have the signed appointment form for Michael Williamson—

Mr Barry O'Farrell: Who signed it?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: It was signed by the former Treasurer, Eric Roozendaal.

Ms Linda Burney: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! I hope it is a different point of order.

Ms Linda Burney: He is going nowhere near the answer. At least ask him to return to the leave of the question.

The SPEAKER: Order! This is not an opportunity for debate. There is no point of order. The Treasurer is being relevant to the question asked.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I think that we might be interested to know that the second signature on that appointment of Michael Williamson on election eve was none other than my good mate the member for Maroubra. Those opposite are lecturing us on appointments. Let us just have a think about that. We are appointing people with real experience in reducing electricity costs and adding value to the State. Who do they appoint? They appoint the former president of the Health Services Union, who has admitted to corruption. They cannot come in here and lecture us. He is the person who signed off on that particular appointment.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: If those opposite continue to politicise the appointment to boards of outstanding people who will help this State, then they have a significant problem. The judgement of those opposite is the significant problem.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Those opposite are putting politics ahead of the good of this State. Fundamentally, every member of Parliament is judged on their conduct, but there is an even higher standard for those who are

given the privilege of leading their party. It is shameful for their leader to use politics to smear good people who are making a great contribution to this State. He should be ashamed of himself. Regardless of the politics of those opposite, we will continue to appoint great people to those boards because they are making a difference to the people of New South Wales.

GREATER SYDNEY INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: My question is addressed to the Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney. How is the Government delivering on its election commitments for people living in Sydney?

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I thank the member for Baulkham Hills for his question. The member has a particular interest in this issue, given our commitment to roads and railways in north-western Sydney. We were elected in 2011 with a clear plan to grow the economy, create jobs and improve lives of people living across Australia's greatest and largest city. We know that getting Sydney moving is key to boosting the State's economy and our budget bottom line so that New South Wales continues to be the State of opportunity and a State in which people can obtain the jobs they aspire to. Growth in Sydney is the key to investment in infrastructure and quality services for people in Sydney and across New South Wales. I make that comment in particular to our friends from Port Macquarie and Tamworth who are in the gallery today. Our two largest transport infrastructure projects are in this city.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: The North West Rail Link, long promised by those opposite but now opposed by them, is forging ahead. Demolition work is well advanced, including at Castle Hill where The Hills Centre has now made way for the proposed Showground station on that rail link. Residents of one of Sydney's fastest growing regions—an area identified for growth by those opposite but starved by them of a much-needed public transport link—can now see progress. The massive tunnel-boring machine will be in the ground next year—I am referring to an actual tunnel-boring machine, not the members opposite. We are also delivering the South West Rail Link, which was promised in 2004 by those opposite but not a single centimetre of track was laid before they left office. Under the expert stewardship of the Minister for Transport and Transport for NSW, 53,000 sleepers have been laid along the entire 31 kilometre stretch of track.

Mr Mark Coure: There are 21 sleepers over there.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: No, there are only 20 sleepers over there. Prior to the election we promised to make a start on one of Sydney's missing motorways; we are delivering on that promise. With the help of Prime Minister Abbott, and his commitment to inject \$1.5 billion in Commonwealth funding, we are getting on with the job of delivering a 33 kilometre motorway to connect Western Sydney with our international gateways. This will mean huge travel time savings for residents and it will take 3,000 trucks off Sydney roads. This will be a massive productivity boost for the economy because it will be easier for businesses and goods to move both across and through the city.

This has been the year of Jillian the Builder. Communities across Sydney are seeing their local hospitals finally receiving the funding for upgrades long promised by those opposite but long neglected by them. Hospitals promised by us before the election are being delivered. Construction has started on the \$139 million redevelopment of Campbelltown Hospital and main works are underway on the \$324 million redevelopment of Blacktown and Mount Druitt Hospital. I remind members again of the last speech of the former member for Blacktown in which he said Labor took Blacktown for granted.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: For 10 years they failed to invest in a hospital that needed work and the first project that we recommitted to was the \$324 million redevelopment of the Blacktown and Mount Druitt hospital. The new emergency department at St George hospital is well underway, thanks to the member for Oatley—the only person in this place to have aggressively campaigned, outside the office of the Minister for Health, whether in session or out of session, to get that development done. The sod has been turned for the upgrade of Hornsby Hospital, which will be of interest to the member of Hornsby. The new Northern Beaches Hospital has been announced, and the environmental impact statement is currently on display.

Mr John Robertson: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, relevance. That is a bit far away from the electorate of the member for Baulkham Hills. The question was about Western Sydney.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The previous question was about Western Sydney. The Premier has the call.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I am happy to flag a policy for the Opposition for the next election: hearing tests for the Leader of the Opposition. Money has been put aside and made available to plan upgrades at Westmead Hospital and Sutherland Hospital and a further upgrade at St George Hospital. We are about to deliver the new mental health unit at Nepean Hospital. Roads, homes and jobs go hand in hand; we are delivering on that front as well. We promised to accelerate land releases for more affordable housing and thanks to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure monthly housing approvals are at their highest levels in more than a decade. [*Extension of time granted.*]

I declare for the member for Baulkham Hills that his previous occupation was that of executive director of the Civil Contractors Federation. I understand the federation is happy with the \$60 billion the Government is investing in infrastructure across this State. The Government is delivering road upgrades such as upgrades to Camden Valley Way, Schofields Road and Richmond Road. When houses in those areas are built and families move in, the road infrastructure will be in place. I am delighted to mention the Erskine Park Link Road. This is a small but important road in Western Sydney because of its capacity to unlock employment lands. With the commitment to build the Old Wallgrove Road in our budget this year, which will link it to the M7, those employment lands will grow exponentially and provide local jobs for people across Western Sydney.

We promised to help rebuild the State's economy through major events. I thank the Minister responsible for major events, and all his other portfolios, because he has delivered a major events calendar that will help Sydney get its mojo back. It includes major league baseball, the State of Origin, the Bledisloe Cup, Vivid Sydney, the *Lion King*, and the Sydney Festival, which extends to Western Sydney, Asian Cup Football, Parramasala, the Autumn Carnival and the recently announced racing championships—

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: —for nags like the member for Canterbury. In our ambitious infrastructure program of building roads, railways, hospitals or schools—15 new schools are being built, 13 in Sydney and 10 in Western Sydney—we are determined to move resources from the back office to the front office. That includes the employment of an additional 4,000 nurses, 500 teachers and 420 police officers.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I again thank the member for Baulkham Hills for his question. Finally, the State has a government that is determined to deliver on its commitments and in so doing restore opportunities, jobs and growth in this State.

LINKS TO LEARNING PROGRAM

Ms CARMEL TEBBUTT: I direct my question to the Minister for Education. Will the Minister provide certainty for the non-government organisations supporting some of the most vulnerable students in this State by confirming that the Links to Learning program will continue to be funded for 2014 and beyond?

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: I thank the member for Marrickville for her question. Links to Learning is a great program through which great services are provided to students by non-government organisations. In any one year, or over a couple of years, different providers deliver this the program. So I am unable to give the assurance that the member is seeking. However, I can assure the member that schools will have an even greater opportunity to provide those types of services to their students because of the change in the funding model, with funding of \$100 million next year. We expect that figure to rise as we roll into the second year of the Gonski reform and additional dollars will be distributed to schools on a needs basis.

Ms Carmel Tebbutt: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, relevance. The Minister is talking about the Resource Allocation Model for schools. I understand that that is an important initiative of the Government, but my question was about funding for non-government organisations. I ask that the Minister respond directly to my question. It is a very important question, particularly for those organisations.

The SPEAKER: Order! I cannot direct the Minister how to answer the question. The Minister is being relevant to the question asked. There is no point of order.

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: The Government is committed to that type of service because, increasingly, high schools are using methods of curriculum delivery that are more relevant to students. Moving students into vocational courses whilst they are still at school is an increasingly popular way to keep students engaged. Those opposite can be assured, indeed I guarantee that this Government is committed to supporting schools and delivering what they want. As a result of this Government signing up to the Gonski reforms, our schools will have an additional \$100 million. It was not the Labor Party in New South Wales that did that, it was the Liberal Party and The Nationals. High schools in disadvantaged areas, where vocational education and training assists in keeping students engaged, will have extra dollars and greater flexibility to provide a variable form of curriculum delivery. That will include giving their students the opportunity to undertake vocational education and training courses and to begin work experience whilst still at school. I guarantee that this Government has a complete and utter commitment to supporting our schools.

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

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: I take this opportunity to express my sympathy to the member for Toongabbie and to his wife for the appalling way they were treated in the *Daily Telegraph* yesterday. This is not usually a matter that a member of Parliament would raise in Parliament but at times our humanity has to exceed our role as members of Parliament. The way that Nathan Rees and, in particular, his wife have been treated is utterly appalling. I suggest there would be very few members of Parliament, or indeed members of the media, who could put up their hand and say that they have a perfect personal life. I express my sympathies to Nathan and to his family. In my humble opinion, it is a personal matter and should remain that way.

REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

Mr GREG APLIN: My question is directed to the Premier. How is the Government delivering on its election commitments for regional New South Wales?

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I thank the member for Albury for his question and his obvious interest in this issue, given his longstanding commitment to improving regional New South Wales. This Government delivers for regional New South Wales first and foremost. Regional New South Wales has a loud voice at the Cabinet table and within the party rooms. Gone are the days where, under those opposite, one struggled to find a member of the Government who came from regional New South Wales. Those opposite when in government invented terms like Country Labor and put that badge on members like Eddie Obeid. They tried to pretend that they had links to country New South Wales. Nearly half of those who sit around the Cabinet table in this Government come from rural and regional New South Wales. That means that this Government makes decisions for the entire State, not just for Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong, as was the case under Labor governments.

We are delivering on our commitments to people across the State, whether through the drought package, announced by the Deputy Premier and the Minister for Primary Industries yesterday to deal with the crisis in the north-west, or through the delivery of much-needed hospital upgrades, announced by our fantastic Minister for Health Jillian Skinner, also known as "Jillian the Builder". The member for Wollongong is yawning. She has actually stayed for longer than she usually does during question time. The provision of first-class health services to country New South Wales is just as important as the delivery of health services in the big cities.

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

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: We promised to improve regional hospitals and health services and it is clear that we are getting on with meeting that commitment. More than 1,400 full-time equivalent nurses have been employed across regional New South Wales since this Government came to office. The Government has allocated \$28 million over four years to improve the Isolated Patient Transport Assistance and Accommodation Scheme [IPTAAS] and has made reforms to make it easier for patients and carers who need to travel to receive treatment to apply for that assistance from that scheme. It may not be a big sum but for the families and carers involved it is a huge commitment. It is making a huge difference to the lives of people suffering from illness. We highlighted that problem in opposition and we have fixed it in government.

Work is underway in Wagga Wagga, Bega, Lismore, Parkes, Dubbo, Kempsey, Tamworth and Port Macquarie to upgrade hospital services. The long list is testament to the efforts of local members in getting the

ear of government and the Minister for Health to deliver for their communities. We are building roads for the future; many country roads are construction sites. We have delivered record levels of funding in our first three State budgets for roads and bridges in country New South Wales. The Pacific Highway is benefiting from an extra \$2 billion committed by the New South Wales Government to continue its duplication from Hexham to the Queensland border. We look forward to a strong partnership with the newly elected Abbott-Truss Government to finish this work.

Who could forget the record of those opposite when they were in government? They cut funding for the Pacific Highway upgrade. The member for Coffs Harbour does not forget that, nor does any member who represents electorates across this city or up and down the North Coast and has constituents who have had family members either killed or maimed on that road. We are getting on with the job. Madam Speaker, I know that the Princes Highway is of particular interest to you. The highway is receiving record funding, as I am constantly being reminded by the member for Kiama. Some \$489 million has been committed in our first three State budgets to upgrade the Princes Highway to a four-lane divided road north of Jervis Bay and south of Nowra, with other improvement works between Jervis Bay Road and the Victorian border.

The list continues. The Government has committed \$435 million in upgrades to the Great Western Highway in its first three budgets. This will widen the highway to four lanes between Emu Plains and Katoomba, with other improvements planned between Katoomba and Bathurst. There are also works to the Bells Line of Road and the Newell Highway. We are delivering \$145 million to the Bridges to the Bush program and \$130 million to the Resources for Regions program, which the Deputy Premier often talks about, to help communities deal with the impacts of mining on their local infrastructure and to ensure that they get some return.

The revitalisation of Newcastle has been shamelessly opposed by Labor. Newcastle also was shamelessly neglected by Labor during its period in office. After doing nothing for 16 years, Labor is now attempting to stand in the way of this Government making a sensible decision to recycle the assets of the port, which will include the introduction of light rail, and revolutionise the way in which that city operates. We have the Hunter Infrastructure and Investment Fund and the Illawarra Investment Fund, with successful projects to be announced shortly. Hundreds of additional police are patrolling the streets of our regional centres. [*Extension of time granted.*]

As well as additional police across the State, the northern region will have record numbers of police. That is important, given some of the pests they have to deal with in that region. I am not talking about the member for Tweed but rather the things he is wearing on his feet. Clearly, the member for Tweed has shot a couple of snakes because he is now wearing them. They would have to be the worst boots I have seen in my 18 years in this House. I would expect the member for Mount Druitt to be wearing them, not the stylish member for Tweed. I am distracted by that vision of snakes in the bearpit. One of the first rules for any member of Parliament is: Do not wear anything to do with snakes. Politicians have a bad enough reputation as it is.

At Pack Saddle, north of Broken Hill, the Silver Highway is being upgraded. At Albury we have completed the Hume Highway duplication. In the electorate of Tweed we are building the Kingscliff police station. On the Central Coast we are delivering the West Gosford intersection upgrade—another project that Labor talked about but did nothing. We have opened the new multipurpose service at Werris Creek near Tamworth, and the construction of other multipurpose services is underway at Hillston and Peak Hill. On every corner throughout the State one can see signs of progress. This is a government that governs for the whole State. This is a government that delivers resources across the State. This is a government that ensures that people who grow up in country and regional areas can stay in those areas because they have the quality of services they deserve. We would not mind if more people left the city to live in those areas because that would alleviate population growth issues in the city.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Wollongong will be heard in silence. The member for Murray-Darling will come to order. I am sure that he wants to hear the member's question.

STADIA STRATEGY 2012

Ms NOREEN HAY: My question is directed to the Minister for Sport and Recreation. Given that St George Illawarra Dragons Chief Executive Officer Peter Doust has said that cutting the number of home matches in Wollongong is in line with "the NSW Government's planned future investment in major Sydney venues", will the Minister reverse her predecessor's Stadia Strategy, which cuts funding from suburban and regional sporting grounds such as WIN Stadium in Wollongong?

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind members that questions should be brief.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: It has taken 21 sitting days since I was appointed as Minister, but I have finally been asked a question by the typewriter team.

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

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: Today being an important day for cricket, I must say that question has as much credibility as Stuart Broad.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members who continue to interject will be removed from the Chamber. I call the member for Keira to order for the first time. I remind the member for Canterbury that she is on two calls to order.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: The announcement by the National Rugby League and St George Illawarra Dragons that the Dragons will play fewer games at WIN Stadium is disappointing. While I acknowledge that the club has the right to make such a decision, I make it crystal clear that the announcement is not consistent with the New South Wales Government's Stadia Strategy 2012. The strategy always has indicated the need to provide future government investment in two medium-sized regional venues: one in Newcastle and one in Wollongong. The WIN Stadium at Wollongong has always been part of the Stadia Strategy and nothing has changed. In light of this disappointing announcement, I have spoken at length with National Rugby League Chief Executive Officer Dave Smith regarding options to ensure that WIN Stadium continues to provide a strong link between the club and the local community. We discussed also how the Wollongong stadium might be used to showcase events other than rugby league fixtures. Dave Smith said:

WIN Stadium is a critical part of Rugby League's future and will remain so.

St George Illawarra remains unambiguous about its deep commitment to the South Coast and the NRL continues to see the Illawarra as a key strategic area for the game.

The Dragons will continue to play matches there and are furthermore in discussions with Venues NSW and the NRL to attract additional Rugby League events to the venue.

He concluded by saying:

The NRL is looking forward to further discussions with Venues NSW and to working cooperatively with the O'Farrell Government in ensuring the best possible outcomes for fans, clubs and the sporting public of NSW.

The Government understands the importance of sporting events to local businesses, communities, restaurants, accommodation providers and all businesses that provide direct and indirect services. Local committees have a say through the local five-person venue boards, whose chairs are representatives on the Venues NSW board. The Venues NSW board also understands how important the stadium is to Wollongong and this year has delivered to the venue sport from local to international levels. For example, all local rugby league and rugby union grand finals were played at the stadium this year, the Young Socceroos brought international football to the stadium in June and on Sunday afternoon an elite women's sporting showcase will take place when the Matildas play China. The decision by the Dragons to move two games away from WIN Stadium is disappointing. I understand that the member for Kogarah and the member for Wollongong were contacted by Peter Doust ahead of the decision. What did they do about it?

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Wollongong will cease arguing with the Minister. She can speak to the Minister after question time. Government members will come to order. The Minister has the call.

Ms Noreen Hay: We upgraded the stadium.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: If the member for Wollongong was contacted ahead of the decision, what did she do about it? I know what the Government is doing about it

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

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: The Government will hold a discussion with the National Rugby League—

Ms Noreen Hay: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The member for Wollongong will cease arguing with the Minister.

Ms Noreen Hay: My point of order is relevance under Standing Order 129.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is being relevant to the question asked. There is no point of order. The member for Wollongong will resume her seat.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: I assure the House that— [*Time expired.*]

CROWN LANDS TENURE

Mr THOMAS GEORGE: My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier. How is the Government supporting communities across New South Wales?

Mr ANDREW STONER: I thank the member for Lismore for his well-delivered question.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order. The Deputy Premier will be heard in silence

Mr ANDREW STONER: I acknowledge the member's tireless and passionate advocacy for his electorate, including its many country towns. I also acknowledge his support for community groups that occupy Crown lands and reserves in his electorate, as they do in many other electorates. Crown lands occupy enormous areas across our State. In fact, more than 40 per cent of land in the Western Division is Crown land. We recently debated Crown land leases in this House. We identified 7,000 farmers, businesses and community and sporting groups whose leases were under threat as a result of a recent court decision. Despite the Labor Party having had the bill for two months, we had to drag them kicking and screaming to amend the legislation to preserve the tenancies of those communities.

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the Leader of the Opposition that he is on three calls to order. The member for Cessnock will behave in a parliamentary manner.

Mr ANDREW STONER: Labor members did not come up with any amendments until the eleventh hour when they put forward a couple of minor amendments to which the Government agreed. That bill has now been passed. The member for Cessnock tempts me greatly, but I will come back to that dodo bird later.

Mr John Robertson: Point of order: My point of order is relevance under Standing Order 129. The Opposition amendments that were moved in the upper House were those that the Deputy Premier asked us to move. He is a buffoon.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition is being argumentative. There is no point of order.

Mr ANDREW STONER: Many Crown reserves that are used for community purposes are managed by local community trusts. These groups, which are generally made up of volunteers, do a magnificent job of looking after showgrounds, girl guides halls, police citizens youth clubs, parks—

Mr Darren Webber: Wetlands.

Mr ANDREW STONER: I will come to wetlands in a moment. They also look after reserves, foreshores and beaches. I take great delight in advising the House today that this Government, through its Public Reserves Management Fund, is delivering record funding to support community groups in the management of public reserves. This year we will deliver more than \$23 million from the Public Reserves Management Fund for community groups who do a terrific job with those local community assets. I am pleased to state that that includes more than \$15 million for regional areas of New South Wales. I know that members are very interested to hear about specific projects and amounts that affect many electorates that have public reserves. For example, we are delivering more than \$1 million for community projects in the electorate of Murray-Darling, which is a very large country electorate. More than \$500,000 will be delivered for each of the Barwon, Burrinjuck,

Murrumbidgee, Orange and Wagga Wagga electorates, which are also quite large and diverse regional electorates with a multiplicity of community resources that need funding for their upkeep, maintenance and, in some cases, upgrades.

The Government is delivering \$60,000 for the Quirindi Showground and Racecourse in the electorate of the member for Upper Hunter, \$50,000 each for the Hampton Park Reserve in Bathurst and the Dickinson recreational reserve in Bega, and more than \$30,000 for the police and community youth clubs in Tamworth and Gunnedah.

Mr Kevin Anderson: Thank you.

Mr ANDREW STONER: The member for Tamworth is welcome. The Government is also delivering \$10,000 for the Cooma rifle range in the Monaro electorate, and the Pioneer Dairy wetlands on the Central Coast will clean up with \$100,000, courtesy of the Government's Public Reserves Management Fund. The Government will deliver \$100,000 for the Newcastle velodrome trust, and \$100,000 for the Callala Bay reserve in the beautiful South Coast electorate, which is represented by Madam Speaker. More than \$40,000 will be delivered to the police and community youth club in Hornsby. My answer is taking a while because so much funding is going to our local communities across the State. [*Extension of time granted.*]

Mr Ryan Park: To support our Nationals members?

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Keira will cease interjecting.

Mr ANDREW STONER: The member for Keira has been on the red cordial again—"Old Crazy Eyes" is out of control. More than \$20,000 will be delivered for the Glenbrook Native Plant Reserve in Penrith. Many of those electorates are represented by members on the Government side of the House, but that is because there are so few Labor electorates. However, I will get to some Labor electorates shortly. Tomorrow I will visit Guyra with the member for Northern Tablelands where we will offer the local showground trust \$30,000 to help to upgrade that valuable community facility. Earlier I referred to the member for Cessnock, who blindingly opposed the Government's amendments that would fix issues that relate to Crown lands leases. He opposed 33 grazing electorates in his own electorate. Finally the legislation was passed, but not with his help. However, I can tell the member for Cessnock that the Government is offering \$140,000 to the Kitchener Poppethead Reserve in the Cessnock electorate to replace playground equipment and the security fence in that terrific reserve.

Mr Ryan Park: Any for me?

Mr ANDREW STONER: "Old Crazy Eyes" wants some money. Should we give him some? The cheque is in the mail. The Government is supporting local communities with real funding to maintain community assets.

M1 PACIFIC MOTORWAY SAFETY

Mr GREG PIPER: My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Government, through the New South Wales Centre for Road Safety, consider a campaign to target aggressive and reckless driving on the M1 Pacific Motorway—formerly the F3—which is one of the State's busiest and longest uninterrupted stretches of freeway and which seems to provoke a disproportionate level of cowboy behaviour from motorists?

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Murray-Darling will come to order.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I thank the member for Lake Macquarie or his question. The short answer is yes. Let us not waste four and a half minutes.

Mr Greg Piper: I will give you two more.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: Thanks. The M1, which was formerly the F3, runs for 130 kilometres. As the member for Lake Macquarie said, it is one of the longest uninterrupted stretches of road anywhere across the regions immediately outside Sydney. It carries approximately 65,000 vehicles each day. Like the member for Lake Macquarie, I have concerns about the M1, which unloads into Sydney in my electorate at Wahroonga. All too frequently when listening to the radio at various times of the day, we hear updates from police about drivers

speeding, breakdowns or accidents that have occurred. Regrettably, we also hear about people being pulled over for drink-driving and later prosecuted. It is even more tragic when we hear too often about fatal accidents on that road. This Government takes road safety seriously. We have undertaken regular road safety campaigns relating to driver behaviour on motorways that include fatigue, speed and drink-driving. The campaigns include the anti-speeding "Don't rush" campaign, the "Speeding: You're in Our Sights" and of course the "Plan B" campaign to curb drink-driving.

The Government is extremely worried also about drivers using their mobile phones while they are behind the wheel. That certainly happens on a long stretch of road like the M1/F3, where I have seen it firsthand. That is why the Government launched a controversial campaign to curb the illegal use of mobile phones. That campaign is set to make a return over the Christmas period. The Centre for Road Safety, to which the member for Lake Macquarie referred, advises me that it is developing a new road user interaction campaign that is focused on increasing respect and courtesy, improving understanding among road users of each other's issues, and addressing reckless and aggressive behaviour. After the main campaign is launched to highlight poor behaviour, Transport for NSW will tailor the campaign for specific road user groups and for particular roads, including the M1 and the F3.

The advertising campaigns are in addition to the work done by the NSW Police Force and Roads and Maritime Services to target illegal behaviour on roads such as the M1 and the F3. We have delivered on our pre-election commitment by ensuring that there is a dedicated, specialised and trained Highway Patrol team with a high-profile presence on New South Wales roads. Wherever we drive across the State, we cannot avoid the Highway Patrol marked vehicles. Whether one is driving over a rise or along the M1/F3, there may well be a police car over the rise or round the bend, and they will get you. Nothing deters speeding and drink-driving more than a visible police presence on our roads. I pay tribute to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services for his efforts to ensure high visibility. The Traffic and Highway Patrol Command has approximately 1,300 officers across New South Wales. Officers from this team are assigned specifically to patrol the M1 as part of Operation Freeflow.

Police work closely with Roads and Maritime Services to target heavy vehicle safety and compliance. They focus on speeding, drug and alcohol use, and compliance with fatigue laws. The New South Wales Government will carry out a heavy vehicle crackdown on the M1 in December—which will be welcome news to those who use it regularly—particularly in relation to increased holiday traffic. We are improving and upgrading the M1/F3 also to make it even safer. For example, planning is underway to widen the M1 between the Tuggerah and Doyalson interchanges, which will improve traffic flow and increase safety. To keep drivers on the M1 informed, we have installed several permanent variable message signs to provide road users with travel time information and advance warning of road incidents. There is no doubt that has had an impact on driver behaviour.

On the M1 we have also set up a contra flow system to divert traffic around an incident site when there is a need to close all lanes in one direction for two hours or more. We certainly hope not to see that over the forthcoming holiday season. The police are constantly urging people to drive safely on our roads, but sadly the message does not always get through. The Government understands that we have a responsibility to educate people about road safety, but people need to show personal responsibility and exercise responsibility when they are behind the wheel. We are on track to deliver a record low toll this year. [*Extension of time granted.*]

The message is clear this Christmas: Do not speed, do not drink-drive, do not drive when you are overtired and do not text behind the wheel. Over the Christmas period no doubt drivers will see our advertisements urging them to drive responsibly. I ask them to take notice. I thank the member for Lake Macquarie for his question. He and other Central Coast members, and members from the Hunter, understand the importance of the F3/M1 to their constituents. It is important to ensure that people are able to use that highly engineered road—one of the better roads in the State—safely without fearing an accident or a threat to their lives. The Centre for Road Safety will continue its efforts, the Roads and Maritime Services will continue its efforts, and police will continue their efforts, but ultimately they can only do so much. Every person who gets behind the wheel needs to understand that they are in charge of a vehicle that can cause death and destruction to others. That is a lesson and a message that needs to be understood, particularly as we move into the Christmas season.

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION INQUIRY INTO MINISTERIAL CONDUCT

Mr MARK COURE: My question is directed to the Premier. What is the Government doing to address corruption involving former Labor Ministers?

The SPEAKER: Order! Government members will come to order. The Premier has the call.

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL: I thank the member for Oatley for his question. We have seen a shameful procession of former Labor members and Ministers in the Independent Commission Against Corruption. We have seen a procession of former Labor officials in New South Wales, including the former president and the Health Services Union president—the man who made a \$50,000 donation to the member for Maroubra, amongst other members opposite—declared bankrupt, in schemes of arrangement to pay back money and no longer having access to the credit card, whether it comes with those under-the-table benefits or not. It is shameful.

Thank God in New South Wales we have an Independent Commission Against Corruption—an Independent Commission Against Corruption that we have given record funding to; an Independent Commission Against Corruption whose powers we have increased at its request; and an Independent Commission Against Corruption whose advice we listen to to ensure that never again will we see the sorts of episodes that we lived through for 16 years that denied this State the infrastructure, the resources and the opportunities it deserves. May that long hang as a millstone around the necks of those opposite. It was not the fact that Eddie Obeid was Lebanese or that he was part of the Australian Lebanese community—a Lebanese community that has contributed greatly to this State. It was the fact that he was corrupt, the fact that in his heart and in his head he had evil, and the fact that in the Labor Party he had a vehicle to exact that evil through corrupt practices that ripped off this State.

This month the Independent Commission Against Corruption handed down its third report arising from operations Acacia and Jasper on the granting of mining rights entitled "Reducing the Opportunities and Incentives for Corruption in the State's Management of Coal Resources". The New South Wales Government accepts all the recommendations of the Independent Commission Against Corruption, and I have written to the commissioner to advise him of the Government's support for those recommendations. Further, I have asked the Director General of the Department of Premier and Cabinet to coordinate the provision of plans of action by public authorities in response to the Independent Commission Against Corruption recommendations. I do not intend to go through the recommendations in complete detail, but I will touch on a number of them.

Recommendations 1 to 19 address the process for managing and allocating the State's coal resources. In its principal recommendation the Independent Commission Against Corruption has proposed the establishment of a steering group, comprising officials from across government, to assess and make recommendations on the release of coal resources and the allocation of exploration licences, to be supported by an assessment panel with appropriate expertise. We agree that the allocation of exploration licences should be based on the principles of transparency, maximising the value of resources for the people of New South Wales and ensuring highly competitive outcomes. We will give further consideration to the best possible allocation models to achieve these ends.

Recommendation 21 relates to the Public Service Commission and proposes delivering a best-practice guide to assist public officials in their dealings with ministerial offices. This recommendation supports our establishment, after our election, of the Public Service Commission in order to return Westminster-style government to New South Wales, including the provision of frank and fearless advice from the public service—the frank and fearless advice needed to deliver the best policy outcomes for the people of this State. The commission is currently developing a new ethics toolkit to assist public officials to better understand their obligations to act ethically and in the public interest. The Independent Commission Against Corruption's issues will be covered in the development of that guide.

Recommendations 20 and 23 relate to the Code of Conduct for Ministers of the Crown. The first, recommendation 20, seeks to address issues uncovered in recent years about Ministers or ministerial staff under Labor demanding that government agencies change recommendations in instances where the agency believes it should not be changed. The code will be amended to reflect the ethical framework we introduced in 2011 to the Public Sector Employment and Management Act 2002 and to ensure that Ministers do not make demands that are inconsistent with that framework. I note that the Commissioner of the Independent Commission Against Corruption has confirmed that this recommendation is not intended to limit in any way ministerial discretion or Ministers' abilities to disagree with recommendations.

Recommendation 23 seeks adoption of the Code of Conduct for Ministers of the Crown as an applicable code for the purposes of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act. This too is supported by my Government. No previous government has adopted the code under the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act. Once adopted for the purposes of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act, a

substantial breach of the code may amount to corrupt conduct that can be investigated by the commission. I have been advised, and the commission accepts, that the drafting of the current ministerial code of conduct is not suitable for adoption for the purposes of section 9 of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act. [*Extension of time granted.*]

Changes to the code also may be necessary following the inquiries proposed into the code and disclosure of interest for members of Parliament. Accordingly, I intend to review the code in terms of both its substance and with a view to making it suitable for adoption under section 9 of the Act. Recommendations 22, 24 and 25 relate to the Parliament and matters concerning the code of conduct for members, members' pecuniary interest disclosures and the proposal to establish a parliamentary investigator position. Today I have written to both Presiding Officers to advise that the Government will be moving motions in each House to refer these recommendations to the Legislative Council Privileges Committee and the Legislative Assembly Ethics Committee.

I have proposed that, just as we did for the 1996 inquiry into the establishment of a draft code of conduct for members of Parliament, the two committees confer together in seeking submissions and hearing evidence prior to each committee deliberating and reporting in its own right. But, just as with that code of conduct inquiry, I believe it is important for both committees to reach common outcomes as far as practicable. Recommendation 26 requires the Government to review the Independent Commission Against Corruption 2010 report about corruption risks involved in lobbying. Since coming to office, this Government has introduced a number of reforms to strengthen the regulation of lobbyists, including banning success fees and preventing office holders in political parties from lobbying government officials. The Government supports recommendation 26 and will consider what additional recommendations should be adopted.

The implementation of these recommendations is important to restore confidence in public administration in this State, which has been trashed by the parade of former Labor Ministers into the Independent Commission Against Corruption and the subsequent findings of corruption. My Government was elected on a platform to clean up politics, and that is exactly what we are doing. The recommendations from the commissioner go a long way to ensuring that the sort of corruption in the handling under Labor of mining licences exposed by the Independent Commission Against Corruption will never occur again. The revelations have shocked the entire State. It is a matter of utmost importance to this Government and to the people of New South Wales that we have confidence in our representatives and the processes by which they manage the significant resources of this State on behalf of the people of New South Wales.

Question time concluded at 3.28 p.m.

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION

Government Response to Report

Mr Barry O'Farrell tabled the Government's response to the report entitled, "Reducing the Opportunities and Incentives for Corruption in the State's Management of Coal Resources".

DR STEPAN KERKYASHARIAN, COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMISSION CHAIRMAN

Ministerial Statement

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL (Ku-ring-gai—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) [3.32 p.m.]: It is my pleasure today to have the opportunity to say a few words about a great servant of this State: Stepan Kerkyasharian. Of course, Dr Kerkyasharian is known to us all as the Chair of the Community Relations Commission. He is retiring after what, by any measure, has been an extraordinary career spanning 24 years. He is a man who puts the "service" into public service in New South Wales. He has devoted so much of his time to promoting one of the great strengths of New South Wales: our harmonious multiculturalism. Born in Cyprus of Armenian background, Stepan was raised by his refugee parents, who were also survivors of the Armenian genocide. Stepan's classmates were Greek, Turkish, Maronite, Armenian and English, and clearly he experienced class segregation. Not a single teacher ever wanted to mix the children. He understood, growing up in Nicosia only 30 metres from the barbed-wire division between Greek and Turkish communities, that communities divided were dysfunctional, bred hatred and did not realise their potential.

Those early experiences shaped his identity but also, importantly for us, his vision for the future. At age 17 in 1960 he moved to London, where he studied electronics. In 1967, happily for this country, he migrated to

Australia and was appointed in 1980 to head SBS radio, where he was a major catalyst in establishing professional ethnic broadcasting across this country. In 1989 he was appointed Chair of the Ethnic Affairs Commission of New South Wales by a great Premier of this State who was also the son of migrants, Nick Greiner. Of course in 2001 the Ethnic Affairs Commission became the Community Relations Commission. Stepan led the process for the name change from "Ethnic Affairs" to "Community Relations" as decreed by Parliament. This new approach reinforced the notion that we are a community of communities, united by a commitment to Australia. Stepan is also President of the Anti-Discrimination Board—an appointment he has held since 2003.

In 1992 he was recognised for his service when he became a Member of the Order of Australia, and in 2012 he was happily made an Officer of the Order of Australia. In 2000 the Olympic Order was conferred upon him by the International Olympic Committee for his contribution to the success of the Sydney Olympic Games. Doctor of Letters degrees were conferred on Stepan in June 2007 by the University of Sydney and in September 2013 by the University of Western Sydney. As Chair of the Community Relations Commission, he was instrumental in promoting community harmony and in reducing episodes of racial tension, including the repercussions felt in New South Wales following the first Gulf War and the September 11 attacks in New York.

Other achievements from which Dr Kerkyasharian can derive satisfaction include the establishment in 1990 of the National Multicultural Marketing Awards, which are now in their twenty-fourth year. In 1993, in an Australian first, the New South Wales Government developed a Charter of Principles for a Culturally Diverse Society, marking the Government's commitment to multiculturalism. The charter enshrined the important principle that no person in New South Wales will be treated differently because of race, culture, religion or language. In 2002, to meet the challenges of crime, drugs and city cleanliness affecting Cabramatta and surrounding suburbs, the commission was charged with administering a new city watch program to enable direct dialogue between the local community, including businesses, schools, police and decision-makers. Following the Cronulla riots in 2005 a range of community programs were established to promote social cohesion and to alleviate tensions in the Cronulla area.

In 2011 the first Deepavali celebration was held at Parliament House and a working party was established, involving the Islamic communities of New South Wales, to examine concerns and experiences surrounding the wearing of the burqa and the niqab, which we successfully and harmoniously legislated through this Parliament. Stepan was also instrumental in establishing 10 regional advisory councils, allowing the commission to address major issues of concern for people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in all corners of the State; reporting and accountability requirements for government agencies on multicultural issues; the introduction of designated youth commissioners; and the expansion of the Community Relations Commission's professional interpreting and translation service. I thank Dr Stepan Kerkyasharian particularly for his advice to me over many years, not just as Leader of the Opposition and Premier, but also as a member of this place.

Stepan Kerkyasharian was always keen; it was his practice to meet members of Parliament to work us out, try to redesign us and put us back together if we were not in tune with his aspirations for the most successful multicultural society in the world. I grew up in different circumstances but, nevertheless, in a multicultural frontier town in Darwin. I attended school in a similar diaspora but was fortunate not to experience the divisions he did in Nicosia. I was also fortunate to learn early that the colour of one's skin, the language one spoke, where one's parents were born or what someone brought with their lunch did not matter. Rather, what was in one's mind and heart mattered, as well as the contribution one could make and how big one's heart was to fellow citizens.

I have always admired the contribution Stepan has made to New South Wales. Of course, behind, or standing beside, every successful man is a successful spouse. I do not know whether Hilda's mother was surprised at Stepan's success, but certainly Hilda has been a huge part of his support. I have no doubt that the hours he worked and the fact that they both put into the job after office hours, attending endless functions and dinners, must have impacted upon them and their family over these 24 years. I pay tribute to Hilda for everything she has done in an unpaid capacity for the people of this State being married to Stepan. On behalf of every citizen of New South Wales, not just the linguistically and culturally diverse communities, I thank Stepan Kerkyasharian for everything he has done. I say so particularly on behalf of the current Minister, but I am sure I speak on behalf of all Ministers who have walked in his shoes.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON (Blacktown—Leader of the Opposition) [3.37 p.m.]: On behalf of the Opposition, I also thank Dr Stepan Kerkyasharian for his great service to the people of New South Wales. This is the end of an era. Stepan has served with distinction as chair of the Community Relations Commission for many years. As the Premier outlined, he also served as president of the NSW Anti-Discrimination Board, head

of the Ethnic Affairs Commission of New South Wales, head of SBS Radio, and in numerous other public capacities. He was made a Member of the Order of Australia in 1992 but, more importantly, he has a record of extraordinary achievement for the people of this State, and it is probably not over yet. Stepan has been nothing less than a pillar of our multicultural society in New South Wales. Under his leadership, the Community Relations Commission has blossomed.

The past 24 years has been a period of rapid change for New South Wales. Our population has grown to seven million. We take tens of thousands of migrants every year from every corner of the globe. As the Premier rightly pointed out, we are the most successful example of a multicultural society anywhere in the world. Australia is not immune to the troubles of the world, but our economy is stronger than most other countries and so is our society. In part, that is largely due to the contribution of the many migrants who have arrived in Australia and who have been assisted, many of whom will not have an appreciation for the great contribution Dr Kerkyasharian has made to ensure that they were part of our society.

It is fair to say that we do not get everything right but we are better than most. We have challenges. I think of the offensive views of Pauline Hanson in the debate about Asian immigration, the challenge to our community cohesion caused by events of September 11 and the Bali bombings, the Cronulla riots, the more recent examples of anti-Semitic attacks on individual families, and, not so long ago, the targeted organisations such as the Max Brenner stores. More recently, there were attacks on Indian students that caused hurt and anxiety for many here and on the subcontinent. In times such as these we have the potential to fracture and our society needs elder statesmen, people who are held in high regard, such as Dr Stepan Kerkyasharian. It is the wise and calm thoughts that he brings to those circumstances that has enabled us to deal with the most difficult of circumstances and to come through them much stronger. Stepan's first instinct is always to bring people together around the same table to avoid inflaming a situation and to ensure that people are not driven apart.

Stepan Kerkyasharian has devoted almost his entire adult life to working for the benefit of people who have come to live in Australia. He has demonstrated an empathy for the struggle of new migrants and, as the Premier has outlined, that clearly stems from his own life experiences after coming to Australia from Cyprus. As a young boy, Stepan Kerkyasharian saw a photograph of a giant turtle on one of Australia's beautiful sandy beaches. I am told it was that photograph that drove his determination to move to Australia to see whether it was as idyllic as the photograph had shown. The day he arrived in Australia Stepan realised it was the country where he wanted to spend the rest of his life and to contribute to make it a much better place in which to live. His story is one that is familiar to many migrants. It has given him the capacity to engage with empathy and a real insight into the sorts of struggles that so many who come here are likely to confront.

I have said on many occasions at many of the functions I have had the opportunity to share with Stepan that the modern Australian story is one of migration, but it is also one of open heartedness towards new arrivals. Long may it be so. In large part it is because of the contribution that Stepan Kerkyasharian has made. He is regarded within the multicultural communities across New South Wales as a genuinely trusted friend. People look to him for guidance and counsel and everyone trusts him. I know that Dr Stepan Kerkyasharian's contribution is highly unlikely ever to be matched again in this State. It is fair to say that he has made a significant contribution to multiculturalism in New South Wales, which celebrates our great diversity. To Dr Stepan Kerkyasharian and his wife, Hilda, I wish them all the best in their future endeavours. I am absolutely certain this is a move in another direction, but it will be a move in which we will continue to see Dr Kerkyasharian playing a vital role in the continued building of a stronger multicultural society in New South Wales.

QUESTION TIME: SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWERS

MR ROGER MASSY-GREENE APPOINTMENT

Mr MIKE BAIRD: In response to a question I was asked earlier, I seek leave to table a Declaration of Political Donations and Electoral Expenditure by a Donor to the Election Funding Authority by the Health Services Union, which confirms hundreds of thousands of dollars in donations to the Labor Party and at least a \$50,000 donation to the Maroubra by-election.

Leave granted.

Document tabled.

SITTING SCHEDULE 2014

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [3.46 p.m.]: I move:

That the resolution of the 31 October 2013 regarding the 2014 autumn and spring sittings be amended by leaving out "June 3, 4, 5" and inserting instead "November 4, 5, 6".

I seek leave to table a revised calendar of the proposed 2014 sitting days, which will be available on the Parliament's web page.

Leave granted.

Document tabled.

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

Motion agreed to.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGE AND ETHICS**Reference and Membership**

Motion by Mr BRAD HAZZARD, by leave, agreed to:

- (1) The Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics inquire into and report on recommendations 22, 24 and 25 in the report of the Independent Commission Against Corruption entitled "Reducing the opportunities and incentives for corruption in the state's management of coal resources", which was tabled in this House on 30 October 2013.
- (2)
 - (a) The Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics have leave to meet together with the Legislative Council Privileges Committee during the current Parliament; and
 - (b) A message be sent informing the Legislative Council.
- (3) Jai Travers Rowell be appointed to the Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics in place of Glenn Edward Brookes, discharged.

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

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [3.48 p.m.]: I move:

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

- (1) The moving of a motion "That the House take note of Christmas felicitations", after question time and prior to the commencement of private members' statements, with the following speaking time limits:
 - (a) Premier—10 minutes;
 - (b) Deputy Premier—10 minutes;
 - (c) Leader of the Opposition—10 minutes;
 - (d) Leader of the House—10 minutes;
 - (e) Deputy Leader of the Opposition—5 minutes;
 - (f) Member for Maroubra—10 minutes
 - (g) Member for Wagga Wagga—5 minutes;
 - (h) Member for Murray-Darling—5 minutes;
 - (i) Member for Mount Druitt—5 minutes; and
 - (j) Member for Wollondilly—5 minutes.
- (2) The taking of community recognition statements for a period of up to 30 minutes.
- (3) The taking of up to 30 private members' statements.
- (4) Consideration of Government business after the conclusion of the routine business.
- (5) The Speaker to leave the chair until the ringing of one long bell, no earlier than 10.30 a.m. on Thursday 28 November 2013, for the continuation of Government business.
- (6) The House to adjourn on motion.

At the conclusion of this motion we will consider Legislative Council amendments to the Motor Dealers and Repairers Bill 2013 and then the Cemetery and Crematoria Bill 2013. The Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Women will then deliver her second reading speech on the Child Protection Legislation Amendment Bill. All those matters should be dealt with by 4.05 p.m. We will then deal with seasonal felicitations. I will hand up a list of members who will be speaking.

I expect that seasonal felicitations may well need to be interrupted. At 4.30 p.m. the House will then debate the petition signed by more than 10,000 persons on Newcastle and Hunter train services. At the conclusion of that debate, which should take less than 20 minutes, the House will return to seasonal felicitations if they have not been concluded. Thereafter the normal time allocated for the giving of community recognition notices will be extended from 15 minutes to 30 minutes. This is in recognition of the undertaking that I gave to members to try to increase some of their opportunities to speak before the conclusion of this sitting.

Further, the number of private members' statements to be made today will be extended from 18 to 30. If members want to be added to the additional list of private members' statements they should speak to their respective Whips. Finally, at the conclusion of the business of the House this afternoon, we will be adjourning on a long bell to 10.30 a.m. on Thursday 28 November 2013 for the continuation of Government business. That is necessary because legislation is being considered in the Legislative Council that will almost certainly require this House to consider amendments to it.

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

Motion agreed to.

UNPROCLAIMED LEGISLATION

The SPEAKER: Pursuant to Standing Order 117, I table a list detailing all legislation unproclaimed 90 calendar days after assent as at 21 November 2013.

STANDING ORDERS AND PROCEDURE COMMITTEE

Report

The Speaker tabled report No. 5/55 entitled, "Citizen's Right of Reply—Ms Lea Rosser", dated November 2013.

Ordered to be printed.

COMMITTEE ON LAW AND SAFETY

Report

Mr John Barilaro, as Chair, tabled report No. 3/55 entitled, "Driver Licence Disqualification Reform", dated November 2013.

Ordered to be printed on motion by Mr John Barilaro.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE MOTOR VEHICLE REPAIR INDUSTRY

Deputy Chair

The SPEAKER: Pursuant to Standing Order No. 282 (2), I advise the House that on 20 November 2013 Bryan Michael Doyle was elected Deputy Chair of the Select Committee on the Motor Vehicle Repair Industry.

PETITIONS

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

Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service

Petition requesting the re-instatement of the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service, 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 fewer than 500 persons were lodged for presentation:

GyMEA College of TAFE

Petition opposing cuts to courses and increased fees for students at GyMEA College of TAFE, received from **Mr Barry Collier**.

Sutherland Shire Fire Stations

Petition opposing closures of fire stations in the Sutherland Shire, received from **Mr Barry Collier**.

Oxford Street Traffic Arrangements

Petition requesting the removal of the clearway and introduction of a 40 kilometre per hour speed limit in Oxford Street, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Callan Park

Petition calling on the Government to implement the Callan Park master plan and establish the Callan Park and Broughton Hall Trust, received from **Mr Jamie Parker**.

Walsh Bay Precinct Public Transport

Petition requesting improved bus services for the Walsh Bay precinct, and ferry services for the new wharf at pier 2/3, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Como and Jannali Railway Stations

Petition requesting the restoration of train services from Como and Jannali railway stations, received from **Mr Barry Collier**.

Sutherland Shire to Kogarah Railway Station

Petition requesting the restoration of direct rail services from the Sutherland Shire to Kogarah railway station, received from **Mr Barry Collier**.

Pet Shops

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

Inner-city Social Housing

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

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

Funding for TAFE Education

Petition requesting continued viable funding for TAFE education, received from **Ms Carmel Tebbutt**.

South East Light Rail

Petition opposing the proposed South East Light Rail route, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

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

The Hon. Adrian Piccoli—Vocational education and training fees—lodged 30 October (Mr John Robertson)

MOTOR DEALERS AND REPAIRERS BILL 2013

Consideration in Detail

Consideration of the Legislative Council amendments.

Schedule of amendments referred to in message of 21 November 2013

No. 1 Page 2, clause 2 (2), line 8. Omit "commences". Insert instead "and clause 11 of schedule 2 commence".

No. 2 Page 45, clause 141. Insert after line 4:

distributor means a person who:

- (a) imports new motor vehicles into Australia, or
- (b) distributes new motor vehicles (whether assembled or manufactured in or outside Australia).

No. 3 Page 45, clause 141, line 5. Insert "or distributor" after "or manufacturer".

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [3.55 p.m.]: I move:

That the House agree to the Legislative Council amendments.

The amendments moved in the upper House are acceptable to the Government. I indicate the Government's support and ask the House to support the amendments.

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

Motion agreed to.

Legislative Council amendments agreed to.

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

CEMETERIES AND CREMATORIA BILL 2013

Consideration in Detail

Consideration of the Legislative Council amendments.

Schedule of amendments referred to in message of 20 November 2013

No. 1 Page 2, clause 3. Insert after line 22:

- (g) to promote environmental sustainability of the interment industry, including provision for natural and private burials,
- (h) to promote that cost structures for burials and cremations are transparent across all sectors of the interment industry,
- (i) to promote affordable and accessible interment practices, particularly for those of limited means.

No. 2 Page 5, clause 11 (3) (c), line 14. Omit all words on that line.

No. 3 Page 5, clause 12 (1). Insert after line 26:

- (c) to promote environmentally sustainable practices in the interment industry,

No. 4 Page 5, clause 12 (1) (c), line 27. Omit "voluntary".

No. 5 Page 5, clause 12. Insert after line 38:

- (2) The Cemeteries Agency must, within 12 months after it is constituted, prepare a strategic plan outlining its key objectives and time frames for implementation of those objectives.
- (3) The Cemeteries Agency must publish the strategic plan in the Gazette.

No. 6 Page 7, clause 16. Insert after line 20:

- (3) The persons appointed under subsection (2) (b) must include one person nominated by the Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association of NSW who has knowledge and expertise relevant to consumer and customer advocacy.

No. 7 Page 13, clause 28 (4), line 24. Insert "(including, without limitation, the Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association of NSW)" after "stakeholders".

No. 8 Page 13, clause 29, lines 28–30. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead:

29 Nature of codes of practice

- (1) Except as provided by this section, codes of practice are in the nature of guidelines and compliance is not mandatory.
- (2) The Cemeteries Agency must, before the end of the period of 5 years after the date of assent to this Act, develop and approve codes of practice under section 28 for the interment industry and compliance with which is intended to be mandatory (a mandatory code of practice).
- (3) A mandatory code of practice has no effect unless it is incorporated in an interment industry scheme under section 31 (2).
- (4) A person must comply with any requirement of a mandatory code of practice that applies to the person.

Maximum civil penalty: the amount specified in the interment industry scheme not exceeding \$27,500.

No. 9 Page 14, clause 32 (1), line 37. Insert "(and other relevant stakeholders including, without limitation, the Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association of NSW)" after "sector of the interment industry".

No. 10 Page 21, clause 52 (2). Insert after line 37:

- (3) If no response to the notice under subsection (2) is received within 28 days after the date on which it is sent, the cemetery operator is to cause a further notice of the intention to be sent, by registered post, to each person shown in the relevant cemetery operator's register as a secondary contact with respect to the holder.

No. 11 Page 21, clause 52 (3), line 38. Insert "under subsection (2) or (3)" after "the notice".

No. 12 Page 24, clause 54 (6), line 5. Insert "and any person shown in the relevant cemetery operator's register as a secondary contact with respect to the holder" after "right".

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Burrinjuck—Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Small Business) [3.56 p.m.]: I move:

That the House agree to the Legislative Council amendments.

The amendments moved in the upper House are acceptable to the Government. I indicate the Government's support and ask the House to support the amendments.

Mr RICHARD AMERY (Mount Druitt) [3.56 p.m.]: I have read all the amendments but I do not intend to speak to each of them; I will speak to only a couple of the amendments. It is my understanding that the Government is agreeing to all the upper House amendments and that includes amendment No. 1. The Government did so in the Legislative Council and it has done so again today in this Chamber. The question I ask is: Why would it not do that? That amendment means nothing other than having a vague reference to sustainable development. The first amendment to promote environmental sustainability of the interment industry came with no explanation. According to The Greens the burial of a loved one appears to be on the same basis as a farmer clearing land. The issues are, of course, very different. The blinkered Greens seem to respond to every issue with the same buzzwords—I suppose it saves them from doing any real work.

Amendment No. 8 concerns the nature of codes of practice set out on page 29 and expands the original provision. It makes the provision a little more prescriptive in nature. The Opposition has no concerns with that. Amendment No. 19, which is probably one of the most substantial amendments, includes a substantial addition to the review of the Act as set out on page 62. The original bill required the usual statutory review after five years with the tabling in Parliament and so on. The amendment requires the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal to conduct an investigation into interment costs, in particular the price difference between perpetual and renewable interment rights, which is necessary. Obviously members of all parties have picked up the price difference in those two types of interment rights. The pricing of perpetual sites as opposed to limited tenure sites

will be the issue that makes this process a two-tiered system for burials—namely, those with money to pay for a gravesite to be a final resting place, as opposed to those who will be forced, because of economic circumstances, to opt for a limited tenure, placing burdens, financial and emotional, on future generations.

A detailed explanation as to why each of these amendments was necessary was lacking in the debate in the Legislative Council. In response the Minister, despite many questions asked of him, appeared to know little about the amendments or the bill other than a few one-line comments. For example, the Minister said that "limited tenure started under my watch as the Minister", which is a nonsense. If that were true this bill and these amendments would not be before this House today. The gravesite availability was enhanced by the passage of the Cemeteries Unused Gravesites Bill 2001. In conclusion, these minor amendments which added a cost review will still ensure that limited tenure—which was once a boutique option offered by a few cemeteries across the State—will be expanded across the industry, in particular, to Crown cemeteries. For that reason we oppose the principle of the bill. These amendments do nothing to change the principle of the bill but we support them.

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

Motion agreed to.

Legislative Council amendments agreed to.

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

CHILD PROTECTION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2013

Bill introduced on motion by Ms Pru Goward, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading

Ms PRU GOWARD (Goulburn—Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Women) [4.01 p.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Child Protection Legislation Amendment Bill 2013. The introduction of this bill comes 12 months after a comprehensive discussion paper was publicly released and follows extensive consultation and careful drafting. Over 230 submissions were received in response to the discussion paper—from individual community members, child protection case workers, children in care, care leavers, universities and other research bodies, our non-government partners, who deliver services to children and families, child protection and other related peak organisations, the courts and all relevant agencies across the New South Wales Government. In addition to these written submissions, my department coordinated face-to-face consultations across the State.

Every contribution was important, whether it provided an idea to be tested or a strategy or direction to be adopted. When we assumed government, New South Wales had the highest number of children in out-of-home care in Australia. Members of this House and the community are all too aware of the intergenerational nature of disadvantage through some of the desperately tragic stories that have emerged about children who were known to my department prior to their deaths. Breaking this cycle of disadvantage is at the heart of the proposals contained in this bill. All decision-making in child protection work is, and naturally should be, driven by what is in the best interests of a child.

The principles of this bill reflect this Government's belief that ideally, a child will live safely at home with his or her parents and community services will work alongside the families to help them change. If children cannot live safely at home then the next best place for them is with family or kin—or in some circumstances with a non-relative carer—in a long-term, safe, nurturing, stable and secure placement. Where family or kin are unwilling and/or unable to assist then open adoption of the child should be considered and pursued. Open adoption offers a permanent home for life, with all the benefits this bestows on a child, including lifelong security and that precious sense of belonging.

The bill will also improve parenting capacity—by helping parents take responsibility for keeping their children safe. While many struggling parents will accept assistance to do this, unfortunately, some who should do not. So this bill modifies the current parent responsibility contracts to make them more effective in practice and extends them to be applied to parents of an unborn child. The bill extends the time frame of parent responsibility

contracts from six to 12 months to allow parents more time to demonstrate a change in parenting behaviour. The bill also introduces a new tool, the parenting capacity order, which is issued by the courts. These tools are designed to put the welfare of the child at the centre of decision-making and give the best chance of providing them a safe home for life. That means we need to promote permanency, and also timeliness in achieving that permanency.

There will now be legislated time frames in place for decisions about returning children to their parents: six months if a child is less than two years or within 12 months for a child over the age of two. Family group conferencing received significant support through the consultation process, and it is hoped that the consolidation of key alternative dispute resolution provisions will promote the use of alternative dispute resolution in all its relevant forms wherever possible and appropriate. As members of this House would be aware, in 2011 I requested that my department prepare a document, to be released annually, which reports on the deaths of all children known to Community Services in the previous 12-month period. This bill ensures that this level of transparency continues into the future.

New provisions of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act will require the Director General of the Department of Family and Community Services to provide the Minister with an annual written report on the deaths of children known to the department. I thank all those involved in the reform process and in the preparation of this bill. In particular, I acknowledge the hard work and dedication of all Community Services caseworkers, who make such a significant difference to the lives of this State's most vulnerable children every day. I commend this bill to the House.

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

PRINTING OF PAPERS

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [4.07 p.m.]: I move:

That the following papers be printed:

Report of the New South Wales Electoral Commission entitled "Report on the Local Government Elections 2012".

Report on State Finances 2012-2013.

Report of the Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator for the period 20 January to 30 June 2013.

Report of Service NSW for the period 18 March to 30 June 2013.

Consolidated Financial Report of Snowy Hydro Limited for the period 1 July 2012 to 29 June 2013.

Government Response to the report of the Independent Commission Against Corruption entitled "Reducing the opportunities and incentives for corruption in the state's management of coal resources".

Report of the New South Wales Electoral Commission entitled "Report on the Conduct of the Election, Northern Tablelands State By-election", dated 1 November 2013.

Reports for 2012 of—NSW Youth Advisory Council; and Industrial Relations Commission of New South Wales.

Reports for the year ended 30 June 2013 of:

New South Wales Law Reform Commission; WorkCover Authority; Lifetime Care and Support Authority; Workers' Compensation (Dust Diseases) Board; Dumaresq-Barwon Border Rivers Commission; New South Wales Rural Assistance Authority; Board of Vocational Education and Training; Education and Care Services Ombudsman, National Education and Care Services Freedom of Information and Privacy Commissioners; Board of Studies and the Office of the Board of Studies; NSW Institute of Teachers; Department of Planning and Infrastructure; Central Coast Regional Development Corporation; Hunter Development Corporation; UrbanGrowth NSW Development Corporation (formerly the Sydney Metropolitan Development Authority); UrbanGrowth NSW (formerly Landcom); Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority; Roads and Maritime Services; Department of Transport (trading as Transport for NSW); Rail Corporation New South Wales; State Transit Authority of New South Wales; Office of Transport Safety Investigations; Independent Transport Safety Regulator; Board of Surveying and Spatial Information; Government Property NSW (formerly the State Property Authority); Motor Accidents Authority of New South Wales; NSW Architects Registration Board; Department of Finance and Services (including reports for: NSW Procurement Board; Waste Assets Management Corporation; Australian Centre for Advanced Computing and Communication Pty Ltd; Office of the Valuer-General; Surveyor-General; Registrar-General; and the Geographical Names Board); NSW Government Telecommunications Authority; Trustees of the Parliamentary Contributory Superannuation Fund; SAS Trustee Corporation; Superannuation Administration Corporation (trading as Pillar Administration); Teacher Housing Authority; WorkCover NSW Scheme; NSW Self Insurance Corporation; Administrative Decisions Tribunal; Anti-Discrimination Board of New South Wales; New South Wales Bar Association; Department of Attorney General and Justice; Office of the

Director of Public Prosecutions; Guardianship Tribunal; Judicial Commission of New South Wales; Law Society of New South Wales (Volumes One and Two); Legal Aid New South Wales; Legal Profession Admission Board; NSW Trustee and Guardian (incorporating the report of the Public Guardian); Office of the Legal Services Commissioner; Professional Standards Council; New South Wales Crime Commission; Fire and Rescue NSW; NSW Police Force; NSW Rural Fire Service; Ministry for Police and Emergency Services; Consumer, Trader and Tenancy Tribunal; Fair Trading Administration Corporation and the Motor Vehicle Repair Industry Authority; Rental Bond Board; Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust; New South Wales Environmental Trust; Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales; Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust; Lord Howe Island Board; Parramatta Park Trust; Taronga Conservation Society Australia; Western Sydney Parklands Trust; Environment Protection Authority; Royal Botanic Gardens Trust; Trustees of the ANZAC Memorial Building; New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council; Community Relations Commission; State Sporting Venues Authority; Venues NSW; NSW Institute of Sport; Sydney Olympic Park Authority; Election Funding Authority; New South Wales Electoral Commission; Barangaroo Delivery Authority; Natural Resources Commission; Internal Audit Bureau (trading as IAB Services); Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal; Department of Premier and Cabinet; Infrastructure NSW; Public Service Commission; Lake Illawarra Authority; Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services; Wentworth Park Sporting Complex Trust; Administrator of the National Health Funding Pool; Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency; Cancer Institute NSW; New South Wales Health Foundation; Health Care Complaints Commission; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Council of New South Wales; Chinese Medicine Council of New South Wales; Chiropractic Council of New South Wales; Dental Council of New South Wales; Medical Council of New South Wales; Medical Radiation Practice Council of New South Wales; Nursing and Midwifery Council of New South Wales; Occupational Therapy Council of New South Wales; Optometry Council of New South Wales; Osteopathy Council of New South Wales; Pharmacy Council of New South Wales; Physiotherapy Council of New South Wales; Podiatry Council of New South Wales; Psychology Council of New South Wales; Ministry of Health (incorporating the Financial Statements of Public Health Organisations under control) (Volumes One to Four); Mine Subsidence Board; Racing NSW; Greyhound Racing NSW; Harness Racing New South Wales; Australian Museum Trust; Destination NSW; Trustees of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences; New South Wales Film and Television Office (trading as Screen NSW); Sydney Opera House Trust; Art Gallery of New South Wales Trust; Library Council of New South Wales; Ausgrid; Delta Electricity; Endeavour Energy; Essential Energy; Forestry Corporation of New South Wales; Hunter Water Corporation; Long Service Corporation; Macquarie Generation; New South Wales Treasury Corporation; New South Wales Treasury (incorporating the reports of: State Rail Authority Residual Holding Corporation; Liability Management Ministerial Corporation; Lotteries Assets Ministerial Holding Corporation; and the Electricity Assets Ministerial Holding Corporation, Volumes One and Two); Port Kembla Port Corporation; State Water Corporation; Sydney Ports Corporation; Sydney Water Corporation; TransGrid; Border Rivers - Gwydir Catchment Management Authority; Lachlan Catchment Management Authority; Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority; Western Catchment Management Authority; Hunter-Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority; Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority; Hawkesbury-Nepean Catchment Management Authority; Namoi Catchment Management Authority; Central West Catchment Management Authority; Veterinary Practitioners Board of New South Wales; New South Wales Food Authority; New South Wales Dams Safety Committee; Sydney Catchment Management Authority; Cobar Water Board; Central Coast Water Corporation; Rice Marketing Board; Lower Murray Darling Catchment Management Authority; Administration of Agricultural Statutory Authorities; Department of Family and Community Services (Volumes One to Three); NSW Land and Housing Corporation; NSW BusinessLink Pty Ltd; Mental Health Review Tribunal; Mental Health Commission of New South Wales; New South Wales Institute of Psychiatry; and the Radiation Advisory Council.

I note that a great number of reports and papers were lodged in the past few days, which is why I formally moved that they be printed.

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

Motion agreed to.

SEASONAL FELICITATIONS

Mr BARRY O'FARRELL (Ku-ring-gai—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) [4.07 p.m.]:
I move:

That the House take note of Christmas felicitations.

At this point in the parliamentary sittings each year we take a moment from being opponents tackling the big issues facing the State, in what can be seen as modern-day political wrestling, to pause and give thanks, to get along and, ultimately, to get out of here. I am pleased that, for the third year in a row, we are rising ahead of school presentation days, which will be held next week. Attending these events will occupy the time of every member of the lower House over the next three to four weeks. That is important because education is probably the single most important activity that occurs across New South Wales. It is a reminder to members of the lower House, when they start to receive those presentation day invitations, that the Christmas season is upon us. This is a time to thank all those people who help this place operate.

Parliament of the Westminster style or otherwise may not be perfect but it is the best system we have and it gives a voice to communities across the State. The way in which we have sought to run this Parliament has

ensured that the voices of communities and Opposition, Independent, Liberal Party and The Nationals members can be heard. As I understand, there have been more sitting days during the past three years than in any other term. Question time has been held every sitting day, which is a key accountability measure for the Parliament.

I congratulate the Leader of the House on ensuring that the parliamentary calendar is prepared with exactitude and care. I thank the Government and Opposition Whips. Without them the Parliament would not operate as smoothly as it does on most occasions. I thank the Clerk, Deputy-Clerk and Clerk-Assistants for providing advice, assistance and direction to our activities. I thank the Speaker, the Deputy-Speaker, the Assistant-Speaker and the Acting-Speakers for their work, good grace and generally good humour. I note that the Speaker had a period of ill health this year. I would like to say that it did not show when she resumed the chair, but it did. Thankfully it showed more in relation to the members of the Opposition than the members of the Government. We are pleased that she is back in fine fettle and full health. We wish the Speaker and all members who sit in the chair the best for the holiday season.

It takes many different groups to make this place operate. They range from people like me to those who look after the gymnasium on level two and the wonderful cleaners who ensure that our offices are spick and span every day. They also include Hansard, who make a silk purse out of a sow's ear and make wonderful English sentences and paragraphs out of the odd mangled words that may be delivered fast or slowly by members of this place. I thank all those who work in the library for ensuring that we have up-to-date resources which we need to do our jobs. I recognise, of course, that it is up to individual members to use those resources.

An army marches on its stomach and a parliament is no different. Our catering staff do incredibly important work entertaining guests, supporting functions and providing the nourishment and drink that members require during sitting weeks. I thank the parliamentary attendants in the Chamber and those manning the desks around the building for the assistance they provide to our guests. I especially thank them for their work with school and other groups that visit. It is vital that our communities understand the Parliament's history and its importance and role in modern New South Wales and Australia.

The problem with running through a list of people is that some people inevitably are missed out. No matter if they have been working here for a day or for 30 years, I thank everyone who has been part of making this lower House and Parliament operate. I thank those who work in building services and the education sector, those who do our accounts and equip our electorate offices and I extend my best wishes to all of them for the holiday season. I hope they are able to join with their families and loved ones to share some peace and respite from what at times can be a demanding place.

I could not be more proud of the team that I lead. Each and every member brings their talents to the table and brings the views of their community to our party room. I am grateful for their loyalty, effort and diligence. I pay particular tribute to the Leader of the Nationals. We are a partnership, and it is an important partnership for this State. He and the other members of the Liberal-Nationals leadership team have been instrumental in ensuring that we have returned stable, methodical and responsible government to New South Wales. I am delighted with our progress. I will be the first in this debate to switch off the politics, cease the shots across the bows of our political opponents and genuinely wish everybody the very best for Christmas and the New Year. I urge everyone to enjoy the break with their families, renew their batteries and come back next year to continue to serve the people of this State.

Mr ANDREW STONER (Oxley—Deputy Premier, Minister for Trade and Investment, and Minister for Regional Infrastructure and Services) [4.15 p.m.]: As Deputy Premier and Leader of the Nationals I am pleased to extend seasonal felicitations to all in this place and beyond. Looking back, 2013 has been a busy but satisfying time. The Government has continued to deliver on important reforms for the people of New South Wales, which have included economic reforms that will deliver better services and infrastructure to the people we represent. Importantly, we have continued to live within our means and maintain our triple-A credit rating despite the revenue challenges we have faced.

Within my portfolio of Trade and Investment I acknowledge the efforts of my Director General, Mark Paterson, and his team. This year we have delivered reforms and programs to create a number of export and investment projects. They will deliver around \$1.7 billion worth of new investment and export sales for New South Wales, as well as more than 3,700 jobs over the next three years. We have continued to develop key industry action plans for our high-growth industry sectors. We have delivered also an international engagement strategy for our State, which is already beginning to pay dividends. Further, we have modified our decade of decentralisation policy.

I particularly thank the Deputy-Speaker and other members of his decentralisation task force for tweaking programs to drive balanced population and economic growth across our State. I also thank my ministerial colleagues within the Trade and Investment cluster, George Souris, Katrina Hodgkinson and Chris Hartcher, for their hard work. This has been a tough year for regional New South Wales, which started the year with shocking bushfires and terrible conditions and then had floods, particularly across the North Coast. More recently, there were bushfires in the Blue Mountains, the Hunter and other parts of the State and the north-west is experiencing a severe drought. Our thoughts are with the people who are still recovering from these natural disasters, which have ranged from one extreme to the other in regional areas during 2013.

I thank my partner in Government, the Premier and Leader of the Liberal Party. I thank the Leader of the House for his organisation in getting us through a busy program of legislation and sittings. As unlikely as it seemed some weeks ago, we will finish on time. I thank the Whips on both sides of the House for their work, although they could be quicker with counting the votes. I am not looking at anyone in particular. I thank The Nationals parliamentary team, including our newest member, the member for Northern Tablelands, Adam Marshall. I also thank our colleagues on both sides of the House.

The New South Wales Opposition is an essential part of our system of parliamentary democracy. This is a very tough place, but I will refer to a couple of Opposition members who resist the temptation to deliver low blows. In particular, I mention the member for Marrickville, who is in her penultimate year. She remains nice, no matter what. The member for Macquarie Fields is a very decent bloke—although the Minister for Health may not agree with me. I know his brother who lives in Port Macquarie, and they are similar. I have been able to kind of get along with the Hon. Mick Veitch, a shadow Minister in the other place. He is not a bad bloke—because he is from the country, like me.

I thank the Speaker; the Deputy-Speaker; the Assistant-Speaker; the Acting-Speakers; our parliamentary officers, the Clerks and deputies; Hansard staff; staff of accounts, building services, catering and security; the library staff, the Information Technology staff who have the patience of Job when dealing with the Luddites in this place; the Procedure Office staff; the cleaners; the Special Constables; and of course Café Quorum, which keeps us caffeinated, happy and well fed. I thank my electorate office staff, who have to cope with a frequently absent member. Jodie Griffiths and Rebecca Tyson are on the front line looking after the constituents of Oxley. They are variously assisted in temporary or relieving positions by Margaret Bateman, Matthew Clarke, James Burnett and Mary Tarr. I also have farewelled Rob Nardella, who now works for the Federal member for Lyne.

I am blessed to have in my ministerial office some of the best staff in politics anywhere, not just New South Wales. I begin with my Chief of Staff, Tom Callachor; the brilliant Greg Price, who keeps me organised and pointed in the right direction, which is not easy; and Ben Shine, Blake Hardy, Christine Wajler, Crystal Barnes, Laura Clarke, Lis Davis, Sean O'Connell, Trenton Brown and Tara Black. They are all highly capable and very decent people. I make special mention of Natasha Luschwitz from the Premier's office, who expressed a desire to be remembered in seasonal felicitations, which I will pass on to the Premier. Most importantly, I express my gratitude to my family: my wife, Cathy, and our children who remain at home, Abi, Anneliese and Nathaniel, without whose support I would be unable to do my job in this place.

In conclusion, I mention the reason for the season, that is, to celebrate the birth of Christ and the message of peace, goodwill and reconciliation with God that His birth represents. I wish all families associated with this place and across the State a happy and holy Christmas as well as a very safe new year and break over the festive period. I urge everyone to be particularly safe on our roads. I expect many visitors to the magnificent mid North Coast, from whence I hail. I urge them to be patient on the roads and to be careful when they hit our beautiful beaches. I give my regards to all associated with the New South Wales Parliament.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON (Blacktown—Leader of the Opposition) [4.23 p.m.]: In the spirit of festivity and cooperation, I note the Premier's earlier contribution about what an interesting and rough-and-tumble place this can be. However, on occasions, although rare, we take a moment to wish each other well. This is an important part of the year. Unfortunately, not too many people, particularly visitors to our public gallery, have an opportunity to see that. For all the rough and tumble, the argy-bargy, the heckling and the jeering, we are able to wish everyone in this Chamber well for the festive season ahead.

At this time it is important to acknowledge the contribution that so many make to the Parliament, in particular, the contribution made by those who are not members but who ensure that the Parliament operates in a smooth and efficient manner. In that vein, firstly, I thank the Clerks and Table staff for the assistance they

provide to all members throughout the year. Without their assistance, and sometimes without their indulgence, I am not sure that we would be able to get the job done on behalf of our constituents and the wider community of New South Wales. I offer my special thanks to them.

I also thank the Hansard staff. Sometimes our speeches can be equated to a piece of coal when we make them but they become a polished diamond when we read them in *Hansard*. I thank the Hansard staff particularly for making our speeches—most of us in this Chamber—better than they were when we made them. I send a great big thank you to all the Hansard staff. I offer special thanks to the catering staff, facilities staff and, in particular, the cleaners and others who work behind the scenes and do a great job making our lives a bit easier. Earlier a member alluded to the fact that when we arrive each day the building has been dusted, the bins have been emptied, the toilets have been cleaned. All of that work is a critical function in the life of a parliament but goes unnoticed by so many. I especially thank the attendants, who greatly assist all members when Parliament sits and when Parliament is not sitting make a significant contribution to the parliamentary operations. Madam-Speaker, I thank you for the latitude you have shown us during the sittings.

The SPEAKER: Actually I do.

Mr Richard Amery: On some occasions.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: It is Christmas felicitations, Richard.

The SPEAKER: Does the member for Mount Druitt want to take a point of order or argue?

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: I did say latitude, Madam Speaker. I was hoping during seasonal felicitations I would be shown some. I also thank the Deputy-Speaker and all those who occupy the chair during sittings. We all look forward to the end of the parliamentary session so that we can spend time within our communities among our constituents, celebrate Christmas with community organisations and attend school presentations. Many members run Christmas card competitions at their local schools and attend presentations for that purpose. We also look forward to spending a significantly greater amount of time with our family and loved ones. I want to pause and think for a moment about the year we have had. For many in our community and across the world it has been a year of tragedy. Many families lost their homes in the recent bushfires in New South Wales. Consequently, they will not be able to enjoy Christmas in their homes, as they have enjoyed in the past. I am particularly thinking of Madam Speaker's Personal Assistant, Mr Joe Andrade.

The SPEAKER: Indeed.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: This Christmas will be different for those families. It is appropriate that we pause for a moment and think about them. It is appropriate to think about the suffering of people in the Philippines who have experienced the effects of the typhoon. It is also appropriate as the year comes to an end to mention that many volunteers will be called upon over the Christmas period. I particularly think of the men and women who volunteer their time to the State Emergency Service. I hope the volunteers of the Rural Fire Service will not be called upon. However, if recent events are anything to go by, people may be called away from family gatherings to deal with bushfires or storm damage. I place on record my appreciation for them and I indicate that my thoughts are with them at this difficult time.

I acknowledge a comment during question time today by the Minister for Education. Earlier I mentioned how tough this place can be. We come into this House and perhaps hide behind a façade of indestructibility. But we should think about each other's health and wellbeing, and particularly about those who may not be dealing with the pressures of this place as well as we would hope. We should think about the way we treat one another. Sometimes this place can be quite ruthless—hence the name "bearpit". It is appropriate at this time that we contemplate how tough we can be on one another. We should reach out and make sure that others are doing okay. We try to keep up a façade, but doing that under pressure can be difficult and can place even more pressure on us. It is important that we reach out to each other and wish each other all the best for the festive season.

I thank my Deputy Leader, Ms Linda Burney, the member for Canterbury, for her support throughout the year and for the great work that she does both in the Chamber and outside Parliament. I thank the Opposition Leader of the House, Mr Michael Daley, the member for Maroubra, who undertakes a lot of the work that needs to be done. I also thank the Whip, the member for Mount Druitt, for the great work he does, and the Deputy Whip, Mr Nick Lalich, the member for Cabramatta. I acknowledge the Government Whips as well. I thank the

Leader of the House for the Government for the way that he has dealt with us throughout the year, and over the last three years. He has engaged us and informed us about the business of the House, most of the time. He has done so in a decent and fair fashion, and I place on record that we appreciate that. I am sure that his fairness towards us has created difficulties for him within the Government, so I place on record our appreciation.

I conclude by thanking my staff. Opposition staff work twice as hard with half as many officers compared to when the Premier was in opposition. Being in opposition is tough. The Opposition has a very small staff, yet we expect a great deal from them. They do fantastic work and go well above and beyond the call of duty. Madam Speaker, I wish you, every member in this Chamber and the parliamentary staff all the best for the festive season. I hope everyone has a happy and safe festive season. I look forward to returning next year. It is only two sessions and then we start to get serious about the election in 2015. I am looking forward to coming back next year.

Pursuant to sessional orders business interrupted and set down as an order of the day for a later hour.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

Report

Mr Brad Hazzard, on behalf of Mr Barry O'Farrell, tabled, by leave, the report of the Public Service Commission entitled "State of the NSW Public Sector Report 2013".

Ordered to be printed on motion by Mr Brad Hazzard.

NEWCASTLE RAIL LINE

Discussion on Petition Signed by 10,000 or More Persons

Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend) [4.30 p.m.]: I speak today on a matter that I feel very passionately about: the retention of the heavy rail line from Sydney to the heart of Newcastle. I acknowledge the many members of Save Our Rail who are in the gallery. Newcastle has the advantage of mass transport direct to the central business district. It transports workers, customers and tourists, linking several cities, including our capital city of Sydney. Our rail line also has a major overseas connection. Worldwide experts agree that access to mass transport is vital to the success of a city. Rail is considered the most sustainable transport system, with heavy rail being the best value in terms of capacity and efficiency.

The existing heavy rail service to Newcastle cannot be replaced by light rail. They are two different types of transport. Light rail is suited to short trips within a city; heavy rail has capacity for the long haul. The retention of the existing rail line to Newcastle is essential for the future business prospects of our growing city. Population projections suggest growth of about 150,000 residents over the next 20 years. According to the Bureau of Transport Statistics, employment growth by 2046 is expected to bring 75,000 jobs to the region, and 20,000 of those will be in the inner city. Public funding is scarce. Ripping up existing rail infrastructure would be a huge waste and should be the subject of an inquiry.

The Government offers a less efficient rail option which will cause economic loss: the cost of removal and replacement, lost fares and decreased land value. As well, we must take into account the inconvenience for all Newcastle-bound passengers, the loss of patronage due to delays in trip times, and the consequent increased car use. The traffic implications for Newcastle city are enormous, yet the reason given for replacing the heavy rail line is better access across the city. That does not make sense. Access to public transport is vital. This can be achieved more cheaply other than by removing the line. Many solutions have been proffered but ignored. Why? The reason may be the value of the land which the rail line occupies. It is the only land in Newcastle not undermined and, therefore, has great value for developers. Save Our Rail suggests it should be the subject of public inquiry.

There is no evidence to indicate that there would be any advantage in truncating the rail line. The evidence in every report regarding cutting the rail line shows that forced interchanges will cause patronage loss. This goes against goal No. 8 in the NSW 2021 plan. The New South Wales Government wants to grow patronage for commuter work trips by 20 per cent by 2016. How will this goal be achieved if the rail line to Newcastle is cut? Newcastle hosts many large events, including Surfest, Australia Day celebrations and New

Year's Eve concerts, when people are encouraged to use rail instead of private transport. A university campus, with an estimated 8,000 students, is to be established in the central business district near Civic station. The parking shortage at the Callaghan campus is an indication of what will happen at the city campus if the rail line is removed. Further, the plan for the new law courts in the inner city has only 13 car parking spaces—because of their proximity to Civic station.

Earlier this year Regional Development Australia hosted the well-respected demographer and trends forecaster Bernard Salt, who gave a public lecture on the future of Newcastle. The last slide of the night was a list of must-haves for regions that hoped to thrive and be successful. At the top of the list was a direct rail connection to a capital city. It is of the utmost importance that we retain the heavy rail line into the heart of Newcastle and its central business district. According to the 11,000 signatures on this petition, the people of Newcastle feel that way too. They want to keep the rail line to Newcastle station.

Mr TIM OWEN (Newcastle) [4.35 p.m.]: I take great pleasure in speaking to this petition today and I welcome everyone in the gallery from Save Our Rail. For decades there has been a lengthy public debate about the revitalisation of Newcastle. We have gone round and round, with no decision. Prior to the 2011 election I read every report on this issue. The documents stand quite high, but I read every one of them. In the lead-up to the election, my platform was predicated on four particular issues. One was the renewal of Newcastle mall, from which GPT had walked away. The second was to move the proposed university campus from Honeysuckle to the inner city, as the member for Wallsend has articulated. The third was to prepare a renewal strategy for the centre of Newcastle. The fourth was a public transport system that suited the urban renewal of the city of Newcastle. They were the four big muscle movements for the city that I said I would stand on.

Ladies and gentlemen, I was elected and I am of the view that when you are elected on a platform you fight as hard as you can to deliver the outcome. This Government is doing that. This Government is delivering an outcome that will modernise and renew the city of Newcastle to make it one of the greatest harbour cities in the world. This proposal is not about the city of Newcastle having no public transport. We continually hear that the rail line is being cut. Our proposal is about truncating the heavy rail line at an appropriate position outside its current location to move to a better public transport system that will open up the city of Newcastle to the waterfront.

No doubt changes of this nature will always have advantages and disadvantages. I will not say there will be no disadvantages as they have been articulated already. People will have to alight at an interchange, but people do that on transport systems all over the world. I lived in London; people caught the heavy rail to Waterloo and alighted to get on the Tube or a double-decker bus, including people of all ages and those with disabilities. The construct of what we are trying to deliver will not change. This system will deliver the best renewal plan for the city of Newcastle to allow it to leave behind the past three, four and five decades and become a modern and vibrant harbour city. Many people in this Chamber will agree that light rail plays an important part in any transport system; it is an outstanding transport capability in cities around the world.

Save Our Rail should be part of the delivery of this new transport system instead of saying "It's our solution or no solution" and being at loggerheads. We want Save Our Rail to tell us in what direction it wants transport to head and what problems are involved with negotiating the city of Newcastle. Initially, we will deliver a light rail system in Newcastle, which we have funded, and it is hoped that over the next two decades we will extend it so that people can travel around the city of Newcastle far better and more cheaply and efficiently. This proposal is not about cutting the system and making people find their own way; it is about delivering better transport capability for the city of Newcastle. I am sure we all agree that making Newcastle a vibrant city will add vibrancy to the Hunter.

Newcastle is the seventh-biggest city in Australia and the second-biggest city in New South Wales. It deserves better than it has received for many decades. We are changing Newcastle into a most beautiful harbour city. The urban renewal strategy that we will fund and soon commence will change how people move around the city of Newcastle. It will make it more attractive and it will change the nature of jobs in the city. Newcastle will be one of the most beautiful cities in the world. I encourage Save Our Rail to be part of the solution instead of part of the problem—which is how you portray yourselves to us; I hope it is not the case. We want Save Our Rail to work with us to achieve a better outcome for the city of Newcastle. That is what we have asked for.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! Opposition members will come to order.

Mr TIM OWEN: We offer the opportunity to Save Our Rail members to be part of the solution as part of the community consultation; we want everyone to be part of that. The decision has been made: The heavy rail will be truncated and light rail will be the public transport system for the city of Newcastle.

Ms LINDA BURNEY (Canterbury) [4.40 p.m.]: I recognise in the public gallery Joan Dawson and her crew who are incredibly committed to the Newcastle rail system. Putting together a petition with 11,000 signatures is no mean feat. No-one in their right mind would ignore 11,000 signatures because they represent many more people. One of the stunning things about the proposal to rip up the rail line in Newcastle is the argument that it somehow divides the city and is stopping its revitalisation. It is absolute nonsense to claim that rail is a big block to revitalising Newcastle. It is a nonsense that the Government wants to spend more than \$400 million to rip up a rail line for no good reason with no plan, no idea and no explanation of what will replace it, how it will be replaced or, more importantly, when it will be replaced. It is ridiculous also to suggest that somehow the rail line is a brake on the city. Many cities around the world, country towns and large regional centres in Australia have rail lines—even cane transport lines—operating through them that are not regarded as blocks or brakes.

One disturbing feature of this proposal is the back and forth arguments between Ministers. The Minister for Transport said it was not her responsibility and the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure said it was not his responsibility. I am not quite sure who ended up being the responsible Minister. This issue requires a proper parliamentary inquiry to try to understand what this Government is doing for Newcastle. The suggestion that heavy rail is not suitable for Newcastle is refuted not just by those in the gallery but also in research they have uncovered. Imagine suggesting stopping trains at Town Hall and not continuing them to Circular Quay. That is the offer that has been made to the people of Newcastle: Somehow a mythical stop will provide an interchange to make it easy for people to jump on and off to get in and out of the city. Why do that when there is already a perfectly good rail line? Why sell the port to pay for this ridiculous project when it is not necessary? I find it most perplexing, as I am sure do the 11,000 people who signed this petition. [*Time expired.*]

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Minister for Transport) [4.43 p.m.]: I acknowledge in the gallery not only the hardworking members of Save Our Rail but also the former Labor member for Newcastle, Mr Bryce Gaudry. Newcastle is our State's second-largest city and needs the opportunity to grow and prosper. A strong Hunter is a strong Newcastle; a strong Newcastle is a strong Hunter. The region has great history and the community is passionate about its future. We are passionate about the future. I did not want to make this a political issue, but the contribution of the member for Canterbury forced me to recall the past 16 years of inaction.

Ms Linda Burney: Oh Gladys, you do this every question time.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! The member for Canterbury will come to order.

Ms Linda Burney: Try to give a speech.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! I call the member for Canterbury to order for the third time.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Newcastle is our State's second-largest city and deserves to have the opportunity to grow and prosper. The Hunter region is a very important region in our State and deserves the opportunity to grow and prosper.

Ms Linda Burney: Conrad Capital.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! The member for Canterbury will come to order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: No doubt those present may not agree on how future transport solutions should be determined. But we should agree that a good public transport system is needed to connect people from the Hunter with Sydney, from the Hunter with Newcastle and from Newcastle with Sydney. I assure everybody in the gallery today and everybody who signed the petition that the Government appreciates the importance of public transport growing and connecting communities. I feel that responsibility heavily as the Minister for Transport. I emphasise that light rail is a good option for the Hunter and for Newcastle in connecting with heavy rail. Light rail can shape cities and connect people. It can make a good city a great city; it can make a good region a great region.

Alongside the important revitalisation work for the Hunter and for Newcastle, our transport plan will support a new commercial hub and ensure an integrated transport network. The jobs created in the region through this proposal will mean that people from the Hunter can potentially pursue employment opportunities in

Newcastle—if that is their wish—instead of having to make their way to Sydney. I appreciate the concerns raised by those in the public gallery and those who signed the petition but, as the member for Newcastle said most eloquently, we want those people to be part of the solution. We have committed to an extensive consultation process. A robust process will ensure an integrated transport network for the Hunter area and for Newcastle. We ask you to join that process. I assure everyone that we are putting much effort and thought into the planning process to ensure seamless connections. I have met with members of Save Our Rail a number of times and I look forward to future discussions on this important issue. [*Time expired.*]

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) [4.46 p.m.], by leave: There are four train stations in my electorate of Cessnock: Branxton, Greta, Beresfield and Tarro. Those stations feed into the Newcastle central business district. When discussing the Newcastle rail line we often lose sight of the fact that the discussions are focused on the needs of Newcastle. The reality is that we should focus on the people who feed into the Newcastle central business district and who are using the rail line. That is the conversation we need to have. It is fantastic for the member for Newcastle, who enjoys a chardonnay with his central business district associates, because the people who are already in the central business district do not need to catch a train there. I appreciate that the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure and the Minister for Transport are speaking on this issue, because I became confused about who is responsible for rail.

In December 2012 the planning Minister announced that there would be buses. Then we had the community consultation process and the Government ruled out conversations about the train line. I wrote to the planning Minister about that and he said it was part of the community consultation process. I responded that people were told they could not talk about the train line. In the lead-up to the budget announcement I put questions on notice to the Minister for Transport. It is in *Hansard*. The Minister for Transport responded that the rail line was a planning issue so she did not want anything to do with it. The planning Minister said that light rail did not work in the central business district and it had to be buses. Then two weeks later the Treasurer announced that the Port of Newcastle would be sold and the money would go towards light rail to the Newcastle central business district.

Mr Brad Hazzard: That is a porky pie.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! The Leader of the House will come to order.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: I withdraw my comment that the Minister said light rail would not work. That is how it was reported in the local media, and of course I always believe the media.

[*Interruption*]

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! I call the member for Pittwater to order for the first time.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: That is the journey we are on.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! I call the member for Pittwater to order for the second time.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: Much has been made in this place of how Labor's decision about the Sydney metro was made without a plan, although an enormous amount of money was invested in it. Here we have a Hunter Valley version of the metro. Almost half a billion dollars in funding has been announced although we have no plan and we do not know where the line will stop. We do not know where the line will run and we do not know how much it will cost. We do not have a cost-benefit analysis. We do not have any answers. But we have a decision that is apparently not a political decision. It is a decision based on research and facts, except we do not have any facts. I am a bit confused about what the Government is trying to achieve. The conversation about the Newcastle rail line needs to include people who do not live in Newcastle. We need to discuss how other international cities have moved to other forms of transport—plan B—because they could not have plan A. Plan A for Newcastle is a heavy rail line.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [4.49 p.m.], by leave: I speak to this issue on behalf of The Greens. This matter goes to the heart of how we plan for public transport in this State. Newcastle is the second city in New South Wales, but it has been treated for too long as a second-class citizen. We know that under the former Government it was an absolute mess. The decision-making process was shambolic, and that is why we are in this situation. No-one has worked with the community to demonstrate the benefits of whatever proposal is being

put forward. We have heard that the process has not been ideal. There were proposals for buses, light rail and heavy rail, and the community consultation process was not up to the job. The petition says that, and I congratulate the Save Our Rail group for bringing it to the House. At the heart of any process there must be full community consultation before a decision is made, not after it has been made.

Many members know that I am a fan of light rail but there must be clear evidence of its specific benefits in each case. The Government is yet to prove its case and demonstrate that light rail will provide the optimal service. We need to see that evidence and the cost-benefit analysis. We need to examine patronage studies and other details to see whether this project is viable and sustainable. The Rozelle metro was proposed for my electorate. I am proud that the Leader of the Opposition, the Premier and I campaigned against that proposal, which was a waste of \$500 million. This project should not be like that. I am pleased that the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure and the Minister for Transport are engaged on this issue because a project like the Rozelle metro should never be inflicted on any community.

The Government said it will go ahead with the proposal and consult later to work out the details. I encourage the Government to work closely with people like the Save Our Rail group to make sure that before definitive decisions are made the evidence is shown to the community. Nowadays people do not want to be handed a decision; they want to be part of the process. They want to see rigorous analysis and study the transport management issues before a decision is made. This decision should not be driven by the big end of town or by people with financial interests. It should be focused on increasing patronage numbers to reduce private vehicle use and climate impacts, and to maximise the environmental benefits of public transport and long-term planning. I commend this petition to the House and encourage people in the gallery, in Newcastle and throughout New South Wales to continue to fight for sustainable transport based on good, long-term planning that is focused on real issues and that has real backing.

Mr ANDREW CORNWELL (Charlestown) [4.52 p.m.], by leave: I remind the House of the expression "the wrong side of the railway tracks". Railway lines demarcate communities. In Newcastle the heavy rail line has demarcated a city that is currently struggling. It has been separated from its magnificent and greatest asset: its harbour. We need to allow the central business district of Newcastle to be reconnected with its harbour. This is a public transport solution to an urban design problem. That fact is getting lost in the debate. We need to allow this city to reconnect with its harbour and by replacing the heavy rail with light rail we will be able to do that. It will improve connectivity between the city and the harbour while allowing my constituents and the constituents of the member for Cessnock, the member for Wallsend, the member for Maitland and the member for Upper Hunter access to our region's capital.

The proposal will involve changing modes of transport. As the member for Newcastle said, that occurs all over the world. The Government has made a commitment to spend \$15 million on the Glendale interchange. The interchange is the point at which people get off one mode of transport and get on to another mode of transport. It is ironic that many people in this Chamber who support the Glendale interchange, as I do, do not support what will become the Newcastle interchange, whether it be at Wickham, Broadmeadow or wherever is determined to be the most appropriate place. There are interchanges and changing modes of transport across the world. This light rail solution—which I think is the best solution and a world-class solution—will allow the city to prosper. It will reconnect the city with its harbour. It will allow people with shops on Hunter Street—who currently look through the barrier of the rail line, that dingo fence, and see streams of people walking along Honeysuckle while Hunter Street is dead—to get that patronage because people on Honeysuckle can easily get across to Hunter Street. It will encourage the revitalisation of Hunter Street.

It will enable landowners and property owners to reinvest in their buildings, because it will undoubtedly change property values throughout the city. That is a good thing. Those property owners will leverage up and reinvest in the city. This proposal is about unlocking the power of private enterprise to rebuild the city of Newcastle by reconnecting the city with its harbour. Having an interchange is not a problem; it is the right thing for our city. Light rail is the premier solution for our city. I commend the Government for making this decision.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! Before we conclude discussion on this petition, I thank the people in the gallery for coming to Parliament today. I represent a regional seat and know how long the trip is to Sydney, particularly by rail. It is appreciated that you are a part of this process, which was established by the new Government to allow people to bring matters to Parliament. Whether or not you agree with the speakers, I congratulate you on bringing this petition forward to ensure that your concerns were heard in this House today. Thank you.

Discussion concluded.

SEASONAL FELICITATIONS

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [4.56 p.m.]: I continue with the Christmas felicitations and express season's greetings and joyous celebrations to those who celebrate the birth of Christ. I extend my thanks to the Premier and Deputy Premier and to each of my colleagues on both sides of the House who have allowed me to conduct the business of the House this year as Leader of the House. I appreciate their courtesy and generosity. They have been caring enough to recognise that from time to time many members wish to speak on bills so they have curtailed their speeches, and for that I thank them. I thank Madam Speaker and her staff: Joe Andrade, Gladys Kleiner and Luke Sikora. I note that Joe has been through a traumatic time in recent weeks when the fires in the Blue Mountains destroyed his home. I thank Deputy-Speaker Thomas George, Assistant-Speaker Andrew Fraser and Acting-Speakers Lee Evans, Sonia Hornery, John Barilaro, Melanie Gibbons and Gareth Ward.

I thank the electorate office staff throughout the State in the offices of the Coalition members, the Independent members, and the Labor Party members. I particularly thank my staff: Noelene Barrell, who has put up with me for 22 years, Lisa Nagle and Julie Hegarty, who have put up with me for some time less—although at times it must seem like 22 years. I thank the party Whips Daryl Maguire, John Williams, Jai Rowell and Richard Amery. I particularly thank Rebecca Cartwright and Zach Bentley. Bec does an amazing job working with my staff to ensure the House operates smoothly.

I thank the Opposition Leader of the House, Michael Daley, and his adviser, Dylan Parker. It is a challenge to work across the divide, but we have managed to do that quite well. I thank the Leader of the Opposition, John Robertson, not only for his kind words earlier but also for his ongoing courtesy in dealing with me as Leader of the House. I thank the Opposition spokesman on planning, Luke Foley, and the entire crossbench for working so well with the Government throughout this year.

I thank the clerks at the table, particularly Ronda Miller, Mark Swinson, Les Gönye, Helen Minnican, and the others who come here from time to time to keep the place operating so well. I thank Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms Sarah-Anne Fong. I also thank the table staff, the security staff, the cleaning staff, the administration staff, the catering staff, the library staff, the Information and Technology Services staff and, of course, the incredible staff of Hansard, who really do turn some terrible speeches into gems.

I thank Parliamentary Counsel Don Colagiuri and Paul Miller from the Department of Premier and Cabinet for assisting and making sure that legislation comes to this place in a smooth manner. I thank all of the Premier's office staff, particularly Anna McPhee, the Premier's relatively new chief of staff who has certainly brought a new approach. That is not to say that the previous approach taken by Pete McConnell was not excellent. Anna has her own style, which we appreciate. I thank Natasha Luschwitz, senior policy adviser, and the other staff who work in the Premier's office.

I thank the Chamber attendant Ian Delahunty and his fantastic team who keep this place operating so well. I thank my own ministerial staff, particularly Kath McFarlane, who is a consummate professional who treats everybody on both sides of Parliament fairly. I thank my deputy chief of staff, Lee Dixon. I thank my media people, Leonie Lamont and Chi Trantor. I also thank my policy advisers Tim Robertson, Elliott Hale and Lydia Robertson and the other staff who work in my office—sometimes sharing jobs on a part-time basis—Megan Batchelor, Sybilla Levenston, Lyn Weadon, and Bill Young, who assists me to get to where I need to go every day, and my Parliamentary Secretary, Craig Baumann.

I thank all of the staff at the Department of Planning and Infrastructure who do an incredible job. For years they have worked for both sides of politics and will continue to so. I particularly thank the Director General, Sam Haddad, who has served both sides of politics faithfully. He is a consummate civil servant and I hold him in high regard. I thank the deputy directors general, including Richard Pearson, Steven McIntyre and Jill Reich. I thank Catherine Gallagher, Chief Executive Officer of the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority, and Bob Hawes from the Hunter Development Corporation.

I thank other departmental staff who are working with me on a range of issues, including Leah Schramm, Meagan Kanaley, Lin Wrona, Elisabeth Gilroy and Chris Ray. I also thank some of the staff who have left and moved on to other jobs during the course of this year: Kacey Cogle, Ingrid Jansons, Adam Raskall,

Paulina Kruminate, Emma Batchelor and Sue Kiprovich. They did a great job working with me and my staff. I thank each of the government agencies that make up my portfolio, including the Hunter Development Corporation, the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority, UrbanGrowth—formerly Landcom—and Infrastructure NSW. I particularly thank Sean O'Toole, who has served both sides of politics faithfully but who retired a few weeks ago. I thank the Planning Assessment Commission and all the commissioners, particularly Gabrielle Kibble. She is known to both sides of politics and has done an amazing job for the people of New South Wales for many years in many roles. I thank the joint regional planning panels that do a great job across the State.

This place works only because of the goodwill of many people for the vast majority of time. Contrary to what others outside this place might think, it works incredibly well because so many people ensure it does. Politics is often set aside. Yes, it is a political environment, but politics in this place is mostly secondary to the community's interests, which we as elected officials put first and foremost in our daily endeavours. Finally, I thank the media who report on this place. Most of the media staff are decent people of great integrity who, within the construct and requirements of their profession, deliver news to the people of New South Wales. However, at least one journalist seems to have forgotten the code of ethics. The Australian Journalists Association Code of Ethics 1984 states:

- 1 They shall report and interpret the news with scrupulous honesty by striving to disclose all essential facts and by not suppressing relevant, available facts or by distorting by wrong or improper emphasis.

The Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance Code of Ethics states:

1. Report and interpret honestly, striving for accuracy, fairness and disclosure of all essential facts. Do not suppress relevant available fact, or give distorting emphasis.

I encourage all journalists who work in this place to reflect on the fact that members and staff try to do the right thing. If they do not, they expect to be reported, but they also expect to be treated fairly and decently, as are the media. But for one, I thank them for the work that they have done and make it clear that members on both sides understand they have a job to do, which we strongly support.

Ms LINDA BURNEY (Canterbury) [5.06 p.m.]: I am sure that for all of us almost the last sitting day of Parliament is a great relief. It means we can return to our electorates and do all the things that we do as members of Parliament leading up to Christmas, particularly attending events at schools within our electorates. In making their contributions to these seasonal felicitations a number of members have mentioned that it is a rough and tumble place and sometimes a harsh place. I know at the end of the day that no matter what side we are on or what area we represent we are all here for one reason, and that is to represent and champion the aspirations of the people who put their trust in us every four years. I think everyone does that with a deep sense of belief and passion and I believe that is what draws us together as members of this House. It is a great relief to mark the end of the parliamentary sitting year. Many people and commentators in the community think that the only time politicians work is when we are in this place. Of course, much of our real work takes place outside of the Parliament and outside of the parliamentary sitting days.

Many people have been mentioned throughout these felicitations and I will probably repeat some of them. I completely endorse what other members have said in recognising our staff in the Parliament, our electorate staff and also the staff in ministerial offices and, in my case, the office of the Leader of the Opposition for the incredible work they do. The public and the media see us, but it is the people behind the scenes who make our lives bearable. I concur wholeheartedly with the comments made about the responsibility of the media and the unfortunate decision made by one particular media outlet this week. I thank parliamentary staff, especially Hansard. I hope my clear voice has not caused them any difficulty, but I have been here for more than 10 years and they have had a long time to get used to me. I also thank the press gallery and the attendants.

I want to recognise the work of the library and research staff and the incredible speed with which they respond to our requests. It is almost miraculous the way they can find obscure local media articles and press releases based on very little information. These kinds of research services are very important to us and are very much appreciated. I also thank the cleaners and the gardeners, who make the rooftop garden and surrounds look so very beautiful. I particularly thank the people in the beverage and food area. They are extraordinarily kind and very professional.

I thank the Leader of the Opposition, who is an inspiration to me. He has worked very hard all this year and has given me great support. I also thank his staff and my electorate office staff. I join everyone in saying that it is good grace that often gets us through this place, and that good grace is shown by the clerks, led by Ronda

Miller, on the floor of this Parliament. I came into Parliament more than 10 years ago. It seems to have gone in the blink of an eye. I am sure that other members who started at the same time as me, including the Speaker—who I recognise as the first woman Speaker of this House—agree that we accumulate experience and wisdom when we are in this place for some time, especially my dear old friend Crusty on the other side of the House. He is laughing at that. With his senior years he would have had wisdom well before he came into this place.

I conclude by wishing everyone a very merry Christmas. I represent an incredibly diverse electorate and at this time of the year, no matter what country one comes from or what religion or faith one has, it is a time to bring us all together to celebrate our families and our life fortunes. But we must remember that there are many in communities across this country and across the world who will not have that experience. We should keep those people in our minds and hearts as well.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [5.10 p.m.], by leave: Because of my age I overlooked somebody earlier in my contribution to seasonal felicitations. I formally place on the record my enormous thanks to the person who works with most of the members here on a daily basis, Emma Gittoes—the girl from West Dapto we call her. She stepped into the position just over a year ago and she has done an enormous job. She has worked with all members on both sides of the House and is highly regarded by members in this place. She has ensured that the operations of this place run extremely smoothly. I say a special thank you to Emma Gittoes for all her work; we appreciate everything she has done. We sometimes forget to thank our families, and I did that. I thank my family for all their support. I appreciate all the time they have given up to allow me to do this job over many years.

Mr DARYL MAGUIRE (Wagga Wagga) [5.12 p.m.]: I place on record my sincere appreciation to all those people who have helped the Whip's office carry out its duties. I extend best wishes to all in the Parliament and across New South Wales. The Whip's office has a particular role in this place and we could not perform it without the dedicated staff who work in the office. I acknowledge Rebecca Cartwright, who basically runs the Parliament along with Emma Gittoes and the Leader of the House. I thank them for their enormous support. I also thank Zac Bentley, who is employed in my electorate office when Parliament is sitting. He is a Wagga Wagga boy and we are very proud of him. He started with us on work experience and settled into the role well.

When we are here in the Parliament the staff at the front line in our electorate offices are the face, the ears and the voice of members and we all depend on them. I do not think the public realise how much work our staff do on our behalf. I thank my staff in Wagga Wagga: Margaret, Paula, Brenda and Sue. The ladies all job share and they now have about 70 years of service between them. In fact, last week Paula celebrated 25 years of service and Rebecca celebrated 20 years.

There are many people in this place who make our job easier, including the clerks, the cleaning staff, the attendants, Hansard, the staff in the library, the caterers, and the list goes on. Quite often we forget them, but I thank each and every one of them for the way in which they go about their jobs. They do their job without favouritism and they always give us the right advice. When country members in particular are away from their electorates we need the support that the Parliament has always given and I sincerely thank the staff for that.

At this time of year we reflect on the occurrences of the past year. We have had dreadful bushfires. In 2010 and 2012 Wagga Wagga suffered dreadful floods and the communities are just coming to grips with those events and getting on top of the devastation that occurred. I recall that while I was addressing the House in 2010 it was starting to rain and it was ominous. It happened again in 2012 and now we have had bushfires. I pay tribute to the wider community, not only those people who help us here in the Parliament but those volunteers who always rise to the challenge—the State Emergency Service, police, ambulance and the rescue services. In the recent bushfires we saw magnificent efforts by those people giving up paid employment to go out and help their fellow citizens.

I want to make special mention of the members of Parliament who were out in their communities during the bushfires, working with their communities and doing everything to help, from providing food and running errands to ringing Ministers to fix problems. It was the magnificent effort of everyone that managed to get people through that terrible time. Here in this Parliament we have been touched by people's personal losses in the bushfires. I was impressed that the members in this place, no matter what their political persuasion, and the staff collectively got together to raise funds and support individuals who had suffered great losses and who are still suffering. I am proud of that support. We have had tragedy as well; we have lost members of staff who were highly regarded. Once again staff and members have come together to acknowledge the enormous contribution made by those individuals.

As we move towards the Christmas season I wish everyone well. I say to anyone who is driving: Please obey the road rules, do not speed and take those necessary breaks to get where you are going safely. As we come together with our friends and families over the Christmas break we should enjoy everything in moderation. I hope that everyone has a safe and happy Christmas and New Year. I look forward to seeing members and staff back in this place next year when we will carry on the work of the O'Farrell Government in making this State number one again.

[Business interrupted.]

MINING AND PETROLEUM LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (PUBLIC INTEREST) BILL 2013

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

SEASONAL FELICITATIONS

[Business resumed.]

Mr RICHARD AMERY (Mount Druitt) [5.18 p.m.]: I join all the previous speakers in wishing everyone season's greetings and best wishes for a safe return to this Parliament next year. The role of the Whip is a busy one throughout the day and it requires a lot of cooperation. I take this opportunity to thank the member for Cabramatta, the member for Wagga Wagga and the member for Murray-Darling in helping to work out many of the mechanical issues that keep the Chamber running. In a five-minute seasonal felicitations speech I cannot name everyone. In fact, I try to avoid wherever possible listing people's names because invariably I leave someone out. I echo the complimentary remarks that have been made about the Speaker, the Deputy-Speaker, the Assistant-Speakers and the Acting-Speakers.

I thank Ronda Miller and the team at the table for their help and cooperation throughout the year. Perhaps during question time they have not been so helpful and cooperative but on most occasions they take a reasonable and fair approach. Those who look after our offices, the security officers and so on have already been mentioned but I certainly want to recognise once again the Hansard staff. The window behind me is really like a window into a very big office block. I recommend that members go beyond the window in the Chamber to see the fascinating work of Hansard. I not only have an interest in the written word; I also want to place on record how proud we are in New South Wales to have such an organisation.

I do not know all the people who have left Hansard but I know that Mark Faulkner and Ron Jacobs retired this year—there may have been others who have skipped my mind. I also express the deepest sympathy of all members to the Hansard team on the loss of their colleague Trevor McDonald who passed away on 9 November and who was acknowledged in this House by the Speaker. Trevor had about 22 years of broken service. He worked in the New South Wales Parliament on two occasions and in other areas such as court reporting. I know that the Hansard team are feeling that loss.

I am proudly a Labor Party member of this place. I am the Labor Whip. It is apparent from the tone of question time that 2013 has been a challenging year for the Labor Party. We lost the Federal election this year. The Independent Commission Against Corruption has investigated the behaviour of some former Ministers and operatives, which reflects not only on Labor members but also on everybody in public office. The year 2013 has been a challenging one for the Labor Party but John Robertson and his staff have been able to keep our members focused, despite the distractions in the press every day, on issues such as housing, transport, holding Ministers accountable and so on. With those sorts of the distractions it took someone with the toughness of John Robertson and I pay tribute to him and his staff. It is not appropriate to expand on that during seasonal felicitations.

I also recognise the catering staff of Parliament House. I do not think I have ever recognised the information technology section of this Parliament. Members will be surprised to know that I ring those members regularly on serious matters such as how to turn my computer on and off. Kerry O'Brien is the public face of the information technology section. I thank Kerry and the team downstairs for their cooperation in attending our offices. They are a very technical unit and they work very hard. Oppositions cannot operate without a parliamentary library and our Parliamentary Library is an exceptionally good resource for all members of Parliament. Indeed, the research papers it produces are of great assistance. I wish everyone all the best for Christmas and the New Year. Oppositions want by-elections but they do not want them as a result of tragedies. Please be careful over the festive season. I look forward to bagging you all in the New Year.

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS (Murray-Darling) [5.23 p.m.]: We certainly know it is Christmas when the member for Tweed goes down to Oxford Street and buys himself a new set of snakeskin boots for the Mardi Gras. I am sure they will match the pink leggings that he wanders around in occasionally. Some members travel further than others to be part of this Parliament and in doing so they leave behind wives, husbands and partners.

Mr Troy Grant: And kids.

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS: It becomes particularly apparent when one goes to dinner with the younger members in this place and their greatest concern on the night is to contact their children before they go to bed. That separation is a tough call on our families and I recognise all families who commit to supporting us. I thank Rachel Hayes for her help. Rachel keeps The Nationals together from her office on floor 12. I thank my fellow Whips: Darryl Maguire, Jai Rowell, Richard Amery and Nick Lalich. Richard is always very generous with his praise and I look forward to getting a bit more of it in the new year. Rebecca Cartwright is the backbone of our side of the House and I recognise her for the support that she gives us. They say that you cannot take Dapto out of the girl but you can take the girl out of Dapto. Emma Gittoes had to get out of Dapto because it was the electorate of the member for Wollongong.

I also acknowledge the Hansard staff who actually get paid for the entertainment that is provided in this Chamber—they get it all for nothing. I thank them for their great support. The table staff ably support members in their work, as do the Clerks and attendants. The Christmas break will enable all members, and in particular members of The Nationals, to return to their home base. We will be able to get around our electorates and once again be seen at our homes. It is a testing time when I get home on Saturday and have to pack my bags and return again on Sunday. It is not always nice leaving our families and our absences are definitely noted. It is a time for us to be with our families. My wife, Helen, and I, my two sons, Jason and Craig, and their family, Louise, and granddaughters Madeline and Avalon, will get together for the first time. I am looking forward to that. It is a time for recharging the batteries, for members to freshen up and to be ready for the next parliamentary year.

It is a time for peace and goodwill. It is the time for everyone in the Parliament to recognise that they are part of a team. Although we represent different factions of politics, we respect each other for the work that we do and what has happened. Our thoughts will be with Joe Andrade and his family, and all those who suffered losses in the bushfires. Joe will be starting his life again with his family, and we will be thinking of him. Best wishes to everyone, members of the Coalition, the Opposition and the crossbench. Have a great Christmas, enjoy the break and drive safely. We will see you again the new year.

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) [5.27 p.m.]: I take this opportunity to offer my thanks, appreciation and best Christmas wishes to the many individuals who make up the many facets of this place. This is my first Christmas felicitations speech as I have only recently been appointed as an office-holder in the capacity of Deputy Government Whip. When I was appointed to this position I was told that I would be tasked with keeping a list of who has been naughty and who has been nice. As much as I have been keeping a list of who has been naughty and nice and I would love to share that, I will refrain from doing so. The member for Kiama is probably at the top of the list.

First, I thank the Premier of this great State. He has shown great leadership since his election to high office; and if anyone deserves a break over the festive season he does. I wish him, Rosemary and their family all the best this Christmas and New Year. I thank his wonderful staff led by Adam McPhee and the team, who do a fantastic job. To the Deputy Premier, Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries, thank you for your hard work and dedication. If any of you are wondering what I would like for Christmas it is more money for Wollondilly in next year's budget. I thank the Government Whip for his friendship and guidance. He has taught me a lot recently—for instance, which vintage of sauvignon blanc I should have with my Christmas lunch. More seriously, the Government Whip and his staff, led by the one and only Rebecca Cartwright and assisted by Zach Bentley, have been of tremendous assistance to me in this role. I truly hope they all have a fantastic break; it is well deserved. I place on record my appreciation to The Nationals Whip who has also given me much guidance over the past few months.

I thank the Leader of the House and his staff, particularly Emma Gittoes, for their friendship and guidance. They do a fantastic job in what are sometimes difficult times. To the Clerk, the clerks at the table, the Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms, the House staff, the Chamber attendants, the table office staff and the wonderful Hansard staff, thank you for your devoted service to this place. You are the cogs in the wheel that keep it turning. We hope you enjoy your break. We also share in your loss with the recent passing of Trevor McDonald.

His family are in our prayers at this time. Although the cleaning staff largely go unnoticed as they go about their business, I want them to know that we all appreciate their work. I thank Tony, the lovely gentleman from facilities who was kind enough to hang the 150 framed pictures I have across my two offices, for using his hammer and nails not on me but on my office.

Phil and his catering team and the staff at Cafe Quorum keep us caffeinated, watered and fed. Without them this place would surely grind to a lethargic halt. I will not name the many individuals but I also include the gardeners, the library and research staff, all the committee staff who have been a fantastic source of support for me, particularly when I was chair of the electoral matters committee earlier this year, the information technology staff and the facilities staff. To Madam Speaker, the Deputy-Speaker, the Assistant-Speaker and the Acting Speakers—the member for Heathcote, the member for Wallsend, the member for Monaro, the member for Menai and my good friend the member for Kiama—your wise counsel and just rulings over this Chamber are to be commended.

I have lost track of how many counts I have been put on by the member for Kiama for simply walking into the Chamber. However, I commend him for his consistency. I thank the media for their dedication and passion. While they keenly report on the differences expressed by the opposing sides of this place, we can all agree that the festive season is when we can all come together and wish each other a safe and happy holiday. Enjoy the break over the festive season and take care. To the Opposition and other non-government members of this place, although we may disagree, I thank you for the role you play in this place. To my fantastic staff, Michael Shore, Brooke Hilton, Madeline Grey, Scott Percival and formerly Kathryn Steinwise, thank you for your help over the years. I could not do this job without you.

I thank the staff of all members and Ministers for their assistance day in and day out. I thank my Liberal Party conference, the Wollondilly State executive council, which allows me to be in this place. I thank the members of this place, my colleagues, for their patience and an enjoyable year. We have achieved a lot together. While each side of the House may disagree on how we get there, we are going in the same direction while representing our communities. The people of Wollondilly who placed their trust in me and allow me to play this role, have had some tough times recently with bushfires. We have been devastated by bushfires but we have seen the best of what Wollondilly can do when we all come together as a community. I take this opportunity to thank the people of the Blue Mountains and other areas that have been devastated by bushfires.

Finally, I thank my wonderful wife, Belinda, and our two beautiful boys, Will and Menzies, for their love and support. I look forward to spending the Christmas break with them. I know I have spent a lot of time away while Parliament has been sitting this year but do not worry. I have helped Santa with the numbers for his preselection so she should get a few presents this year. I love you very much. I wish everyone a very merry Christmas.

The SPEAKER: I shall contribute briefly to Christmas felicitations. I am a little late because we had the pre-Hanukah ceremony in the Strangers Dining Room. It would be remiss of me if I did not wholeheartedly thank all the staff in Parliament House—upwards of 300 people work in this building. I say this every year and at most functions I attend: This place would not operate without their assistance. I mean that from every level, whether they are in cleaning or Hansard, in engineering or the facilities branches. It does not matter where they work in the Parliament, they are all important cogs in a very large wheel. We as members sometimes forget that. Sometimes we take their efforts for granted. We take for granted that before we turn up each morning in our offices somebody has been there very early to clean and take away our rubbish. We should remember each day we are here, and when we return next year, the magnificent efforts from all the staff in this building. When we remember we should thank them all for what they do for us, and I mean that most sincerely. That is all the staff in the Parliament.

I thank my personal staff, Luke Sikora, Joe Andrade and Gladys Kleiner. It is a busy office from time to time, and today has been no different. It has probably been a busy day for us all. Sometimes it is extraordinarily difficult trying to accommodate all the wishes and desires of members of Parliament—when they want to speak, if they want to change offices or if they want to improve their office. All sorts of requests come to my staff and they do a sterling job in meeting all those demands. I thank and pay tribute to everybody in the Parliament who contributed to the fundraising efforts to go towards Joe Andrade when his house burnt to the ground during the Winmalee fires. I thank everybody because it was a magnificent effort. Upwards of \$40,000 in cash was raised, plus all the other incredible goods that were donated. I am sure Joe will be able to tell you about those donations. He is incredibly grateful.

To my electorate office staff, Lynne Arnold, Adam Carney, Samantha Luxford and Georgia Copley, thank you for the magnificent efforts you continue to make on my behalf. For all members of Parliament when we are attending parliamentary sessions we rely on our electorate staff to ensure that our offices are running and our constituents are catered for and looked after. My Deputy-Speaker, Assistant-Speaker and Acting-Speakers—the member for Lismore, the member for Coffs Harbour, the member for Heathcote, the member for Menai, the member for Wallsend, the member for Monaro and the member for Kiama—all do a magnificent job. They must also understand the standing orders. After a short time I was extremely impressed by their knowledge of what to say when they are in the chair. It is a formality and protocol, and they must understand what they are doing. And they do. I thank them all. Obviously they take the chair when I am unavailable. If I have ambassadors visiting or meetings to attend on a daily basis they are always there and always cheerful, and they do the job extremely well, otherwise they would not be on the panel. I would remove them from the panel.

Thank you very much also to the Premier, the Deputy Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the House for their cooperation all year, and their good humour and good nature. I thank the party whips—Daryl Maguire, John Williams, Richard Amery and Nick Lalich—for the work they do. I know theirs is not an easy job, and not pleasant at times, but it is one that has to be done. I thank the clerks at the table for their work. As far as I am concerned, the clerks at the table are the ones with the brains in this Chamber. They are the ones who understand the process and the procedures. None of us in this place understands process and procedure as well as they do, and clearly we could not survive without them.

I thank Ronda Miller, Mark Swinson, Les Gönye, Helen Minnican, Catherine Watson, Elaine Schofield, Stephanie Hesford, Abbie Groves and Jonathan Elliot. I do not know how we can even start to thank these people enough, because we seek their advice daily. This afternoon when we had multiple divisions Helen was here to give me advice on what to do. Ronda is always here giving me advice on a daily basis about what we are doing. I thank John Hatfield, who works very hard in the table procedures office. I thank him every year for the work he does in providing the words that we use in motions that we move in this House. John, thank you for the work that you do.

I thank all in the Department of Parliamentary Services staff—particularly Executive Manager Rob Stefanic—for a wonderful year; and all at Hansard. It has not been an easy time at Hansard recently. They make the words we say seem better than they actually are. Everybody says this every year, but it is so true. When you read the *Hansard* report of what we have said in the House it sounds much better than what we actually did say. So I say thank you to Hansard. This year catering has done a magnificent job. I am sure those of us who have been to the dining room, who have ordered room service or who have visited the members dining would be aware that catering always uphold a very high standard in the quality of the food we are served and in the service we receive. It is critically important for us when we are away from home that we are able to have a meal together. Very often regional and rural members will share a meal, and it is always of extremely high quality. At the top of the catering tree is Philip Freeman. I am sure he is in line for an Order of Australia medal, so he tells me.

Mr Rob Stokes: Or maybe a knighthood.

The SPEAKER: Indeed, maybe a knighthood and deservedly—he does a wonderful job. His job is awfully difficult; it is probably one of the most difficult jobs in the Parliament. So I say well done to Philip, Carlos Andrade and Binny Simon for the wonderful work they do. I thank those in the Legislative Assembly support team and at front desk. I thank Ian Delahunty, who is eternally good-humoured. I thank Ian Thackeray, Chris Papadopoulos, Lynne Vitale, Danny Heidle, April Lowndes, Stephen Smith, Peter Tuziak and Chris Herbert. I know I am running out of time, but I thank all of you for the wonderful work that you do so quietly and so professionally in such a committed way for this Parliament and the people who represent their electorate. I know that you work so hard for them.

I thank everybody on the switchboard and everybody in the press gallery. I thank Alicia Wood, President of the Press Gallery. Thank you everybody for what has been a great year. I wish everybody all the very best for Christmas. I hope that everyone has a very well-earned break and comes back ready to start the new year re-energised for the year ahead and the election beyond it.

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION STATEMENTS

SPECIAL OLYMPICS ASIA PACIFIC GAMES 2013 GALA DINNER

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) [5.44 p.m.]: I had the pleasure of attending the gala dinner held at the Canterbury Hurlstone Park RSL on Friday 15 November 2013 to raise funds for the Special Olympics Asia

Pacific Games 2013. December 1 this year will see the city of Newcastle host the inaugural Special Olympics Asia Pacific Games, and provide 2,500 Special Olympic athletes with an intellectual disability from more than 32 countries with the opportunity to compete and achieve their personal best. This spectacular event will happen thanks to the efforts of 600 volunteer coaches and officials and more than 5,000 games volunteers who will ensure the athletes have the experience of a lifetime. More than 200,000 spectators will attend, with a spectacular opening ceremony on the evening of Sunday 1 December at the Hunter Stadium. Thanks must go to Mr Peter Langthorne, Vice Chairman of Special Olympics New South Wales, and Mr Andrew Paschalidis for organising the gala fundraising night. I know that the inaugural Special Olympics Asia Pacific Games 2013 will be a magnificent success.

NORTH COAST POLICING

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [5.44 p.m.]: I pay tribute to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, the Hon. Michael Gallacher. Yesterday he announced an additional 90 police officers for the six electorates from Port Stephens to the Queensland border. On behalf of the North Coast members of The Nationals, who have fought so hard to get these additional police, I would like to say thank you. It shows that the Coalition is listening to the people and that we have a Minister who understands them. What this means for the electorate of Myall Lakes is that there will be an additional 15 police officers. Our communities, and the Police Force, have been calling for this, and it is supported by the available evidence. The Minister has listened and delivered.

SAVE OUR SUBURBS COMMUNITY GROUP

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) [5.45 p.m.]: Save Our Suburbs is a fantastic community group that was formed by the communities of West Wallsend, Holmesville and Seahampton. These communities surround the now-approved housing estate development known to all as the Hammersmith development. The communities opposed the development from its inception due to the effect it would have on the infrastructure, flora and fauna of the village as it currently exists, let alone the effect on the Aboriginal Caves located right within the boundaries of the development.

The community turned out in number to community meetings and joint regional planning panel meetings. Each and every person expressed themselves clearly, succinctly and passionately as to why they oppose the development. Their arguments were well thought out, well researched and well supported. I commend each and every person for the level of community spirit they displayed and for their "it's not over until the fat lady sings" attitude. I commend the Minister for the Environment, who is now here in the House, for recognising the Aboriginal Caves as a place of special significance.

DUBBO ELECTORATE AWARD RECIPIENT ANDREW RAWSTHORNE

Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.46 p.m.]: I congratulate outstanding Trundle resident Andrew Rawsthorne on being presented the Dubbo Electorate Award. Trundle is a small rural community in the west of my electorate. It is well known for having the widest main street in New South Wales. Trundle's main street also features a number of historic buildings. Over time these buildings have aged and become dilapidated. Andrew has taken on the task of restoring the buildings of Trundle's main street to their former glory—from the local café to the old picture theatre and his most recent project, the 87-metre long verandah at the famous Trundle Hotel.

I visited Trundle recently to present Andrew with the Dubbo Electorate Award. I was humbled to see the number of his friends, family and locals who turned up at the presentation to show their thanks. Andrew is doing this work on a voluntary basis for the good of the community, which he loves and calls home. On behalf of the people of Trundle and district I thank and congratulate him on a job well done. I am extraordinarily proud to represent a man of the calibre of Andrew Rawsthorne.

MIN VUE LAY TEMPLE BONNYRIGG

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [5.47 p.m.]: On Tuesday 8 October 2013 the Australian Chinese Buddhist Society celebrated the thirty-second anniversary of the Min Vue Lay Temple Bonnyrigg. The evening was characterised by cultural entertainment from the Australian Chinese Buddhist Singing Group. I was joined at this event by my colleague, the State member for Cabramatta, Mr Nick Lalich; the Consulate General of the

People's Republic of China in Sydney, Mr Li Hua Xin; and the Federal member for Fowler, Mr Chris Hayes. The evening also marked the inauguration of the new Chairman, Mr James Chan, who has made a vast contribution to our local community and the greater Sydney area.

The outgoing Chairman, Mr Thanh Ha, was acknowledged for his outstanding contribution during his time as chairman, and for all his hard work and his tireless efforts within the community. I congratulate the organising committee—and, in particular, the President of the committee, Mr Vincent Kong—on their outstanding work in the Buddhist and non-Buddhist community over these years. I commend the Australian Chinese Buddhist Society for their ongoing efforts to further facilitate the needs of our vast multicultural community.

NORTHERN BEACHES AUTHORS

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.48 p.m.]: As members would be aware from the ongoing Currawong saga, the northern beaches area lends itself to some intriguing mysteries. Whilst even the most suspicious and cunning of authors could not come up with the events, characters and twists that we are continuing to see emerge from Currawong's recent history, we are fortunate to have many talented local authors on the northern beaches who cleverly incorporate our community's natural environment into their works. I recently had the pleasure of meeting with acclaimed local novelist John M. Green and have been greatly impressed by the quality of his works, the mystery and suspense he creates, and the local influences he includes.

New children's author Margi Law, who will soon launch her adventure novel *The Timberleys of Tingira Bay* also uses our local waterways and national parks to inspire a set of visuals that brings her story to life. Similar to the intrigue, secrecy and stratagem surrounding Currawong, the publications by Margi Law and John M. Green keep you guessing and eagerly awaiting the next revelation. These are two fantastic local authors and I encourage all members to read their works over the Christmas break.

MOUNT DRUITT ELECTORATE SCHOOL STUDENTS

Mr RICHARD AMERY (Mount Druitt) [5.49 p.m.]: I acknowledge in this House the thousands of students from the Mount Druitt electorate who are finishing their school year in the coming weeks. First, to all the students who recently completed their Higher School Certificate I offer my congratulations on achieving this level of education, irrespective of the results they achieve. I wish them good luck with their future endeavours. In the near future I will attend a number of school presentation days. We in this Parliament should recognise all students who have another year of education under their belt, in particular, those year 6 students who are graduating from primary school and going into high school. Leaving primary school is a milestone in their lives. Good luck to all students in the Mount Druitt electorate.

WOLLONDILLY BRIGADE AID FUNDRAISER

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) [5.50 p.m.]: I am organising the Brigade Aid fundraiser to be held on 30 November 2013 at Bargo Sportsground to raise money for the local Rural Fire Service brigade. I take this opportunity to thank the community for their tremendous support in the lead-up to this event, including Inspector Stimpny Bellows, David Stimson, and his fellow staff members at the Picton Fire Control Centre. I thank Dale Burridge, one of the original Phantom of the Opera cast and also proud Tahmoor resident, who has agreed to direct, produce and perform in the event free of charge with Danielle Everett. I thank Linda Defrancesco and Cheryl Derks for their generous support, time and effort. I also thank Sharon and Tim Bishop without whom this event would not be possible, as well as Tahmoor Lions. I also thank my staff Michael Shaw and Brooke Hilton for all their wonderful work in this regard. Our Rural Fire Service volunteers do an amazing job and I look forward to thanking them on 30 November 2013.

HEART OF PUNCHBOWL EXHIBITION

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) [5.51 p.m.]: I pay tribute to the Heart of Punchbowl Exhibition, which will be held at the Bankstown Art Centre. The exhibition has been commissioned by photographer Andrew Quilty and writer Jackie Dent to accompany the Once Upon a Time in Punchbowl series, which will be screened on SBS television in early 2014. The exhibition will showcase a series of images that reflect the everyday lives of members of the Lebanese-Australian community that has settled in Punchbowl. The Heart of Punchbowl reinforces ideals of multiculturalism, tolerance and acceptance—hallmarks of the Bankstown community that has become a home to people from all over the world, including Lebanon. I pay tribute to this exhibition and to the Lebanese Australian community of Bankstown and wider New South Wales.

TRIBUTE TO JAMES MALIN AND BILL KING

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) [5.52 p.m.]: I pay tribute to two extraordinary and brave young men in my electorate: 19-year-old James Malin and 20-year-old Bill King. On Friday 1 November James and Bill rescued a 52-year-old Kiama spear fisherman who was snorkelling in Storm Bay when he became distressed in the water. Following cries for help, the pair came to the man's aid, pulled him from the water and up from the rocks. Emergency services were called at 11.20 a.m. Lake Illawarra police and Kiama lifeguards were the first on the scene, but Fire and Rescue NSW's Kiama unit and Kiama State Emergency Service volunteers also responded. Thankfully the man rescued was soon in a stable condition with no serious injuries. On behalf of the local community, I thank James Malin and Bill King for their quick thinking and for their act of bravery in saving this man's life. Congratulations to two very brave and courageous young men.

SYDNEY GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) [5.53 p.m.]: I acknowledge the 130th successful year for the Sydney Girls High School in Moore Park in my electorate. This is the oldest State girls' school in New South Wales, with a long tradition of educating girls to be active and engaged citizens who contribute to the community. The strong community spirit is evident in the old girls union, school council, parents and citizens, and leadership amongst current students, along with inspiring long-term leadership from Principal Andrea Connell. Significant community fundraising is making possible a major project in the Governors' Centre, an exciting new building to be shared with Sydney Boys High School. The school will soon hold its presentation day, which is always a great opportunity to meet students excelling across the board in academia, sport, culture and creative activities. I congratulate the school on another successful year of learning and excellence.

SUNNYFIELD DISABILITY SERVICES

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) [5.54 p.m.]: Last night I was honoured to represent the Premier of New South Wales, Barry O'Farrell, at the launch of Sunnyfield disAbility Services UnBard television program to air on Foxtel Aurora channel. UnBard television is Australia's first accessible creative community forum. It will feature drama, music, dance and multimedia projects created through collaborations with people with disabilities, independent filmmakers and creative industry professionals. Sunnyfield Patron Air Chief Marshal Angus Houston, retired, spoke with great passion on the excellent work of Sunnyfield. Chairman Malcolm Park, Chief Executive Officer Caroline Cuddihy, and Arts Community and Culture Coordinator Gaye Fleming spoke with great pride of the Sunnyfield clients involved in this launch. Through this project the Government and various others are continuing to rollout the Stronger Together 2 program that will increase funding for services and provide more choice for individuals. New South Wales was the first State in Australia to sign up to the National Disability Insurance Scheme, which will change the landscape of disability services in Australia putting people with disabilities at the centre. I congratulate all involved and wish everyone great success.

TRIBUTE TO FRANCIS KEITH EDWARDS

Mr GARRY EDWARDS (Swansea) [5.55 p.m.]: I make mention in this House of the passing of Francis Keith Edwards, Royal Australian Navy (Retired). Francis Keith Edwards, known as Keith, was born on 23 May 1925 to parents Frank Edwards of St Peters, Sydney and Mary Grace Fisher of Coffee Hill, Orange. Keith grew up in Tempe New South Wales with siblings Neville, Leonard, Russel, Marie and twin sister, Evelyn. After enlisting in the Royal Australian Navy in 1943 at the age of 18 years, Keith was a commissioning crew member of the newly built River Class Frigate HMAS *Gascoyne*, and served on *Gascoyne* for the duration of World War II through some of the most intense sea battles of the Pacific Campaign, including the battle of Leyte Gulf, a battle that in some quarters has been described as the fiercest Naval Battle of all time.

Francis Keith Edwards passed away last Thursday, 14 November, at Belmont District Hospital. At the moment of his passing, Keith was attended by family members, being his wife, Betty, granddaughters Julia and Loretta, son Kenneth, daughter-in-law, Pattie, and older son, yours truly. At 10.50 p.m. on Thursday 14 November last, my best friend set sail on his final voyage—never will I ever see the like of him again: for me a hero at every level. Vale Francis Keith Edwards. Thank you Dad for allowing Ken and me to be your sons.

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

UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN SYDNEY INDIAN COMMUNITY DINNER

Mr ANDREW ROHAN (Smithfield) [5.56 p.m.]: On Friday 15 November I attended the University of Western Sydney Year of Success through Diversity Indian Community Dinner in Parramatta. The celebratory dinner was to honour the Indian community for their contribution to the success of the university. University of Western Sydney is the main provider of higher education to the diverse communities of Western Sydney. Also in attendance were the Hon. Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, representing Prime Minister Tony Abbott; Dr Geoff Lee, representing Premier Barry O'Farrell; Professor Peter Shergold, Chancellor of the university; and many other distinguished guests. The venue was packed with students, teachers and leaders of the Indian community. It was a great night and I thank Dr Sev Ozdowski, OAM, Director, Equity and Diversity, at the university for putting together such a great program.

ANGLICARE NORTH COAST

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) [5.56 p.m.]: I offer my congratulations to Anglicare North Coast on an extremely successful year. The board of Anglicare consists of Chair Ann Helmrich, Executive Director Estelle Graham and board members Robert Simkus, Reverend Thea Archinal, Ronald Marshall, Reverend Canon Brian Mueller, Anne Hywood, Reverend Alan Shaw and Alex Purvis, who have achieved great things. Anglicare North Coast has been able to provide assistance to 982 clients during this past year. For a team of fewer than 30 people, many of whom are part time, they have proven once again how valuable this organisation is to our community, especially for those less fortunate than others. I commend the board, staff and volunteers, for their dedication and commitment to improving the lives of others.

DAVIDSON ELECTORATE CHURCHES

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) [5.57 p.m.]: I congratulate two churches in Roseville and Killara on marking significant milestones this month. St Andrews Anglican Church in Roseville celebrated its centenary recently with a community day, including service, at nearby Roseville College. The service was presided over by the new Anglican Archbishop of Sydney, Glenn Davies, and Senior Minister Reverend Dr John Dickson. The Golden Jubilee for the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, part of the Lindfield-Killara Catholic Parish, of which I am a member, will be commemorated on the last weekend of this month. Activities celebrating its 50 years included a parish cocktail party on Friday, a fete on Saturday and a special service on Sunday. I thank both churches for their excellent contributions to the local and broader communities.

MAITLAND ELECTORATE ACHIEVEMENTS

Ms ROBYN PARKER (Maitland—Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage) [5.58 p.m.]: I congratulate Maitland Football founders Alex Threadgate and Alex Malam on being named volunteers of the year at the Australian Football Awards for the club they established to cater for children with a disability and special needs children. I wish Maitland Gilbert and Sullivan Musical Society all the best for its 10 nominations in the 2013 City of Newcastle Drama awards for the production *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*. I congratulate the 308 City of Maitland Squadron Australian Air Force cadets on exercising its freedom of entry to the city with a march and a ceremonial service in Maitland last Saturday. I acknowledge all members and wish them all the very best for Christmas and the festive season. I hope they get out and about in the environment. Do not forget to visit our zoo, national parks, the Centennial Parklands and gardens around your communities.

AL ZAHRA COLLEGE PRINCIPAL SYED ZAWAR SHAR

Mr JOHN FLOWERS (Rockdale) [5.59 p.m.]: I congratulate Syed Zawar Shar on his appointment as principal at Al Zahra College, Arncliffe. He is a dedicated teacher with more than two decades of experience. Al Zahra College does tremendous work educating students from kindergarten to year 12 in the Rockdale area. I commend it for its promotion of tolerance and understanding. It is a model school that demonstrates successful multiculturalism.

HORNSBY NORTH WEST YOUTH VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR MADELEINE ESTHERBY

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) [6.00 p.m.]: I congratulate Madeleine Estherby from Asquith Girls High School. For the past five years Madeline has been involved in Operation Hope, which is a program run through her local church that makes positive improvements to the lives of others. Madeleine has been named Hornsby

North West Youth Volunteer of the Year as a result of her passion for helping overseas communities in need. The Mount Colah teenager has been raising awareness in her school and community about the plight of people in developing countries, setting a great example for all in our local community. She intends to go on to study international studies where she hopes her passions will lead her to becoming a foreign aid ambassador. I wish Madeleine all the best for the future and thank her for her selfless contribution to society.

I also congratulate Waitara resident Margaret Mullins, who was named Senior Volunteer of the Year for her role as volunteer librarian for more than 20 years at Catholic Healthcare McQuoin Park Retirement Village and Nursing Home. I also acknowledge Hornsby-based service Dial-A-Mum, which was named Volunteer Team of the Year. I thank them for their efforts.

HOLSWORTHY HIGH SCHOOL THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Menai) [6.01 p.m.]: Recently I attended celebrations to mark the thirtieth anniversary of Holsworthy High School. It was a chance for past and present students to come together to celebrate their school and see how far they have come. It was a particularly special opportunity for students from the transient Army community to reconnect with each other. The special assembly focused on the history of the school and the many achievements of its students over the years. A group of students comprising Emily Stewart, Kiara Miller, Sheree Lamond, Ashley Lamond and Eden Foley White were able to capture the school's spirit in their written contributions on the day. A brief excerpt reads:

Many of Holsworthy's students enter young, timid, unaware of their abilities; however every Holsworthy student leaves the gate confident, compassionate and ready to conquer the world ahead of them.

Students were clearly proud to acknowledge their school's history. I congratulate Principal John Frew and school staff on this incredible milestone.

CRONULLA SURF LIFESAVER MICHAEL BANISTER

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.01 p.m.]: I congratulate Cronulla Surf Life Saving Club member Michael Banister, who received a Meritorious Award from Surf Life Saving Australia after rescuing six people caught in rips off North Cronulla beach in January 2012. Mr Banister is the first Bate Bay club member to receive the prestigious award in 26 years. Surf Life Saving Australia cited the following reasons for awarding Mr Banister the Meritorious Award Certificate: it was a rescue out of patrolling hours; the seas were treacherous; he was one out, with no assistance; there were six individuals in danger and all needed rescuing; he developed a plan of action that he put into place and acted upon; he succeeded with his strategy and showed extreme courage and purpose; and without his efforts, in all likelihood, there would have been multiple drownings. I once again offer my sincere congratulations to Mr Banister on his tremendous accomplishment.

RETIREMENT OF BOB AND CHARLENE LAMBERT

Mr ANDREW GEE (Orange) [6.02 p.m.]: This year Bob and Charlene Lambert have celebrated 25 years as exam supervisors in Orange. Last Friday Mr and Mrs Lambert were recognised for their service to education at a special morning tea after announcing that this year will be their last. Mrs Lambert began her involvement with education as a teacher's aide at Glenroi Public School, turning to exam supervision in the late 1980s. Mr Lambert started out at Orange High School before making the switch to Canobolas Rural Technology High School when his grandchildren started sitting their exams nearly 15 years ago. They have been together at Canobolas Rural Technology High School ever since. I congratulate Bob and Charlene Lambert on their quarter of a century of service to education in the Orange region and wish them well in their retirement.

VIETNAMESE COMMUNITY IN AUSTRALIA BUSHFIRE FUNDRAISING

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) [6.03 p.m.]: The Vietnamese Community in Australia [VCA] is the peak body advocating for the Vietnamese community in Cabramatta. Last Friday 15 November I was honoured to attend its fundraising dinner in aid of victims of the recent bushfires. Two days later I again joined the community in Freedom Plaza, Cabramatta, as we walked the streets in the rain and asked people to donate to the victims. I am pleased to report that the Vietnamese Community in Australia has to date raised more than \$150,000 for bushfire victims. I congratulate outgoing President Thanh Nguyen and the Vietnamese Community in Australia on their generous efforts.

PARAROOS FOOTBALLER OF THE YEAR JAMES TURNER

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [6.03 p.m.]: Footballer James Turner admits it will be hard to top his achievements this year. He was a member of the New South Wales side that won the national Paralympic seven-a-side championships. He was also named Player of the Series. He represented the Australian cerebral palsy side in tournaments played in Canada and Spain and last week James was named Pararoos Footballer of the Year at the Australian Football Awards held in Sydney. It has been a big 12 months for James. He has notched up 16 appearances for the Pararoos and hopes to add to the tally next year. His international commitments started in April when he went to Canada with the Pararoos before heading to Spain in June and July for the International Cup. The Australians had a mixed time of it, with Spain winning two of the six games. A victory against the host nation was a highlight. I congratulate James Turner.

OPEN HEART BOOK LAUNCH

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) [6.04 p.m.]: Last Friday I attended the *Open Heart* book launch at the Bellevue Function Centre, Bankstown. *Open Heart* was written by Lebanese Australian author and journalist Sayed Mikhael. The book showcases the visits of Lebanese political and religious leaders to Australia over the past 25 years. Bankstown has a strong and proud Lebanese Australian community. The book pays tribute to the many achievements of the Lebanese community and the strong relationship between Australia and Lebanon. I am privileged to have a longstanding association with the Lebanese Australian community of Bankstown and wider New South Wales. I look forward to working further with them in the future. I congratulate Sayed Mikhael and all supporters and sponsors of the publication.

MONA VALE HOSPITAL AUXILIARY

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.05 p.m.]: It is with great delight that I again draw the attention of the House to the remarkable fundraising efforts of the Mona Vale Hospital Auxiliary. The unwavering commitment of these incredible volunteers is unsurpassed in our community and their generosity and support provides essential and lasting benefits to all local residents. Whether it is raffles, sausage sizzles, craft and cake stalls, morning teas, gift wrapping or the operation of Mona Vale Hospital kiosk, these dedicated volunteers never pass up an opportunity to attract additional funding for key hospital projects and improvements.

With such ardent determination and effort comes achievement, and I am delighted to report that the Mona Vale Hospital Auxiliary has again been awarded for raising more money than any other metropolitan hospital auxiliary in the past financial year. Although these volunteers never seek any gratitude or praise for their work, I am honoured to again share their success with members and thank them for their enormous contribution to the Pittwater community.

BERESFIELD-TARRO-WOODBERRY NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) [6.06 p.m.]: The Beresfield-Tarro-Woodberry Neighbourhood Watch has been operating for more than 20 years. The group is very active in their area and provide a great service to their communities, especially as the Beresfield police station is operational for only about six hours one day a week to receive reports. The Beresfield-Tarro-Woodberry Neighbourhood Watch issues a monthly newsletter to keep the community up to date with what crimes have been committed and encourages residents to continue to report crime even though they may feel that nothing is being done. The group holds monthly meetings that are attended by about 20 people, including a police officer. Coordinator Lloyd Frith and his committee work hard to ensure the group thrives.

WORLD BENCHREST SHOOTING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) [6.07 p.m.]: The World Benchrest Shooting Championships were recently held at the Silverdale range. I was honoured to be asked by the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia to officially open this championship that competitors attended from around the world. Benchrest shooting is a rifle sport where shooters attempt to place five or 10 shots into the smallest possible group at distances of 50, 100, 200 and 300 yards. Rifles are fired from rests that comprise a front rest to support the fore end of the rifle and a rear sandbag to support the butt. I met all the international teams on the day, including the fantastic Australian team. The last time Australia hosted the event was in 1995. I am proud that Wollondilly was able to secure the championship and congratulate the organisers on a successful event.

UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN SYDNEY VIETNAMESE COMMUNITY DINNER

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [6.08 p.m.]: On Friday 26 July 2013 at Fairfield RSL the University of Western Sydney hosted a Vietnamese community dinner. The year 2013 is the university's Year of Success through Diversity. The aim of the year is to acknowledge and celebrate the importance of diversity to the success of the University of Western Sydney as an educational institution. The University of Western Sydney prides itself on being one of the most culturally diverse universities in the country. More than 100 ethnic backgrounds are represented in the student population and 20 per cent of the staff come from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The dinner was in honour of the Vietnamese community, which has made significant contributions to the broader Australian community since the arrival of Vietnamese people in Australia 38 years ago. Dr Sev Ozdowski, OAM, Director of Equity and Diversity, gave the official welcome. Associate Professor Minh Nguyen gave the Vietnamese welcome. Acting Vice-Chancellor Ms Rhonda Hawkins spoke about studying at the University of Western Sydney and University of Western Sydney Aspire medical student Ms Lana Nguyen was the guest speaker. I congratulate the university on supporting and promoting harmony in the community.

MOUNTAIN VIEW MEATS

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) [6.09 p.m.]: I congratulate Nathan Alcock of Mountain View Meats at Shoalhaven Heads, who recently tasted success at the State Sausage Championships at The Entrance on the Central Coast by picking up two first places and a third. He and his team of butchers made up of Kory Edwards and Nick Martin and apprentices Brady Harris Monteith and Joshua Parker claimed first places with their Australian lamb and gourmet sausages. They also gained a third placing with their continental Italian sausage. This follows their success at a regional level, where they took out four first places to qualify for the State finals. They are now eyeing off the national titles, which will be held in the Hunter Valley in February 2014. After placing second last year with their pork sausages they are hoping to go one better in 2014. On behalf of the local community I congratulate them on their achievements to date and wish them every success at the national titles.

MOUNT DRUITT TAFE LIBRARY

Mr RICHARD AMERY (Mount Druitt) [6.10 p.m.]: I would like the Parliament to acknowledge an initiative in my electorate conducted by Mount Druitt TAFE Library. Like all libraries, problems occur when books are not returned. Fines are imposed to get students to return books on time. The TAFE library, through librarian Karen Green, has started a scheme where students can pay their fines by donating two cans of food in lieu of every \$10 they owe in fines. The scheme has two clear benefits. First, it ensures that books are returned and, secondly, the food collected will be added to the student association Christmas Appeal, which helps needy families, including families of college students. I congratulate Mrs Liz Whitelaw-Adams, the mastermind behind the scheme, and Karen Green, the librarian.

LEGACY JUNIOR PUBLIC SPEAKING AWARDS

Mr ANDREW ROHAN (Smithfield) [6.11 p.m.]: On Monday 18 November 2013 I attended the Legacy junior public speaking award 2013 national final competition in Sydney. Finalists at the competition were 10 students from 10 high schools from five States—New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and Victoria. All presentations were fantastic and I believe they were all winners. However, in the end there could only be one winner. Ella Finlay from the MLC School in New South Wales was declared the winner and I congratulate her on her achievement. I commend the efforts of the legatees, Mr Lloyd Cameron, chairman of the forum, Mr Colin Dunston, President of Sydney Legacy, and all other legatees and students. I thank Mr Andrew Condon, Chief Executive Officer of Legacy for his kind invitation and for the opportunity to present the Occasional Address at the forum. I acknowledge the work of Legacy in support of our war widowed families and for sponsoring such forums to preserve the values and ideals of Legacy for future generations.

TRIBUTE TO DR AMY McGRATH

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) [6.12 p.m.]: I acknowledge Dr Amy McGrath, who at 92 years of age is still driving and actively writing books. She has just completed her book *Wolves in Australia*, a follow-up to *Wolves in Sheep's Clothing*, and I will be sponsoring the launch of that book on 2 December 2013 in the Parliamentary Theatre. I note that her husband, Frank McGrath, who is accomplished in the law in his own right, will also be speaking on the day. I congratulate her on her remarkable achievements in life and for her ongoing passion in what she believes.

JOSEPH ERNEST MILLER AND JEAN TROY 100TH BIRTHDAY

Mr JOHN FLOWERS (Rockdale) [6.13 p.m.]: I ask this House to extend special congratulations to Mr Joseph Ernest Miller of Cockle Bay who celebrated his 100th birthday on 3 July 2013 and Mrs Jean Troy of Kogarah, who celebrated her 100th birthday on 22 September 2013. We wish them continued good health and happiness.

Community recognition statements, by leave, taken forthwith for an additional 10 minutes.

MARINE RESCUE HAWKESBURY VOLUNTEERS

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) [6.14 p.m.]: I congratulate several outstanding volunteers from the Hornsby community for their contributions to Marine Rescue NSW. My good friend and former parish priest, Father Carmelo Sciberras and Mr Barry McGrath have both been awarded National Medals for 15 years and 25 years of service respectively to Marine Rescue Hawkesbury and my other good friend, former president of the Brooklyn Ratepayers Association, Mathilde Kearny-Kibble, was awarded with the Marine Rescue Medal for 10 years of service. Marine Rescue NSW is the State's official service and provides a large number of fundamental safety services to the boating community. All of its 3,000-plus members are professionally trained and are available to provide aid to over 2,200 boats on average per year. I thank Father Carmelo, Barry and Mathilde for their extensive contributions to the boating community and to the wider community of Hornsby.

HOLSWORTHY RAILWAY STATION

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Menai) [6.14 p.m.]: I note that the Minister for Transport is in the Chamber because I know she has been working hard with my community and me on this issue. Recently a few incidents have occurred near Holsworthy railway station at Harris Creek Reserve. One person was hit in the head while pushing his daughter in a pram and two hold-ups have taken place in the reserve. I have met with the family of the 16-year-old girl who was held up at gunpoint and her mobile phone was stolen, an incredibly upsetting incident. We need to ensure that this area is safe for people walking to school and to the station, particularly late at night. I thank the Minister for Transport and local police for taking measures to ensure that what needs to be done with closed-circuit televisions and cutting back bushes is undertaken quickly. I also thank Susan Churchill, a Wattle Grove resident, for putting together a Facebook page that has over 700 members. It is important that we address this situation.

ORANGE PHARMACIST DR TIM GRAY

Mr ANDREW GEE (Orange) [6.15 p.m.]: I draw the attention of members to Orange pharmacist Dr Tim Gray, who was recognised for his outstanding customer service earlier this month at the CGU Banjo Business Awards in Orange. Tim took out the People's Choice Award for outstanding customer service, which he believes to be a highlight of his career so far. Although Dr Gray only started as a pharmacist at Peter Smith Chemmart in Orange two years ago, he has worked in a number of different roles under the guidance of his mother, Kate Gray, who is also a pharmacist, since he was young. I am sure I speak on behalf of the entire Orange community in commending Tim for his outstanding commitment to customer service. Well done.

FAMILIES AND FRIENDS OF THE FIRST AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [6.16 p.m.]: The Families and Friends of the First Australian Imperial Force Incorporated held its ninety-seventh anniversary commemoration on Friday 19 July 2013 at the Anzac Memorial, Hyde Park, Sydney. The Families and Friends of the First Australian Imperial Force Incorporated is a not-for-profit registered charitable organisation. The main purpose of the Families and Friends of the First Australian Imperial Force is to commemorate the service, sacrifice and suffering of the First Australian Imperial Force of the Great War of 1914-18 and of their family and friends. The ninety-seventh anniversary commemoration service for the Battle of Fromelles was attended by Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir, AC, CVO, Governor of New South Wales, and Mr Don Rowe, OAM, Deputy Chairman of the Anzac Memorial and New South Wales President of the RSL. The Holy Family Choir from Menai was present to sing hymns at the service. Pastor Bob Durbin, Chaplain of RSL LifeCare, presided over the service. The epilogue was given by Mr Russell Curley, President of the Families and Friends of the First Australian Imperial Force.

SHOALHAVEN RIVER FESTIVAL

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) [6.17 p.m.]: I recognise the Shoalhaven River Festival and the success with which it was organised. I was fortunate to attend the festival, which took place on 26 October 2013 in Nowra, and was delighted to take part in the polliie paddle and to judge the festival floats. I commend the organisers for the street parade, the markets in Nowra pool car park, the entertainment out the front of Riverhaven Motel, the river activities on the southern riverbank and the fireworks on the Shoalhaven River. I thank the organisers and the community of the Shoalhaven for a fantastic event, which has many already looking forward to next year's festival. In particular, I congratulate Catherine Shields and Lynn Locke, who were critical in organising the event, as well as Shoalhaven City Council, Her Worship, Mayor Councillor Joanna Gash, on the initiative and the local media, in particular, the *South Coast Register* for pushing this proposal.

VOLUNTEER CRAFTS TEACHER MAY DELORAINE

Mr RICHARD AMERY (Mount Druitt) [6.17 p.m.]: I would like the Parliament to acknowledge a story in this week's St Marys-Mount Druitt newspaper *The Standard* about 90-year-old May Deloraine, who years ago joined the Wash House. May certainly proves that one never reaches an age where one cannot volunteer, health permitting of course. May Deloraine is a volunteer teacher of knitting and crocheting and each week catches two buses to reach the centre to teach her skills. May has been knitting since the age of four. She is a great inspiration to the elderly in our community and I am pleased to recognise May Deloraine of Eastern Creek in the Parliament today.

GREAT LAKES MUSEUM

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [6.18 p.m.]: I wish to tell the House about the Great Lakes Museum, which recently underwent building renovations with a \$24,000 facelift. The ceilings were replaced, downlights were installed, new carpets were laid and the building was given a fresh coat of paint. The facelift also included a new staff room and archive room. The majority of the work was done by volunteers, with the help of a \$14,000 government grant. I congratulate Great Lakes Historical Society President, Alan Wright, volunteer Anne Masters and the committee on all their work.

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION STATEMENTS

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.18 p.m.]: I provide a community recognition statement in support and in recognition of community recognition statements. I recognise the wisdom of the Speaker in facilitating this reform to provide members with a wonderful device to recognise the magnificent effort of community members. I take this opportunity to wish everyone in the House a merry Christmas and I thank Hansard staff for their forbearance.

PICTON STORES TRADING HOURS

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) [6.19 p.m.]: I inform the House of the great initiative of Picton store owners who on 28 November will keep their doors open until 9.00 p.m. to give Wollondilly residents an opportunity to shop locally through Christmas. More than 70 per cent of Wollondilly residents travel outside the district to access work and educational pursuits and by the time they get home, it is often the case that local shops are closed. This initiative allows local shop owners to stay open, which in turn allows Wollondilly residents to shop locally and support local jobs and the local economy. Participating shops will display red, white and green balloons to indicate they are open. I take this opportunity to congratulate local shop owners and the Picton Chamber of Commerce on such a great initiative and commend to members a visit to Wollondilly, particularly to Picton, to buy Christmas presents.

MICHAEL AND MARIANNE O'DEA FIFTIETH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) [6.19 p.m.]: One of the privileges of being a member of Parliament is that we are able to acknowledge people who celebrate significant birthdays and wedding anniversaries. On behalf of my siblings I place on the record that my own parents, Michael and Marianne O'Dea, will celebrate their fiftieth wedding anniversary next Wednesday. On behalf of Michelle, Angela, Philippa, Natalie, Richard, Adrian, Kate and Camille, I wish my parents a very happy fiftieth wedding anniversary. They are wonderful people, and we look forward to celebrating that occasion with them next Wednesday.

TRIBUTE TO MR MICHAEL CORLIS

Mr JOHN FLOWERS (Rockdale) [6.20 p.m.]: I congratulate Mr Michael Corlis of Rockdale, who was recognised in the 2013 Order of Australia awards for service with the New South Wales Ambulance Service. I commend his dedication over a period of 26 years as a paramedic and congratulate him for the tireless and selfless work that he and all paramedics provide in our community.

PHOEBE PETERSON AND TIM SEGUNA AWARD RECIPIENTS

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) [6.20 p.m.]: I congratulate both Phoebe Peterson and Tim Seguna of Galston High School for their excellent achievements in both community service and student life. Phoebe Peterson recently was awarded the Order of Australia John Lincoln Community Service Award for her commitments in community life. With interests ranging from volunteering at the Hawkesbury Community Kitchen to bush regeneration and eco-summits and attending the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Youth Forum, which I hosted earlier this year, Phoebe has proved to be a worthy recipient of that prestigious award. I also congratulate Tim Seguna, who received the Minister's Award for Excellence in Student Achievement. The award recognises students in secondary school years who have achieved highly in any area of their schooling life. I wish Phoebe and Tim all the best as they finish their Higher School Certificate, and all the best in the future.

ORANGE MUSICIAN CHARLI STANFORD

Mr ANDREW GEE (Orange) [6.21 p.m.]: I draw the attention of the House to the fact that a talented young Orange musician, Charli Stanford, recently received a scholarship. Charli's head violin teacher, Doreen Cumming, and Quota Club of Orange president, Verona Gavin, presented Charli with a \$500 scholarship this week at an end-of-season concert at the Police and Community Youth Club. Charli will be able to spend the prize money on lessons with the Orange Regional Conservatorium. Charli certainly is a very talented musician and she has a very bright future. She was awarded the seventy-first music scholarship. I thank the Police and Community Youth Club and its music activities coordinator, Robin Thompson, for the fine work they do for our youth in Orange. I congratulate Charli Stanford and all people associated with the Police and Community Youth Club as well as all those who support the scholarship programs.

HIDDEN TREASURE HELEN BENNETT

LEA YOUNG GRAND FRIEND OF THE YEAR

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [6.21 p.m.]: I inform the House of two great ladies of the Manning Valley. Firstly, I refer to Helen Bennett of Tinonee in the Manning Valley, who has been named in the 2013 Hidden Treasures Honour Roll that is presented by the Department of Primary Industries. The Honour Roll formally acknowledges the efforts of rural, regional and remote women and celebrates volunteering as an important community value. Helen is a wonderful volunteer in the community of Tinonee and beyond.

The second great lady is Lea Young of Taree who is the 2013 Grand Friend of the Year. Lea was presented with her award by the Minister for Ageing, John Ajaka, in a ceremony during the recent Grandparents Day celebrations. Lea has several grandchildren of her own and is an active volunteer in many local community organisations. She worked in a women's refuge centre in Taree for many years and is a member of the Taree Arts Council. Lea is also a volunteer at a local school where she assists on three days each week with special needs children and with the schools early intervention unit.

ULYSSES MOTORCYCLE CLUB

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) [6.22 p.m.]: I draw to the attention of the House the Ulysses Motorcycle Club, whose members work so hard to support our local community. This year more than 100 riders will take part in the annual toy run on Sunday 1 December. The participating bikes will be decorated in Christmas decorations and riders will buy toys that will be distributed to needy children in our region by the Salvation Army. We all know that not all parents can afford presents at this time of year. The club wanted to do something for our future leaders. The toy run is now in its thirteenth year. This year the ride begins at the Narellan McDonald's and ends with a sausage sizzle at Koshigaya Park. Ted Schloithe, who is a member of the club, has confirmed that all toys will stay in our region. I also thank my good friends, Alf and Dot Lechner, who are members of the club and who volunteer their time in just about every activity in the Wollondilly and Macarthur communities. People can drop off their toys at Koshigaya Park from 11.00 a.m. I commend the event to the House.

RAYMOND AND MARGARET TOWNSEND SIXTIETH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Mr JOHN FLOWERS (Rockdale) [6.23 p.m.]: I congratulate Raymond and Margaret Townsend of Bexley on the celebration of this sixtieth wedding anniversary on 18 July 2013. I wish them all the very best for the future.

POSITIVE LIFE NSW

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) [6.23 p.m.]: I commend the strategic work and personal support provided by Positive Life NSW, which has spoken for and represented the needs of people living with HIV since 1989. Positive Life NSW works to eliminate prejudice, isolation, stigmatisation and discrimination affecting all people with HIV. The group provides information and referral to experienced professionals and runs peer support programs. Its advocacy is aimed at improving access to treatments and reducing costs for people living with HIV as well as ensuring that the Government's plans include the needs of those directly affected by HIV. Recently I met with the executive officer and president of the group and was impressed with the thorough approach to the group's work. The new Positive Life NSW campaign, Choose Life, is a welcome addition to educate and empower people with HIV to make the best choices open to them for their future. This is particularly important when World AIDS Day again reminds us of the impact of this epidemic.

LORNA WALKER 100TH BIRTHDAY

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [6.24 p.m.]: I inform the House that Lorna Walker of Coolongolook recently celebrated her 100th birthday. Lorna was born on 3 October 1913 in Melbourne and for many years lived in Canberra and Sydney with her husband, who was a Commonwealth statistician. Lorna has four children and now lives with her daughter, Jennifer, in Coolongolook. For her birthday, a group of more than 30 people, comprising mostly family members, travelled across Australia and from around the world to celebrate.

CAMDEN SHOWGIRL JACINDA WEBSTER

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) [6.24 p.m.]: I congratulate Jacinda Webster, who was recently announced as the Camden Showgirl. Jacinda is from Appin in my electorate of Wollondilly, which has a strong history of its girls winning this proud and historical title. I have to say sorry to the member for Camden because Wollondilly girls always win. As an Ambassador for Agriculture for our region, Jacinda is well experienced in agriculture as she grew up on a horse stud. Jacinda is 19 years of age and has started her own business, Jacinda Anne Milliners. She is so skilful that her hats have been worn throughout the latest Spring Carnival. Last year Jacinda was asked to be the face of the Tabcorp Inter Dominion Championships, which is where I first met her. Jacinda is a credit to our community. I take this opportunity to thank her for all she does.

Community recognition statements concluded.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**DR STEPAN KERKYASHARIAN, COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMISSION CHAIRMAN**

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Citizenship and Communities, and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs) [6.25 p.m.]: I am honoured to have the opportunity to speak about Dr Stepan Kerkyasharian, who is the Chairperson of the Community Relations Commission. Stepan is retiring after a distinguished 24 years of service. As the Premier stated in Parliament earlier today, Stepan is a man who exemplifies public service in New South Wales. He has devoted much of his life to promoting community harmony and the benefits of multiculturalism. We are fortunate to have such a dedicated and devoted public servant, who has been a leading light on the issue of multiculturalism. John Quincy Adams said:

If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.

Throughout his 24 years of public service, Stepan Kerkyasharian has been a true model of leadership. Twenty-four years ago he inspired us to dream of a better society in which people are free to profess, practice and maintain their own linguistic, religious, racial and ethnic heritage. This dream crystallised into reality when the principles of multiculturalism were enshrined in legislation in New South Wales. This law creates a

framework for people to learn about and celebrate our cultural diversity. He also inspired others to do more through the creation of the Multicultural Policies and Services Program and through continual community engagement through which he was able to breathe life into legislation to deliver practical outcomes.

As a result of the inspired dreaming, learning and doing more over the past 24 years, we have become more as a society. We are now a multicultural society with a richness of diversity. New South Wales is considered to be a leader in multicultural practices throughout the world. That is largely due to the efforts of Stepan. Because of our multicultural society, today New South Wales is well placed to continue prosperity. As Rupert Murdoch recently said, the twenty-first century is Australia's for the taking. The reason for this is, as Murdoch said:

... Australia is on the way to becoming what may be the world's most diverse nation. This is an incredible competitive advantage.

[The] opportunity for Australia [is] in embracing diversity and opening the doors to all [new] comers.

The Premier also encapsulated this idea eloquently when he said:

Our greatest asset in New South Wales is not the minerals underneath the ground; it is the diamonds that walk above it.

In New South Wales our greatest asset is our people. Because of our diverse society, we are well positioned to utilise every opportunity the world has to offer. There is a great saying that success has many fathers but failure is an orphan. When people like the Minister for Transport, the Hon. Gladys Berejiklian, and I symbolise success, in many ways that is part of Stepan's success. Life's path is often a jumble as we traverse vines, roadblocks and incredible obstacles that we need to get through with determination to achieve our journey's end. Stepan has been a pioneer. He has done the heavy lifting. He has cleared the vines and the obstacles so that people like the Minister for Transport and me, as well as future generations, can make our way in life a little bit more easily. Because we have the luxury of getting through our journey, we have the liberty to dream even bigger dreams, and that is all because of Stepan Kerkyasharian. I thank Stepan very much for delivering outstanding service to the people of New South Wales. While he will be missed, his legacy definitely will not be forgotten. It will endure. My staff and I, including Verity Lomax, who is with you in the gallery today, Jessica Dorney, Jane Standish, Michael Evangelidis, and Sandy Ko, wish you and your family every success. You deserve every prosperity that life has to offer.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): I take the opportunity to wish Michael Evangelidis all the very best in his new career prospects as he leaves the Minister's office. Congratulations.

BANKSTOWN POLICE CITIZENS YOUTH CLUB

BANKSTOWN LOCAL AREA COMMAND

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) [6.30 p.m.]: This evening I commend the achievements in 2013 of two vital community organisations in the Bankstown electorate: the Bankstown Police Citizens Youth Club and the Bankstown Local Area Command. It is most apt that my final private member's statement for this sitting year commends these two institutions, as they both play a crucial role in the prevention of crime and the mentoring of young people in the Bankstown area.

The club manager at the Bankstown Police Citizens Youth Club, Geoff Yates, reports that the club has "gone gangbusters" in 2013. The kids and family fun program has been implemented with the support of Centrelink and the Smith Family. This program gives families who receive the Newstart Allowance the opportunity to undertake sporting and other events on a weekly basis. The program runs on four afternoons a week in Bankstown. Several children's activities are catered for under the auspices of the program, including a weekly excursion. I am reliably informed that the laser tag and bowling excursions are a particular highlight for the children involved in the program. Naturally, as it is a kids and family program, the parents and relatives are also actively encouraged to get involved. One of the more popular activities has been the kickbox-for-mums session.

Bankstown Police Citizens Youth Club has successfully implemented the L-plate driver training program. Three of these sessions have been conducted since August. The program is essential to continued driver education for youths in Bankstown. In 2013 Bankstown Police Citizens Youth Club had two full-time police officers deployed to the club. These officers, and other youth case managers, help coordinate the police youth mentoring services. These services provide a vital role in the rehabilitation of young offenders. The best

way to stop youth crime is to get these kids back on track. As the shadow Minister for Youth, I am proud to say that in 2013 the Bankstown Police Citizens Youth Club manager, Geoff Yates, and all the staff and volunteers have done an outstanding job. I also pay tribute to Danny McKearney and Glen O'Halloran for their outstanding work in the Bankstown Police Citizens Youth Club and the broader community.

As the member for Bankstown I am also proud to report on the achievements of the Bankstown Local Area Command. The members of the NSW Police Force play an incredibly vital role in keeping our streets safe. I have been advised by the Bankstown Commander, Superintendent David Eardley, that levels of crime in Bankstown are at a record low. I congratulate Superintendent Eardley on that achievement. I commend the hard work of everybody at the Bankstown Local Area Command in forging a close working relationship with community leaders and with the extended Bankstown community. The results speak for themselves. In 2013 in the Bankstown Local Area Command assaults are down 20 per cent, break and enters are down 19 per cent, robberies are down 30 per cent and vehicle-related thefts are down 19 per cent.

This year, the Bankstown Local Area Command has also successfully implemented the Eyewatch program. This is a community initiative where almost 5,000 people on Facebook and other forms of digital media are informed of crimes and can help to solve those crimes. The Bankstown Local Area Command should be proud of introducing the community watchdog of the twenty-first century. Everybody involved at the Bankstown Local Area Command has done a tremendous job with the level of resources provided to them by the Government. I am a strong advocate for increasing police resources and police powers. On 13 September I visited the Bankstown Local Area Command with the Leader of the Opposition to outline the Labor Party's support for more police powers and more police resources. These initiatives will help ensure that vital institutions such as the Bankstown Local Area Command can continue to do an outstanding job in protecting their local community in 2014.

I commend the achievements of Bankstown Commander Superintendent David Eardley and all of the officers and staff stationed at the Bankstown Local Area Command for preventing, detecting and investigating crime in the Bankstown area. I am proud to use this platform in the House to recognise their valour and effort in maintaining social order in our community.

ROTARY CLUB OF KENTHURST

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Hawkesbury—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.34 p.m.]: It is my pleasure to inform the House of the work undertaken by Kenthurst Rotary Club over the past 40 years. On Friday 8 November my wife, Wendy, and I attended the fortieth anniversary of Kenthurst Rotary when its long history of selfless work to assist needy individuals and communities both in Australia and overseas was celebrated. A special presentation by Bob Thorne outlined to the many past and present members who attended the anniversary some of the outstanding projects conducted overseas by Kenthurst Rotary.

In 1976 the fundraising efforts of members Dennis White and Bill Burnham provided funds to construct a community hall at the missionary school in Magong, New Guinea. In 1983 Kenthurst Rotary donated money for a transport boat to carry sick people around and between islands in Tonga. When members Howard Bradley and Gordon Rowe arrived in Tonga they found that boat was being used for other purposes. The team arranged for the money to be refunded and reallocated to the government workshop for worthwhile purposes. In 1990 donations organised by Kenthurst Rotary funded construction work on the Papitalai High School community hall in New Guinea islands, 800 kilometres north of Port Moresby.

In addition to the funding, members travelled to New Guinea and provided their labour. When they arrived their job was to lay some 3,000 blocks and to fit door and window frames. The temperature was extremely hot, mostly around 35 degrees but at times up to 45 degrees. The members of Kenthurst Rotary were looked after by five Catholic Sisters who cooked for them each day. In the evening many good stories were told and they enjoyed a drink of wine. After about three days the mission sent down an older priest to check on the wine situation. Interestingly, his name was Father Drinklittle. In 1993 members of Kenthurst Rotary travelled to Samoa to contribute time and money to the fit-out and associated building work of a TAFE college. The team consisted of at least three good builders from Kenthurst Rotary. They progressed very well and completed the carpentry work ahead of schedule. One member from this project, Col Chalong, was present at the anniversary function.

In 2004 in Vanuatu at the Port Vila Hospital, members of Kenthurst Rotary provided funds and labour to renovate an existing waiting room and turn it into an eight-bed ward. In addition they worked on the

run-down kitchen. When the members arrived at the hospital they were taken up to the large water tank, which was the water supply to the hospital. The roof had been blown off in a cyclone and landed 50 metres away. The water valves and pipework system were badly corroded. This job had been placed in the too-hard basket by the previous 15 teams of Rotarians but in the Kenthurst group one particular fellow had what has been reported as "web feet". He and his offsidiers spent the next two weeks completely overhauling the water system and replacing valves and pipes. With four days remaining there was still one job to do—replace the roof. They contacted the Port Vila government and discovered that there was \$15,000 available through a donation by World Charities for Emergencies. Within 15 hours they had the money in their hands and very quickly designed a new steel roof, beams and sheeting. It was all hands on deck and over 20 men and women completed the new roof just three hours before their plane was due to take off.

In 2006 on Espiritu Santo an extension to the medical centre and sleepover facilities for people travelling in remote areas of Vanuatu was constructed. The project was 18 days from start to completion and again had a very strong team. The Longueville Rotary and the Bone Village men and women also assisted. They hit the job like a bomb. The drainage was laid and the slab poured within two days, which was a significant feat as there was no Readymix concrete; it was all hand mixed. The external walls consisted of 1,800 blocks. Brum Kommer made all the windows and carried out the internal plumbing work. A handover ceremony was organised that was attended by government officials, Rotarians and village people.

In 2008 in the Eastern Highlands of New Guinea a five classroom school for elementary students was constructed. When Rotarian Sue O'Neill joined the club in 2006 she had a passion to help turn around the lives of the people in the village of Fomu. After having visited the village Ms O'Neill promised the people she would return to help them. When the team arrived at the Fomu village the men had poured nearly half the concrete slab, which measured some 48 metres by nine metres. The Rotarians constructed the frame and roof by making scissor trusses on site to achieve a higher roof level. The problem was that the hardware shop in Goroka could not keep up the timber supply due to the enthusiasm of the Kenthurst Rotary team.

In desperation Ms O'Neill and other members drove 14 kilometres to a local timber mill that cut Australian gum trees into studs and plates for local use. Ms O'Neill purchased every piece of timber in the mill, approximately 2.5 tonnes. Unbeknown to the Rotarians, that night the village chief sent out 80 men and boys to carry the timber by hand the 14 kilometres to the project so it was ready for the next morning. Over 450 school students turned up for enrolment on the first day of the school's operation.

In 2009 and 2010 Kenthurst Rotarians undertook their largest project in Vanuatu on Espiritu Santo, in the village of Hog Harbour: the construction of a full prenatal maternity hospital to house facilities for local village women. The members of Kenthurst Rotary were joined by 14 Japanese Rotarians and many local villagers. Once again the job was fully completed within hours of returning home. I pay tribute to the members of Kenthurst Rotary and their selfless contribution to assist others both in our local community and abroad. They are a wonderful group of people and I am privileged to have them in my electorate.

PATRICIA BAILEY COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENT

Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.39 p.m.]: I congratulate well-known and respected Parkes resident Patricia Bailey—better known as Pat—on receiving the Premier of New South Wales Community Service Award. I was honoured earlier this month to present Pat with her award, accompanied by the very proud Mayor of Parkes, Councillor Ken Keith, and surrounded by Pat's family and friends. The New South Wales Government acknowledges inspiring members of the community through a range of awards. One of those awards is the Premier's Community Service Award, which recognises people who have substantially contributed to improving the quality of life of members of their community. Pat is an extremely worthy recipient of this award. She is the first in the community to reach out to those in need and has worked tirelessly for more than two decades with Can Assist, helping cancer patients and their families.

Besides raising funds, Pat is also involved with counselling patients and the Look Good...Feel Better program, which I will allude to later. Pat coordinates and organises the Parkes-based volunteers and gives a vast amount of her own time to ease the worry of cancer patients and their families during very difficult times. She also helps by organising financial assistance and accommodation during treatment. She is on hand to provide support before, during and after treatment to many cancer sufferers across the district. Pat can also be relied upon to serve refreshments at local hospitals for cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy treatment and, at an extremely stressful time for families, also assists with catering for wakes of those patients who have succumbed to their battle with cancer.

Pat is involved in many community groups, either in conjunction with her role at Can Assist or as a proud member of the community simply lending a hand. She is passionate about the cancer journey and is a strong advocate of increased health services for local cancer sufferers. Pat is involved in counselling patients, the Look Good...Feel Better program, holding daffodil stalls and selling raffle tickets. Almost every day Pat can be found in the main street selling tickets to raise funds for local patients and their families. Pat also assists in local shire villages, visiting patients or helping with fundraising efforts. Can Assist is a grassroots community-based charity dedicated solely to supporting country people affected by cancer and their families. For more than 57 years we have been supporting country cancer patients. Today Can Assist has 50 branches in country towns across rural and regional New South Wales operated by 2,900 local volunteers who, like Pat, raise funds to support local families. Due to travel and accommodation expenses, it can easily cost a country family affected by cancer up to five times more than a city family just to access treatment. Its vision is that every country community, family and individual has equitable access to cancer care and support services.

Pat is also involved in the Look Good...Feel Better program, which seeks to improve the wellbeing and confidence of patients being treated for this terrible disease. It helps by supplying wigs, beauty and hairdressing services to both women and men. Look Good...Feel Better's mission is to improve the wellbeing and confidence of people undergoing treatment for cancer. It does this by offering information and workshops for patients to help them manage appearance-related side-effects caused by cancer. In 2012 it reached a significant milestone, assisting more than 100,000 sufferers. Pat and the team fund nearly 1,000 free workshops for cancer patients each year. They have raised more than \$3 million for skincare and make-up products in confidence kits used by workshop participants and arranged for the production of free program support materials such as videos, patient brochures and self-help booklets.

Pat gets involved in many community events in conjunction with her Can Assist role and separately as a community member lending a hand, volunteering at the Salvation Army Family shop or assisting with the staging of the Parkes Show N Shine car club event each October and regular bingo days—including Elvis bingo during the Elvis festivals—marshalling at community street parades or holding a market stall. Overall, Pat is a fantastic advocate for Parkes and district. She has been a wonderful support to so many people and her tireless work has touched many lives when it was needed most. Pat is a valued member of the community and it is an honour to recognise her today in the New South Wales Parliament.

SISTERS OF CHARITY FOUNDATION

Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH (Coogee) [6.44 p.m.]: I inform the House about the wonderful work undertaken by the Sisters of Charity Foundation in my electorate. The Sisters of Charity Foundation is a non-profit organisation formed in 2000 by the congregational leader of the Sisters of Charity of Australia to promote its mission through funding community initiatives that benefit those less fortunate or with special needs. The Sisters of Charity Foundation sponsors and supports local initiatives across Australia that offer specialised services in a broad range of areas dealing with the poor and marginalised in society. As part of its mission, the foundation aims to break the cycle of poverty by providing grants to community-based organisations. In 2012-13, the foundation funded 39 projects, distributing \$295,984. I will outline some of the organisations and initiatives that the foundation has supported recently.

The foundation also provided financial support to the Tree of Hope program run by CatholicCare Community Services. The Tree of Hope program provides emotional, spiritual and practical support to those living with HIV-AIDS through the provision of home visits, telephone support and assistance with shopping and attending medical appointments. The immense challenges faced by someone living with HIV-AIDS are life long, although with the support of the Sisters of Charity I understand that the program has shifted from having a focus on care for the dying to having a focus on care for the living. This is an inspiring idea, and I commend the work done by CatholicCare on this project with the support of the Sisters of Charity.

The Sisters of Charity Tertiary Scholarship Program gives disadvantaged young people who have lived in out-of-home care the opportunity to attend university. According to the foundation, shockingly, only 2.8 per cent of young people who have lived in out-of-home care will ever attend university. Compare this with 40.4 per cent of other young people in their early twenties. Out-of-home care includes foster care, kinship care, group homes and refuge accommodation as a last resort for young people who cannot live safely at home. Those over 18 years of age living out of home often get very little assistance, leaving them to embark upon independent living, which often puts tertiary education out of reach. In line with its mission to break the cycle that leads to social exclusion, the scholarship aims to give disadvantaged youth the opportunity to thrive and to maximise their fulfilment in life through education.

Currently nine students are studying on the scholarship, including students from the University of Sydney, the University of Technology, Sydney, the University of Queensland, the Australian Catholic University and the University of Notre Dame. They are studying a wide range of degrees, including law, marketing and communications, sports science and nursing. I will share with the House the words of Shantell Bennett, who is currently studying a Bachelor of Nursing degree on a scholarship at the Australian Catholic University. Shantell said :

The scholarship will help bridge the gap between what others with parents have had, and what I have had. It will help me fast track my path to become a registered nurse. It will also benefit my six siblings, showing them that goals and dreams are achievable. I want to prove to everybody, as well as to myself that I am capable and determined. I am really thankful and just know that my life has literally changed so much and forever will be because of that money you have given for the scholarship.

I recently discussed the important work of the foundation with its chief executive officer and former member for Cabramatta, Reba Meagher. I take the opportunity in this House today to congratulate and commend the Sisters of Charity Foundation and its board of directors led by the chairman, Richard Haddock. I also acknowledge the Governor of New South Wales, Her Excellency Marie Bashir, for her work with the Sisters of Charity Foundation as its patron. Their contribution has provided a great amount of relief to some of the most vulnerable members of society who need a helping hand. I thank them and commend them for their terrific work.

STADIA STRATEGY 2012

Ms NOREEN HAY (Wollongong) [6.48 p.m.]: This evening I raise, on behalf of my constituents, awareness about a decision that has been made by the Illawarra Dragons to reduce the number of games played in Wollongong. Earlier today I asked the Minister a question and referred to a statement by the St George Illawarra Dragons chief executive officer, Peter Doust, that the Dragons were cutting the number of home matches in Wollongong because that was in line with "the New South Wales Government's planned future investment in major Sydney venues". I asked the Minister whether she would reverse the Stadia Strategy, which cuts the funding of suburban and regional sporting grounds such as WIN Stadium in Wollongong. During the Minister's response the question was put to me, "What have you done? What did you do as the member for Wollongong?"

I think it important to take this opportunity to say that I lobbied the former Labor Government very strongly, and was successful in obtaining more than \$30 million for the expansion of the western grandstand so that Illawarra Dragons fans and supporters would have a venue equal to any venue elsewhere in the State. I remind people that the agreement to amalgamate the St George Dragons and the Illawarra Steelers had a number of parts to it; and one of those parts was that six games would be played at Kogarah and six games would be played in Wollongong. Nothing that has been said justifies the fact that that agreement, these years later, has been completely ignored. Comments now being made refer to what is in the best interests of the business plan. How can anyone justify breaching faith with the community and breaking an agreement by arguing that this is just part of a new business plan? I suggest that that very argument could be used for moving the other four games away from Wollongong.

The other concern I have with the Minister's response earlier today is the suggestion that other activities could be undertaken at the stadium. That displays a complete lack of understanding that other activities are already undertaken at the stadium. On Sunday, for instance, we have the Matildas versus China match at Wollongong. Women's and men's soccer is played at the Wollongong stadium, and the number of these events could be increased without decreasing the number of games played by the Illawarra Dragons at the home ground in Wollongong. The difficulties faced by a reduction in rail services, and the difficulties faced by the communities of not just Wollongong but the Illawarra as a whole in getting access to the stadiums in Sydney are being underestimated in this argument. The aim should be to provide what was agreed, which is six games in Wollongong, allowing Kogarah supporters to get to Wollongong fairly easily, because the people of the broader Illawarra can get to the Wollongong ground much more easily than they can a Sydney venue. It is wrong to suggest that a change in business plan is justification for breaching an agreement and breaching the faith that fans and supporters in the broader Illawarra have displayed ever since the amalgamation. Personally, before the amalgamation I would not have been a St George Dragons supporter if my life depended on it.

Mr Ryan Park: No. Steelers.

Ms NOREEN HAY: I have always been a Steelers fan. But once they amalgamated I became a 100 per cent supporter. I know the member for Kogarah got a lot of money for improvements at the Kogarah

stadium, and we certainly got more than \$30 million from the former Government to improve our stadium. I call on the Government to reverse this decision if for no other reason than it agreed to the arrangement. We deserve the six games.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! I join the member for Wollongong in her comments about the St George Illawarra Dragons. We were promised six games; we are now being denied them. I concur completely with the member for Wollongong. I am sure the member for Keira, who is in the Chamber, shares our concern about this very important issue for Illawarra football fans.

NEPEAN DISTRICT FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) [6.53 p.m.]: I take this opportunity to acknowledge the excellent work that the Nepean District Soccer Football Association [NDSFA] is undertaking. Organising, managing and overseeing the smooth running of a season-long competition for 31 football clubs, comprising 1,100 teams with 11,500 registered players in a district that crosses the borders of not one but four local government councils, is certainly not an easy task to achieve. Seven of these football clubs are located within my State electorate of Mulgoa. Last Saturday night I had the pleasure of attending the association's 2013 season annual dinner, where competition awards and accolades were presented throughout the evening.

I am delighted to say that all seven clubs within my electorate were proud recipients of a number of 2013 season competition awards that evening, namely: St Clair United Soccer Club, all-age men divisions 2, 7 and 9, all-age men Premier 1 Reserves and Premier 2 Reserves, and under-16 boys division 3; St Marys Band Club Soccer Club, all-age men division 10, 13, 5, all-age men Premier 1, all-age women division 3, and over-35 men division 1; St Marys Convent Soccer Club, under-12 mixed division 4; St Marys Soccer Club, all-age men division 1, 12, and under-14 boys division 3; Wollemi Football Club, under-13 boys division 2; Glenmore Park Football Club, all-age men division 11, under-15 boys division 1, over-45 men division 1; and Mulgoa Valley Football Club, under-13 boys division 1.

I congratulate the coaches, managers, volunteers and families who have given of their time and energy to see their clubs achieve this year. I would like to say how honoured I was to have been asked to present the Referee's Trophy best and fairest award. Hearing the phrase 'best and fairest' conjures up images in my mind of solid and worthy values that single out the true leaders and role models in our society today. To qualify for such an award a club must have at least three junior competitive sides and three all-age sides. The award is presented to the club with the best disciplinary record calculated on an average, based on overall player numbers. I pay tribute to Paul Boyd, President of the Richmond Ex-Servicemen's Soccer Club, whose club won the award this season.

As a parent of a vibrant 6½-year-old daughter, I can recall on numerous occasions encouraging Laura to "do your best" and "be fair" in whatever activity she is performing, particularly when she dons her purple, gold and white Glenmore Park Football Club jersey at the Blue Hills Reserve in Glenmore Park. She proudly goes out to play football with her teammates on winter Saturday mornings and, although we are yet to begin summer this year, she is already asking me, "Mummy, when can I play soccer again?" To be "best and fairest" is to encompass all that we should strive to be—whether it be the way we act while we are enjoying a season of our favourite sport of football with our teammates on the weekend, or setting a role model example to our children throughout our life. To be "best and fairest" is to strive for all that we should be.

I congratulate the association on its work in making the 2013 season another successful year for the players, their families and spectators throughout the Nepean community. The association is overseen by a board of dedicated volunteers, presided over by John Churchward, secretary Sue McNally, treasurer Frances Refalo, Jim Bradley, Dale Witchard, Dianne Skuthorpe, Richard Bray and Roger Phillips, and administered by operations manager Linda Cerone and her motivated staff Jenny Gosling, Colleen McHenry, Angie Welsh and football manager James Rankine. Well done! Finally, I recognise and congratulate all the volunteers and supporters of the 31 clubs in the Nepean District Soccer Football Association whose efforts and contributions in running their clubs make them wonderful places for fitness and friendship.

There are a number of special people who make their football clubs enjoyable and entertaining places for all members and their families. The effort that is put into their clubs has a tremendous ripple effect into our local communities that cannot be underestimated. And I understand that much of that effort goes unnoticed by most in our community, but not all. Volunteers might work for free but their contributions are priceless. I recognise that each individual is part of an army of two million volunteers in New South Wales who contribute

more than 240 million hours of voluntary work each year, estimated to be worth \$5 billion. Each and every one of those volunteers is contributing to improving the quality of life of families in our local community. I thank all those volunteers and I look forward to the beginning of an exciting 2014 season.

THARAWAL ABORIGINAL CORPORATION MEDICAL CENTRE

Dr ANDREW McDONALD (Macquarie Fields) [6.58 p.m.]: On 20 September I attended a sod-turning and smoking ceremony for the vital expansion of the Tharawal Aboriginal Corporation Medical Centre. Tharawal Aboriginal Medical Service in Airds treats many of the Aboriginal community based in the electorate of Macquarie Fields. Tharawal or Dharawal refers to the people of this area and means people who can see through the darkness—the dark time of our Stolen Generation. But Dharawal people were also well known for being able to fight at night. The life expectancy gap of about 10 years between our Indigenous community in south-west Sydney and the non-Indigenous population is far too great. The only solution is for appropriate services to be delivered through Aboriginal medical services such as Tharawal at Airds. The planned expansion will effectively double the size of Tharawal Aboriginal Medical Service and is vital to the future care of the local Indigenous community, many of whom are young but already show signs that they are at risk of a shorter life span than the non-Indigenous community.

This new facility will have increased space for consultation rooms and teaching facilities. Tharawal still teaches many medical and nursing students. Local specialists, including the dean of the medical school, Professor Hennessy, consult at Tharawal. Over the past 10 years the leadership of chief executive officer Darryl Wright has ensured a revolution in the facilities provided at Tharawal. I salute the foresight of the initial Aboriginal elders 30 years ago, who had a vision for improving the health care of the local Aboriginal community. Some of them, such as Christine Mumbulla from Macquarie Fields, were present to celebrate the occasion. I thank and applaud Campbelltown City Council for its foresight in allowing council land to be used for this expansion. This will be the gift that keeps on giving. Campbelltown City Council deserves the congratulations of everybody in south-west Sydney on its common sense and charity to ensure the future health care of the Aboriginal community.

On 2 November the thirtieth birthday of Tharawal was celebrated at the Cube at Campbelltown Catholic Club. It was a great night with a fantastic band and the local Aboriginal and wider community celebrated the success of this fantastic centre over the past 30 years. The service's expansion ensures that the facility can provide quality health care for the local Aboriginal community well into the future. The challenge now is to ensure that our local Indigenous community is able to access careers in medicine, nursing, allied health and community support to look after their people and to ensure that the life expectancy gap is shortened. I commend Tharawal and Campbelltown City Council to the House.

BACKYARD ASHES PREMIERE

Mr DARYL MAGUIRE (Wagga Wagga) [7.02 p.m.]: Australian filmmakers have been active over the years, producing wonderful films such as *Muriel's Wedding*, *Don's Party*, *Priscilla Queen of the Desert*, *Kenny* and, of course, the much-loved movie *The Castle*. Recently, Wagga Wagga held the premiere of an Australian film called *Backyard Ashes*, produced by Mark Grentell and Peter Cox, filmed in my hometown of Wagga Wagga. The film centres on Dougie Walters, a bloke whose life passions involve cooking a feed on the barbie and playing cricket. Dougie's life drastically changes when his best mate and next-door neighbour Norm, leaves town and is replaced by imperious Englishman Edward Lords. A crescendo of animosity between the two men peaks following a beautiful cover drive by Walters, the ball flying down the pitch before connecting with the pompous English neighbour's prize-winning cat, Dexter. The shocked feline falls into the roaring barbecue, resulting in its incineration. The logical outcome of this tragic event ensues, with both neighbours competing in a backyard cricket series, the winner taking home a small valuable urn containing the ashes of Dexter the British cat.

The cast includes some of Australia's greatest acting talents: the likes of John Wood, Andrew Gilbert and Felix Williamson, not to mention cameo appearances by Sandra Sully and the legendary retired Prime newsreader Doug Hogan—a Wagga Wagga institution. While the cast includes some big names in the Australian entertainment industry, a number of local Wagga Wagga residents, such as Jamie Way, Stephen Holt and Adam Drummond, also have roles in the film. The film captures that great love-hate relationship between Australians and those unlucky enough to still inhabit the British Isles. The Australian-English sporting rivalry is the fiercest yet most friendly international sporting derby on earth. It bears witness to the immense esteem and friendship our two nations hold for each other. The film was shot from 12 November to 10 December 2012, with

most of the filming taking place in the backyards of the directors' parents and grandparents and at other locations in the city, such as factories at Bomen, the Riverina Hotel, the Wagga RSL Club, Murrumbidgee River and Wagga Wagga Cricket Ground.

This ultimate Australian story of the underdog produced after a self-fundraising initiative has proved to be a great success with audiences across the country. After premiering in a number of regional cities, including Wagga Wagga, Tamworth, Orange and Albury, the film took \$47,000 in its opening weekend and now has taken well in excess of \$100,000 after only a limited release. That is a fantastic achievement for a self-funded production with a budget of no more than \$300,000. The brilliantly directed, tight-scripted and hilarious production ensures that the audience is in a constant state of laughter for its 90 minutes duration. If properly promoted this film has the potential to be a great success not only in the Australian marketplace but also in the United Kingdom, drawing on that great tradition of mutual appreciation of humour. I should note that today marks the first day of the first Ashes test for this summer. After consecutive defeats I am sure the whole nation is hoping that the boys can pull out a great comeback to return the urn to its rightful owners.

This film will comfortably sit alongside other classic Australian comedies, such as *The Castle*, *Crackerjack* and *Kenny*. I encourage every member in this place to find their nearest cinema showing this magnificent movie and to see it. I congratulate Mark Grentell, Peter Cox and others on bringing this fantastic story to life on the silver screen, which showcases for Australia and the wider world the wonders of my hometown—the great Wagga Wagga. I acknowledge also the wonderful sponsors who put their money where their mouths are to back this fantastic movie. They include the Wagga Wagga City Council and other major sponsors and private businesses who believe in the skills of those who created this movie. This is a fabulous movie featuring a wonderful city and produced by people who love that city. I encourage everyone to enjoy this wonderful movie.

FIRE STATION CLOSURES

Mr BARRY COLLIER (Miranda) [7.07 p.m.]: Residents in my electorate are rightly worried about the ongoing closures of fire stations in Miranda and the shire. That worry was reflected clearly in the recent Miranda by-election result. In the 10 months to 19 October fire stations in the shire have been closed more than 60 times. Any doubts about the potential danger these closures pose to families and businesses of the shire were soon put to rest by the professional firefighters on polling day. Closing fire stations that operate 24 hours a day seven days a week in the shire amounts to taking a gamble on public safety. One of our professional firefighters told me:

It's really only a matter of time before a life is lost.

In response to a question without notice on 14 November, the Premier said:

The Fire and Rescue Commissioner has made it clear there is no risk to communities from this practice.

Clearly, that is not the view of residents in my electorate across the shire, many of whom live on the edge of the Royal National Park. For example, Mrs Larkin, a senior of Kirrawee, rang to report a fire on a total fire ban day only to be told that her local fire station was closed. She now fears for her safety, as do others who hear reports of similar responses. The continuing closure of fire stations is regarded by the bureaucracy as a means of saving some \$64 million over the next three years, as requested by the Government. In the past, if a firefighter called in sick and could not do his shift at the station, an off-duty firefighter attached to the same station would be called in to fill the gap. Now, to save overtime costs, that fire station would be shut for the entire shift of up to 14 hours because the number of firefighters falls below the safe minimum crew. The practice is referred to by the bureaucracy as TOLing—taking fire stations temporarily off line.

When a station is temporarily closed or taken off line for a 10- or 14-hour shift, a crew, often from a distant station, may sometimes be placed on standby and sent to that area. However, at other times fire stations will be closed altogether, as Miranda was on 10 September during a bushfire emergency. Even when firefighters come to the shire stations on "standby"—as they have from Maroubra, Balmain, Glebe, Botany and recently Woollahra—they leave their own district unprotected. In some cases Miranda, Sutherland and Menai crews have been on standby elsewhere, leaving these shire stations unmanned.

Even then the crews on so-called standby do not fill the gap for the full shift at the station they cover. They commence their journey from their station of origin to the station they are directed to cover and must return within the time allocated for the shift itself. To illustrate, when the Woollahra crew was sent to cover the

Menai fire station after it was taken off line for 10 hours on 16 November, the crew had to leave their station at the commencement of the 8.00 a.m. shift and be back at Woollahra by 6.00 p.m. During their travelling time to and from Woollahra, the Menai station was left unmanned for about two hours. Whatever it is called, the fact is that when our local fire stations at Miranda, Sutherland and Menai are shut, the risk to life and property increases for shire residents, even when fire crews from outside the shire are sent on standby. These firefighters are not as familiar with the area as local crews and are not aware of the shortcuts to take on the way to fires or the layout of large local buildings. This lack of local knowledge delays those crews when attending incidents and places our shire at unnecessary risk.

There are yet other issues arising from being taken off line. I am advised that crews sent to Miranda are simply not trained to use the specialised firefighting appliance designed for the massive local Westfield shopping complex. The practice of being taken off line continues. The fire station was closed at Menai for 10 hours on both 9 and 16 November. On 16 November there was no crew on standby and the station was closed altogether. Our shire community and the professional firefighters deserve better from the Government. Indeed, with shire residents contributing \$2.9 million to Fire and Rescue NSW in 2011-12, these closures are regarded as simply outrageous. In 2010, I personally opened a \$596,000 upgrade to the Miranda fire station funded by the previous Government. It is not so much about facilities as about services. There really are no excuses where the safety of our shire community is concerned. With a severe bushfire season predicted despite the rain, I ask the Government to keep our shire fire stations open 24 hours a day, every day, so that a tragedy does not occur.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Parliamentary Secretary) [7.10 p.m.]: For 100 years, stations have been taken off line. For the member for Miranda to engage in this sort of hypocritical scaremongering is—

Mr Barry Collier: Point of order, Mr Acting-Speaker.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! What is the member's point of order?

Mr Barry Collier: The point of order is—

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! What is the point of order?

Mr Barry Collier: Give me a chance at least to state it, with respect. The point of order is this: The private members'—

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! There is no point of order. The member for Miranda will resume his seat.

Mr Barry Collier: No, learn the rules about private members' statements.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! The member for Miranda will resume his seat. I direct the member for Miranda to remove himself from the Chamber for a period of five minutes.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Miranda left the Chamber at 7.11 p.m.]

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: For more than 100 years permanent fire stations have been taken off line temporarily when firefighters are in training or at station forums, when they undertake hazard reduction and for a range of other activities. For the member for Miranda to complain about this practice now when he said absolutely nothing for 12 years when his Government did it is the height of hypocrisy and simply scaremongering. The practice of being taken off line was not invented by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services or the Premier. The Fire and Rescue commissioner says it is a safe practice. It is not fire stations that respond to fires, it is fire trucks and the people in them.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Gareth Ward): Order! Before I proceed I wish to acknowledge those in the gallery. It is wonderful to have you with us tonight. I acknowledge the member for Wagga Wagga, the member for Menai and the Speaker—it is wonderful to have you with us, Madam Speaker. I also acknowledge Joe Andrade, Danny Heldal, Peter Tuziak, Gladys Kleiner, Sarah-Ann Fong, Sabina from upstairs—I assume that means the Table Office—Christopher Herbert, Luke Sikora, Ian Thackeray, John Hatfield and the vivacious and effervescent Rebecca Cartwright. On behalf of the House, I welcome you and Jai Rowell to the Parliament.

TRIBUTE TO IAN PARNABY

Mr ANDREW ROHAN (Smithfield) [7.12 p.m.]: I take this opportunity to speak about a great man, a leader and an educator who has dedicated his life to his chosen profession as a teacher. Mr Ian Parnaby, a former principal of Bossley Park High School in my electorate of Smithfield, held this position from 2001 until his recent retirement in July this year. He now intends to devote more time to his wife, Mrs Gay Parnaby, and expanding nuclear family given the recent addition of grandchildren. I acknowledge the presence of both Ian and Gay Parnaby in the gallery today.

Knowing Mr Parnaby well, I feel confident that he will not be lost to public life. He has much more to offer and is a very high-energy person. I attended his farewell dinner on Saturday 16 November and heard about the impact that Ian has had on the lives of the people around him in the accolades from his colleagues, friends, former students, parents, family members and those he has mentored and supported. Lila Mularczyk, principal of Merrylands High School and president of the New South Wales Secondary Principals' Council, said that Ian has made an immeasurable contribution to his professional association and impacted notably on the public school system. Ian's colleagues acknowledged that he went beyond what was expected. Highlighted were his energy, his emotional attachment to the school, high intellect, commitment to excellence, perseverance, rigour and his extensive knowledge.

Ian began his teaching career in 1974, first at Greystanes High School and then at Miller High School. Over the next four decades he taught at schools in New South Wales, but mainly in south-western Sydney, until his appointment as the principal of Bossley Park High School in 2001. He has served on local and state secondary principals' council groups and has advised and mentored newer principals—a role I believe he willingly continues even though he has officially retired. He is widely acknowledged in principal ranks as someone with very high-order financial acumen. Indeed, the Department of Education and Communities has utilised his skills in the newly implemented Local Schools, Local Decisions reforms. Some of the financial aspects of these reforms have direct input from Ian Parnaby.

Ian has also been involved in high-level sporting arenas. He has refereed first-grade rugby league in Australian Rugby League and National Rugby League competitions. He has also served in an international capacity, both on and off the field. He has served as a video referee in the National Rugby League competition, both at a domestic and an international level. He was one of the foundation pioneers and developers of the current video-refereeing system. Further, he is internationally recognised as a leader in the development of modified rugby league—games developed approximately 25 years ago for the younger children up to the age of 12. Ian is now assisting with the development of younger referees in his local Parramatta district competition. Ian Parnaby was pivotal in coordinating ties between schools and police local area commands. These initiatives enabled stronger and more efficient contacts.

Bossley Park High School, which Ian led, is locally regarded as an exemplary educational institution. Each year the demand for enrolment far exceeds places. It is one of the largest secondary schools in New South Wales. In addition to the core activities offered in all comprehensive schools, Bossley Park High School offers seven gifted and talented streams for students. One of these is the world renowned Talented Football Program. To enhance this program, Mr Parnaby recently led a local committee in an international search for a highly qualified trainer-manager. Some 120 applications were received, 85 per cent being from overseas applicants. This culminated in the employment of a coach from the English Premier League club, Wigan Football Club.

I know that Ian is a passionate football fan and a Liverpool Football Club supporter. He and his family travelled to Melbourne when Liverpool played Melbourne Victory in July 2013. Ian has often used Liverpool's theme song to inspire his students. He believes the words of the song typify life and highlight the strong bond the school has and continues to build with the students and the wider community. This song would be well known to the members of the Chamber. As a Liverpool fan myself, I am familiar with that song. To you, Ian, I will sing *You'll Never Walk Alone*.

BANGLADESH SOCIETY OF SYDNEY SPRING FESTIVAL

Mr JOHN FLOWERS (Rockdale) [7.17 p.m.]: It was with pleasure that I attended celebrations of the Bangladesh Society of Sydney, representing the Premier Barry O'Farrell, MP, at its spring festival, Boshonto Mela, at Jubilee Oval, Kogarah, on 12 October 2013. We were joined by Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Social Services, and the newly elected member for Barton, Nicholas Vavaris, MP, and Shane O'Brien, Mayor of Rockdale City Council, as well as Annie

Tang, Deputy Mayor of Kogarah City Council. The festival celebrates the culture and tradition of the Bangladeshi community. I met the president of the Bangladesh Society of Sydney, Dr Monjural Hoqu, and the coordinator of the festival Mr Sharid Uz-Saman Alo. The dancing and displays of Bangladeshi products were enjoyed by all those present. It is a most effective way to introduce and showcase to the wider community the delights of Bangladeshi cooking. Also on display were products of Bangladesh. I particularly noticed the innovative and comfortable furniture.

It is fitting and appropriate to congratulate the Bangladesh Society of Sydney on its work promoting community harmony in Rockdale and throughout the State. The 2011 census for New South Wales showed that those citizens born in Bangladesh increased from 10,617 in 2006 to 17,008. In 2011 there were approximately 15,948 Bengali speakers in New South Wales. Of the 17,008 born in Bangladesh, 1,060 are English-only speakers. Boshonto Mela is a festival that celebrates the arrival of spring in Bangladesh and is one of the most important celebrations for the Bengali community. This wonderful festival is a welcome addition to our State's already colourful community calendar and provides a platform to celebrate the culture and traditions of the diverse communities of New South Wales. The celebration of Boshonto Mela is an example of the community's desire to maintain and share its cultural heritage. This festival is an opportunity for the growing Bangladeshi Australian community in Rockdale to showcase its talent and cultural beauty. New South Wales is one of the most culturally diverse societies in the world. Our diversity is an asset and it is inspiring to see such festivals flourish in our tolerant multicultural society. As we celebrate spring, we can be thankful that festivals such as these here and in Bangladesh spread peace and harmony.

TYCO WATER YENNORA

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [7.22 p.m.]: I recognise a premier manufacturer and supplier of pipeline systems committed to supplying the country's water industry, which is located in my electorate of Fairfield. I speak of Tyco Water Yennora. It is a unique manufacturing facility in Australia that boasts a proud history of supplying iron pipes to Australian and international markets for almost 50 years. Its origin dates back to 1952 when Tubemakers commissioned the modern plant at the site that we now know as Tyco Water Yennora. The plant's original product was exclusively grey iron. However, in 1976 the plant converted to the production of ductile iron. In its extensive history, the Tyco Water Yennora ductile iron pipe facility has recycled more than 2.5 million tonnes of scrap and waste metal that would otherwise have gone into landfill. Comparatively, this would have been enough to fill 2,000 football fields. The manufacturing process over the years has transformed waste material into more than 55,000 kilometres of high-pressured ductile iron pipe. Today, Yennora is the only high-pressured ductile iron pipe manufacturing plant in Australia, producing and supplying more than 70,000 tonnes of pipe each year with the product being laid in more than 10 countries around the world.

With an impressive \$40 million contributed to the State and national economy through employment, raw material sourcing, power, gas, water and other services, Tyco continues to be a leading supplier to the Australian water industry. Whilst many countries continue to source more cost-effective products from overseas markets, it is impressive that Tyco Water Yennora continues its legacy of producing innovative solutions to remain committed to the Australian manufacturing market. Tyco Water maintains its responsibility to reduce its carbon footprint by taking the significant step of utilising 100 per cent scrap metal to produce a leading product in the industry.

Since its opening, the Yennora facility has continually served the Australian water industry, with every major town and city having almost their entire water supply infrastructure made from ductile iron pipe. In recent years, Tyco Water has made pipe for a number of major projects, including Rockhampton Regional Council, formerly known as Livingston shire; Unity Water, formerly known as Morton Bay RC; SunWater; Allconnex Water, formerly known as Logan Water, NSW Department of Commerce; Wannon Water; and Gippsland Valley Water. The Yennora facility has a long-standing reputation for being reliable in its production and for its commitment to sustained employment opportunities.

Since opening in 1962, it has provided employment for more than 7,000 people; and 90 per cent of the residents of the local area come from 28 diverse nationalities. The company has been a firm foundation for many families. The average length of employee service is 20.4 years. Today, the Yennora facility sustains 130 full-time employees, 80 per cent of whom have exceeded their 15 years of service. Tyco Water Yennora is worthy of recognition for its unwavering commitment to supporting local employment and its sustainable contribution to the Australian economy. The company is a great asset to my electorate of Fairfield. It cannot be missed, especially when driving between Pine Road and Fairfield Street in Yennora.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Hawkesbury—Parliamentary Secretary) [7.27 p.m.]: I take this opportunity to commend the member for Fairfield for his comments on behalf of Tyco Water Yennora. The company changed its name from Tubemakers. In 1976, as a young up-and-coming apprentice, I worked for a company in Girraween known as P. J. Goldstein. It was the largest user of galvanised pipe from Tubemakers at that time. It has been a wonderful company and manufacturer in New South Wales. The proprietors of the company, Peter and Jessie Goldstein, are residents in my electorate and maintain their operation at south Maroota. They are wonderful members of our community. Last year I had the great pleasure of awarding a Citizens Award to Jessie Goldstein. I commend the member for Fairfield for bringing our attention to this important company and manufacturer in Western Sydney.

MOUNT OUSLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL PETER HOLMES

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) [7.28 p.m.]: I make a brief contribution to Parliament tonight. In my final statement for the year, I take this opportunity to acknowledge Peter Holmes, the principal of Mount Ousley Primary School. Peter is a fine leader in education in our local community. I received an email recently from a very young constituent, Maggie Khan, who attends the local school. She said in the email that it would be wonderful if I could recognise in Parliament Mr Holmes and his achievements. Today, in my final speech of the year, I take the opportunity to recognise the work of Peter Holmes—a great leader doing great things at Mount Ousley Primary School, particularly in technology and integrating technology into the lives of young people. He is a wonderful leader and a passionate educator.

I also take this opportunity to acknowledge Maggie, who has been through her fair share of challenges but who continues to display great positiveness and a great attitude towards her education. It was my pleasure to meet and to speak to her. I acknowledge the work of Peter and all the teachers at Mount Ousley Primary School. I look forward to working with them over the next few years.

DISABILITY SOUTH WEST INCORPORATED

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Menai) [7.30 p.m.]: Today I inform the House of another incredible community organisation servicing my electorate: Disability South West Incorporated. Disability South West provides recreational respite, social support, living skills and peer support programs for people with disabilities. It also provides advocacy and information services to people with a disability. I have come to know Disability South West and its board quite well after attending a few of its annual general meetings. I was pleased to be able to bring the new Minister for Ageing and Disability Services, the Hon. John Ajaka, MLC, to meet with them face to face last week.

Disability South West is also the sole provider of brain injury support programs. I joined the new Minister at the organisation's Lurnea activity centre to see one of its acquired brain injury groups in action. According to the Brain Injury Australia website, an acquired brain injury refers to any damage to the brain that occurs after birth. That damage can be caused by an accident or trauma, a stroke, a brain infection, alcohol or other drugs, or by diseases of the brain such as Parkinson's disease. Current statistics estimate that more than 600,000 Australians have an acquired brain injury. Three out of four of those are aged under 65, as many as two out of three acquired their brain injury before they turned 25 and three out of four are men.

Acquired brain injury is a particularly unique area within the disability sector. Many people with an acquired brain injury have known life as an able-bodied independent person and they struggle to come to terms with their new reality post injury. Depending on the extent of the injury, they might struggle to maintain concentration and to control impulsive behaviour and emotion. They might experience limitations in motor skills, including speech, and they can suffer from short-term memory loss. People with an acquired brain injury often do not see themselves as someone with a disability and do not understand why they are grouped into the same categories as someone with cerebral palsy or autism, for example. In many cases they know what life was like before their injury, and coming to terms with a sudden and often traumatic change can be difficult.

As I mentioned earlier, Disability South West provides regular programs to support people with an acquired brain injury throughout their recovery and to keep them connected to the community. Its Brain Injury Respite Program provides recreational social support activities for people with an acquired brain injury. The program is open to people with an acquired brain injury aged between 18 and 65 years who live in the Liverpool, Fairfield or Bankstown communities. It provides weekday activities on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays each week.

While the Minister and I were at the activity centre I noticed a familiar face—Scott, one of the group participants whom I had met only a few weeks ago at the annual general meeting. Scott did not remember me. Scott is one of the more severely affected clients at Disability South West and has been attending its programs for the past 12 years. His short-term memory is so fleeting that he forgets where he is after a few minutes, and even though one of the support workers has been with him every week for the past seven years he still does not recognise her. Despite his unique challenges, Scott attends the day programs at Disability South West and the staff members have devised special ways to ensure that he is always reminded of his surroundings and the reason he is there. One of those techniques is a laminated card that sits in front of him at all times to remind him of who he is, where he is and why he is there.

During our visit the chief executive officer, Sean Langshaw, walked us through the organisation's future vision—a multipurpose centre for the Liverpool area. The preliminary plans include both short-term and long-term accommodation for the organisation's clients. In an ageing society far too many elderly parents are left caring for their adult children full time, despite their children's various physical and behavioural issues that can put the parents in danger. Disability South West realises that it has the ability to include an accommodation component to meet this growing need, particularly for adults with a disability who need supported accommodation. The new centre would also put the organisation in a strong position when the National Disability Insurance Scheme is rolled out in 2018. As a small disability organisation in the south west, but one that is providing incredibly important services to its clients, it is important that it is in the best position to meet the changing needs of clients with the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Like most not-for-profit organisations, Disability South West runs on the smell of an oily rag and it makes every dollar count. I look forward to seeing Disability South West embark on this next stage in its development and I will do whatever I can to support it along the way. I am hopeful that we will be able to find a way for the New South Wales Government to work together with Disability South West as we approach a new era of disability service delivery.

ARTS THEATRE CRONULLA

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Parliamentary Secretary) [7.34 p.m.]: This year marks 50 years since the Arts Theatre Cronulla was first opened as a licensed performance space on 30 November 1963. During its 50 years it has seen more than 170 performances, including works by Shakespeare, Noel Coward, Agatha Christie, Somerset Maugham, Arthur Miller and Oscar Wilde. Perhaps more importantly though, the Arts Theatre Cronulla has fostered the emergence of new voices in Australian theatre and has breathed life into works by established Australian playwrights like David Williamson, Michael Gow, Ray Lawler and Louis Nowra.

The Arts Theatre Cronulla had its genesis in 1946 in the form of the School of the Arts Dramatic Society. This group presented its first play, *The Haxtons*, on 30 April at the Masonic Hall with a subsequent repeat performance the following June at the Sutherland School of Arts. The group presented 20 plays in 11 years in a variety of locations across the Sutherland shire. A program for its nineteenth production, *Fresh Fields*, identified the objectives of the dramatic society as being:

To bring the people of Cronulla and the Sutherland Shire the best in the field of entertainment. We have presented many and varied types of plays in the last ten years all of a high standard.

In 1958 came a significant milestone for the society: the construction of a stage in the School of Arts building at Surf Road, Cronulla. It was utilised until 1963 for a handful of performances for club members only as the theatre had not yet been licensed for public performances. After the School of Arts committee was re-established at a general meeting in 1961, members moved to have the premises licensed in order to ensure the long-term viability of the theatre.

The Arts Theatre Cronulla subsequently opened to the public in November 1963 with its first production: *Will any Gentleman?* The production received positive reviews. In order to promote the new theatre and showcase the quality of its productions, the company entered its production of Richard Beynon's *Shifting Heart* into the Sydney Drama Festival in 1965. It won Best Production of an Australian Play and the Best Actress prize for Joyce Jacobs. It won second place overall. It was one of several performances Joyce Jacobs gave for the Arts Theatre in the 1960s and she later went on to play the role of Esme Watson in the popular television series, *A Country Practice*. In 1969 the theatre conducted a nationwide playwriting competition. According to the *Western Herald*:

The Arts Theatre initiated the competition with the objects of providing the theatre with a suitable play or plays having an Australian theme and of stimulating and raising the standards of Australian play-writing.

It was also, of course, an innovative means of elevating the theatre's profile. The competition, which attracted 46 entries, was won by Mrs Barbara Stellmach of New Farm in Brisbane for her comedy *Hang Your Clothes on Yonder Bush*. Her script was:

A comedy in six scenes [that] dealt with the dilemma of the wife of a former Olympic winner who was so tired of being left out of the limelight that she made up a story of her early days as a promising champion swimmer and gave it to the Press. The catch was that she could not swim a stroke and in fact suffered from aquaphobia.

Hang Your Clothes on Yonder Bush was performed that same year. Arts Theatre Cronulla produces four plays annually, each running for 22 performances over seven weeks. The Jubilee season has included *A View from the Bridge*, *Wrong Turn at Lungfish* and *The Rise and Fall of Little Voice*, all of which were terrific productions. Its current run of *Calendar Girls* has completely sold out and I look forward to seeing the show this weekend. I am delighted to commend the Arts Theatre for its 50-year history of enriching cultural life in the Sutherland shire. This is yet another significant milestone and I am confident that audiences can expect many more years of colourful, entertaining and engaging theatre in Cronulla.

SYDNEY DANCE COMPANY

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [7.39 p.m.]: Tonight I inform the House about Angela Walker, a young teenager from Taree who has been accepted into the Sydney Dance Company pre-professional program for next year. For the past three years the 18-year-old has been studying dance at the McDonald College of Performing Arts and she recently completed her Higher School Certificate. Angela previously attended Saint Clare's High School. She is the daughter of John and Tomomi Walker. John Walker was a previous partner of mine in a law practice. I was also a partner of Angela's grandfather, Bill. Angela auditioned at five places and was accepted into each one, including the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts, where she considered doing a Bachelor of Arts degree majoring in contemporary dance. After some deep thought, Angela decided the Sydney Dance Company's course was what her heart desired.

The Sydney Dance Company promotes the pre-professional year as a unique opportunity for aspiring professional dancers to attend a new full-time one-year training course with Australia's leading contemporary dance company. Students will develop their technique, artistry and performance skills alongside members of the Sydney Dance Company, led by artistic director Rafael Bonachela. Angela will finish with a certificate IV in dance. She said that depending on where this takes her she will consider auditioning for the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts again at the end of next year. This is the first year the Sydney Dance Company has offered a pre-professional course. Angela is not guaranteed a spot with the company at the conclusion of the course but said that the Sydney Dance Company has connections in Europe and if she works hard enough it might just lead to something bigger.

Angela started dancing with Angela Rowsell when she was three years old. She said she received a good grounding in technique from her. Angela said, "She believed in me a lot and was like a mentor." Angela Rowsell is well known in the Manning Valley as a dance teacher. Angela Walker is a beautiful young lady. She takes after her mother—anyone who has seen her father will understand that. Her older brother, Nick, attends the University of New South Wales where he is studying for a degree in something to do with petroleum. He is in the first 15s rugby at the University of New South Wales and in the first 11s cricket. Angela comes from a very good family that goes back many generations in the Manning Valley. I wish her well in her future.

CESSNOCK CITY COUNCIL

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) [7.43 p.m.]: My contribution tonight is made with a certain amount of irony. On the last sitting day of this Parliament in 2012 I spoke about the trials and tribulations of Cessnock City Council, which had been in the headlines for all the wrong reasons at that time. I took specific aim at the then General Manager, Ms Lea Rosser. Ms Rosser has now sought a citizen's right of reply in this Parliament. She is entitled to do that and it has been approved and tabled. Thousands of my constituents follow my comments in *Hansard*. I did not want her right of reply to sit quietly in the background and not be given the due attention it deserves. Addressing Ms Rosser's right of reply in this place tonight will ensure that people will not miss the opportunity to read it.

Ms Rosser was obliged to prepare her right of reply within six months, which meant it had to be completed by May. A number of things have happened since May that Ms Rosser could not possibly have foreseen, including the findings of an investigation by the Independent Commission Against Corruption. Hence

I will try to put this right of reply in context. One of the things she took exception to was the fact that I had referred to the "rot of Cessnock Council". They were not only my words; those words also appeared in about 30 or 40 different newspaper reports. She also spoke about the delivery of council operations at 90 per cent. That might well be true, but I liken it to Michael Clarke saying that he would like his summer cricket average to be about five runs—he will probably achieve that. We do not achieve good things in council by lowering the bar; we try to extend it. I accept that 90 per cent of the council's operations were delivered.

Ms Rosser took exception to my saying that the legal costs in the matter of *Cessnock City Council v Cessnock City Council* in the Supreme Court would exceed \$1 million. I was wrong; the cost was \$2 million. Ms Rosser's response was that the legal costs would be "very much less than that suggested". They were actually double what I had suggested. The matter of *Cessnock City Council v Cessnock City Council* was a complete waste of ratepayers' money. That has been reported to council and in the media, and is widely available for anyone who wants to do a search on it. Ms Rosser also took exception to my saying that councillors were seeking to sack her because of ongoing performance issues. Her response reads:

All of my performance reviews, which were adopted by Council, have rated by the forms are satisfactory and in a number of areas have been more than satisfactory.

However, in two other parts of her citizen's right of reply she cites the fact that the council were trying to sack her. Her citizen's right of reply says the council was trying to sack her whilst also arguing that it was not trying to sack her. Indeed, it was trying to sack her. The reason it was trying to sack her had nothing to do with the fact that she reported a matter to the Independent Commission Against Corruption; it had to do with her performance. That is the way things played out, although Ms Rosser resigned in April before the Independent Commission Against Corruption findings were handed down.

The Independent Commission Against Corruption findings cleared the councillors of any intent to sack Ms Rosser because of her report to the commission. In fact, the commission noted that if council was going to sack her then it had nothing to do with the reports to the Independent Commission Against Corruption. Interestingly, the matter that she reported to the Independent Commission Against Corruption occurred 29 years ago. She also spoke about three motions of no confidence in her by staff. Her response was "all matters raised in the motions of no confidence were addressed and were required, all matters addressed." As recently as April this year, weeks before she wrote her citizen's right of reply, the councillors were still seeking the sacking of the general manager by the mayor. That was reported in the media as well, so I am not quite sure how she addresses those things. Ms Rosser also referred to moving to a purpose-built office at a cost of just \$500. I was actually in the council chambers when she cited and quoted that figure. That is exactly what she told the council it cost to move. [Time expired.]

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Hawkesbury—Parliamentary Secretary) [7.47 p.m.]: The member for Cessnock has demonstrated the need for reform of local government. The cost of \$2 million to the ratepayers of Cessnock is a shameful waste of money. That amount of money could not be sustained by even the largest councils across this State. I look forward to the final report being handed down by Graham Samsom, and to reading about his vision for the sustainability of local government into the future in New South Wales.

BAYS PRECINCT LAND USE

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [7.48 p.m.]: Merry Christmas and happy New Year to everyone in this Parliament. Tonight I speak about an important part of my electorate—the Bays Precinct, which comprises the areas known as White Bay, Glebe Island, Rozelle Bay, Blackwattle Bay and the former rail yards west of Glebe Island. This is a unique and valuable part of the Sydney Harbour foreshore, bounded by the suburbs of Balmain, Rozelle, Lilyfield, Annandale, Glebe and Pyrmont. The Greens have been campaigning for more than a decade on various issues involving the Bays Precinct. Throughout my period at Leichhardt Council from 1999 and even today I have stood alongside members of the community and my Greens colleagues on Leichhardt Council to prevent privatisation of the area and to campaign for improved public transport access and expanded active transport options such as pedestrian paths and cyclepaths.

I acknowledge in particular the work of Councillors Rochelle Porteous and Craig Channells, who took over from me as councillors representing the Balmain peninsular. They have been dedicated campaigners on these issues for many years. Councillor Porteous has consistently stood up and spoken out on behalf of residents, advocating for a long-term plan for the precinct and an end to the ad-hoc development of the site. The absence of a comprehensive plan for the use of public land under the former Labor Government created a

shambolic and poorly planned process, which allowed inappropriate developments to be approved in some of the most despicable betrayals of the community and inappropriate processes that I have seen in my time in local government and in this place.

Earlier this year the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure finally released the Bays Precinct Taskforce Plan, following many months of community lobbying for its release. The report announced five priority tasks, which I welcomed, including greater public access and a review of leasing. However, I am greatly concerned about the continued absence of real action in creating a long-term plan for the bays precinct—a plan which takes into account the needs of the community, secures this place for the future and takes into account the role and needs of local government. There is a need for ongoing community involvement in a process that is genuine and open, and involves consultation with the local community for this long-term plan.

We have seen the poor community process that led to the inappropriate approval of a cruise ship terminal in the precinct. The project was opposed by the Transport and Tourism Forum, the cruise ship industry and local government, but the terminal was placed there nevertheless. It has been creating ongoing problems. I have received a number of complaints from local residents about the noise and air pollution caused by the exhaust fumes of the cruise ships berthed at White Bay. Because of their height and their proximity to houses on top of the escarpment, it has led to particular problems that were not present when other containerised vessels used the same location for berthing. The cruise market is a significant growth segment of the tourism industry, so there are concerns that this problem will increase.

Sydney Ports currently monitors air pollution using a machine located at the end of Adolphus Street on top of a cliff, which does not accurately reflect the amount of exhaust fume pollution to which residents are subjected. This area was originally developed as maritime industrial lands and many in the community strongly support this. Of course, it must be balanced with other uses and the needs of the community. There is also a significant amount of public land that should be made accessible to the public. There are opportunities for public space and parkland on these sites. The Government must redouble its efforts to ensure that this public space is open to the community and that it resists developers and those who would benefit from the privatisation of this valuable land.

I note significant concern about the potential for a new port access road through Rozelle Rail Yards, purportedly to ease congestion in local residential streets. It was developed predominantly because of the problem around access to the cruise ship terminal. We are greatly concerned that such a road, as well as being unnecessary, will also preclude the future expansion of public transport such as light rail to the area, which we believe is a critical part of Sydney's future public transport infrastructure. We know that roads do not ease congestion; it is a false assumption. Indeed, we know that new roads induce more traffic. We need to prioritise accessibility of the precinct so that it is used by the community. This means investing in public transport and active transport options such as cycleways and pedestrian paths. The Government must also ensure that the existing goods line corridor to White Bay and Balmain is retained to allow for the potential extension of light rail.

Important community uses such as child care, community and cultural spaces, and sporting and recreational facilities should be considered and prioritised. Glebe Island Bridge is a key part of this area. I congratulate the Minister for the Environment and the department on the announcement that the bridge will be added to the State Heritage Register. This is great news. I have spoken to many residents about their strong desire to keep the bridge and to conserve its rare, electric-powered swing structure. The bridge could also be reopened for pedestrians and cyclists, providing a crucial transport link from the Inner West to the central business district. The Government has promised transparency, and we want that to continue. I thank all those who have been involved, in particular the precinct committee and former councillor John Stamoloc. I look forward to working diligently with the Government to ensure that there is a positive outcome for the people of the inner west who are involved in these issues. [*Time expired.*]

SYDNEY SECOND AIRPORT SITE

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) [7.53 p.m.]: This evening I speak in response to the release of the former Federal Government's aviation report into the proposed Wilton Airport. This is one of those times when it is unfortunate that I get to say, "I told you so". It is unfortunate because the tax-and-spend, ragtag bunch that were the former Labor Rudd-Gillard-Rudd Governments spent millions of dollars to determine what everyone already knew—the location was wrong and the community did not want it. What astounds me is that the report

did not uncover any great secret, any rare species not known to man, any historic ruin of incalculable value. It discovered that there are mining leases currently active under the proposed site and that there were significant environmental concerns for water catchment areas. Thanks, Scoop!

I heard that Mr Albanese was planning to audition for the third instalment of Sherlock Holmes, but he will have to do better than that if he wants to refer to Jason Clare as Mr Watson. The only saving grace about this report being released now is that Albo cannot call for another one—just to make sure again that he has successfully distracted his constituents from the actual solution. A possible solution worth spending money and time on, but potentially unpalatable with the voting public in his electorate, would be to investigate the increase of movements per day at Sydney airport. It is well reported that the current figure is an arbitrary one devised by Labor many years ago because it sounded good. I say that because comparable airports to Sydney have much higher movements per day than Sydney. Heathrow is a perfect example, if my memory serves me well.

I know many in this place see Badgerys Creek as the silver bullet to this solution, but I must place on record that I am against the idea. I stand by my Federal colleague the Hon. Russell Matheson and oppose the construction of it. I know the member for Camden and member for Campbelltown also support this view. But I digress. I will take these moments to congratulate the hard work of the local action group in my electorate, the Stop Wilton Airport Group [SWAG]. The group held many community rallies, fundraised and held community forums. It acted professionally and with dignity to get its message across. Perhaps we should nominate the chairperson for the Federal seat of Grayndler. That person would do a better job.

Also to be commended are the local councils in our region—namely, Campbelltown, Camden and Wollondilly shire in particular. They supported the wishes of their community and ensured a constant information flow about the topic. I was not only a vocal opponent of the issue but also publicly challenged Minister Albanese to visit the site with me, the then local mayor Col Mitchell, and the then deputy mayor, Ben Bernasic, who is the current mayor, to see firsthand why the site was unsuitable. Come and chat to the locals. Come and see why the original report many years ago said that it was out of order and why that remains current. Even a return cab fare would have been cheaper—and quicker—than his study. Does anyone think that Minister Albanese spent the day with me in Wollondilly? He did not come out to the electorate.

Mr Ray Williams: Did he come out?

Mr JAI ROWELL: He did not come out. I offered. I would have paid for his lunch and his trip out to the electorate, and we still would have been \$1 million better off. That is \$1 million that could have been spent on infrastructure in my local community. Recently the *Sydney Morning Herald* had an insightful article about the release of the report. It detailed the four leases outlined by the analysis and stated:

The report, Further Analysis of Wilton for the Effects of Mining and Mine Subsidence on Possible Airport Sites, prepared by consultants WorleyParsons, says four mining areas cover the land that could be used for an airport at Wilton.

- One is a fully operational Appin Colliery lease owned by a BHP Billiton company, which is being expanded—

that is no secret; it has been there for a long time—

- The second is another expanding and operational lease owned by Gujarat NRE Coking Coal.
- The third is not being mined but was the subject of an expression of interest in 2009 by the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries.
- The fourth is also owned by BHP, but mining has been suspended.

The coal leases would make it more difficult to develop an airport at Wilton because of the potential for safety risks from subsidence or shifting ground. As well as extensive earthworks and site clearing, the Government would incur significant costs from cancelling the leases if it decided to develop an airport instead of allowing mining. Any development would demand major engineering spending to ensure the discharge and run-off from an airport site did not contaminate Sydney's water supply, let alone the billion dollars to do earth excavation works. That is \$1 billion that could have been spent on infrastructure. I finish by reiterating my objection to Badgerys Creek and my satisfaction in knowing that the recent report on Wilton all but rules it out completely. I thank the people of Wollondilly for standing side by side with me on this important issue.

ORANGE ELECTORATE SCHOOLS

Mr ANDREW GEE (Orange) [7.58 p.m.]: Tonight I pay tribute to the small schools of my electorate and the wonderful work they do. They are an important part of the fabric of rural and regional communities, and

therefore it is fitting that we take a moment to reflect on how important they are to regional communities. The Orange electorate is blessed with a number of small and smaller schools, including Borenore Public School, Canobolas Public School, Cargo Public School, Clergate Public School, Cudal Public School, Cumnock Public School, Euchareena Public School, Geurie Public School, Coolma Public School, Lue Public School, Manildra Public School, Mullion Creek Public School—

Dr Geoff Lee: That's a good one.

Mr ANDREW GEE: The member for Parramatta is familiar with the Mullion Creek Public School. There is also Nashdale Public School, Spring Hill Public School, Spring Terrace Public School and Stuart Town Public School. All of them make a valuable contribution to education in my electorate. Indeed, small schools make a great contribution across New South Wales. I received an email recently from a very young constituent, Maggie Khan, who attends the local school. She said in the email that it would be wonderful if I could recognise in Parliament Mr Holmes and his achievements. Today, in my final speech of the year, I take the opportunity to recognise the work of Peter Holmes—a great leader doing great things at Mount Ousley Primary School, particularly in technology and integrating technology into the lives of young people. He is a wonderful leader and a passionate educator.

I know from first-hand experience the great work that small schools do. My father was once what was called the "teacher in charge" at a small school—Collingullie Public School, which is 16 miles from the great city of Wagga Wagga, where I was born. Mr Deputy Speaker, for your information, in the new-fangled measurement scale, that is 26 kilometres from Wagga Wagga. He taught everyone at Collingullie Public School, from kindergarten to year 6. He still attends reunions of that school.

I understand the important role that small schools and their teachers play in our regional communities. That is why I was very pleased when the Minister for Education recently announced the Rural and Remote Education Blueprint. It provides up to \$80 million for rural and remote schools. This is more money for schools in the bush, which is what we have been crying out for for years. On top of that, we have the new funding model, the Resource Allocation Model [RAM], as it is known—which seems appropriate for rural and regional schools. The Resource Allocation Model is delivering more money for schools. Indeed, almost every school in the Orange electorate and every school in the city of Orange has received a funding boost as a result of the new funding model.

This is great news for our country communities. That is why I have been very surprised that some people have been suggesting that the new program means that small schools will have to close or amalgamate. I have had a good read of the new Rural and Remote Education Blueprint and I can say that it says nothing of the sort. There may be cases where it is to the benefit of teachers or students for schools to work more closely but they will not be forced to amalgamate or to become a satellite of a larger school. If schools want to work more cooperatively then they will be able to. But, as Minister Piccoli has stated, no small school will be forced to cooperate or associate, let alone amalgamate, with another school if they do not want to.

That begs the question, and this has been asked in my electorate: Will small schools lose their financial independence? The answer again is no. Under the new Local Schools, Local Decisions policy, schools now have more power than ever before to decide how their money is spent. Those thousands of dollars that the local parents and citizens associations raise are safe. There are no plans to suddenly take that power away and hand it to the bigger schools. So what is all this we have been hearing recently about the issue of principal salaries? The issue is currently the subject of an award negotiation between the NSW Teachers Federation and the Government. The Government wants to move to a system whereby principals are given a loading which recognises the fact that some school principals manage far more complex issues—for example, social disadvantage—than others. For example, there are some schools in Orange that deal with much more difficult issues than a similar sized school elsewhere, such as, in Parramatta. Many school principals have been calling for this for years. There is a fair bit of argy-bargy going on and nothing has been decided as yet.

Of course, in the midst of all this, we certainly do need to make sure that small schools are still an attractive destination for outstanding teachers and principals. No, the principals of small schools are not going to be forced to be called "lead teachers". The Minister has indicated that he is willing to find a name, which includes the word "principal", that everyone can live with. Again, that is all part of the negotiations. Our small schools have served regional New South Wales well for generations. They make an invaluable contribution to education in our great State. Long may they continue.

SUPERINTENDENT ROBERT REDFERN

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) [8.03 p.m.]: I pay tribute to Superintendent Robert Redfern, APM, Commander in the New South Wales Police Force, who, after serving as the Local Area Commander for Parramatta for the past five years, will be leaving to take up new challenges in the New South Wales Police Force corporate services. Commander Redfern's great work has been recognised previously with the Australian Police Medal, the national medal and the Commissioners Commendation for Service. Robert also has been very active in the local community as a board member of Parramatta Mission and constantly represents the New South Wales Police Force at community events and festivals.

The local community recognises Robert's hard work and diligence and has given Robert several awards for his leadership in multicultural communities. I understand from his colleagues that one of Robert's favourite quotes is from Sir Robert Peel, a former United Kingdom Conservative Prime Minister and Home Secretary, who stated: "The police are the public and the public are the police". This highlights Robert's commitment to building stronger ties between the police and the local community. Robert brings the unique aspects of policing and academia together. He has a distinguished educational background, with an economics degree, a law degree and a degree in criminology and psychology from the University of Cambridge. I understand that he is in the final stages of a master's degree.

Robert is an educator and an effective public speaker, and he has travelled extensively throughout Australia and overseas to share his experience in tackling crime. He is a true example of someone who is committed to lifelong learning and sharing his knowledge. Commander Redfern has been a "key weapon" in tackling crime and keeping the streets of Parramatta safe. These streets are much safer today than they were five years ago. Official statistics from the New South Wales Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research show that stealing from motor vehicles has dropped on average 6.5 per cent every year for the past five years. The offence of robbery without a weapon has dropped on average 5.3 per cent every year for the past five years, the offence of "stealing from person" has dropped on average 10.9 per cent every year for the past five years, and offence of "robbery with weapon not firearm" has dropped on average 14 per cent every year for the past five years. Parramatta Local Area Command bats well above average and has consistently achieved outstanding results.

As a leader, Commander Redfern has had many personal achievements. In 2009 Robert was instrumental in addressing community concerns in Harris Park, working with community leaders and the public alike. During his tenure as the Parramatta Local Area Command Commander, Robert served as the Acting Regional Commander for the area. In 2011 Robert was the Acting New South Wales Assistant Commissioner who took control of the response to the Quakers Hill nursing home fire tragedy. Robert played an integral role in the investigation of that tragedy—a task that required an effective and sensitive approach. In 2012 Robert took on the management of the huge crowds that flocked to the Western Sydney Wanderers games at Parramatta Park. Everyone knows how passionate their supporters are. They are known as the Red and Black Bloc [RBB]. Each and every event was a logistical and management exercise that required a skilful balance of management techniques.

I have always found Robert to be approachable and available and able to give sound advice on any issue of law and order in the area. He is genuinely focussed on the local issues and always wants to work with the community, politicians, businesspeople, visitors and residents. Di Bartok, senior crime reporter at *Parramatta Advertiser*, acknowledges that under Robert's command, crime in the local area has fallen. That is a true compliment from a seasoned reporter. Commander Redfern has a distinguished record in Parramatta and will be remembered favourably in the history books of the capital of Western Sydney. Robert is proud of the local area command he is leaving behind.

Robert led a united and active team at the Parramatta Local Area Command, which is testament to his leadership and his dedication to his colleagues. His colleagues tell me that Robert's decisions are made with the best interests of his people at heart. Robert will be missed. His experience and service will be of great benefit to the New South Wales Police Force, where he will be responsible for statewide occupational health and safety, a sensitive and risky area of governance. This demonstrates the trust that the New South Wales Police Force places in Commander Redfern.

KANGAROO VALLEY

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) [8.08 p.m.]: Next year I will have represented the locality of Kangaroo Valley for almost 10 years—firstly, as a councillor with Shoalhaven City Council and now as a member of

Parliament. Kangaroo Valley is renowned for its exquisite beauty, its amazing scenery, its prosperous pasture and its wonderful culture and history. I am very proud to represent Kangaroo Valley and very pleased to talk about some of the improvements I have been able to deliver for Kangaroo Valley. On Monday 18 November 2013 I had the great privilege of attending the official opening of the Kangaroo Valley Sewerage Scheme with my colleague and good friend the Minister for Primary Industries, Katrina Hodgkinson; the Mayor of Shoalhaven City Council, Joanna Gash; and the Director of Shoalhaven Water, Carmel Krogh.

The New South Wales Government contributed \$11.1 million to the \$18.3 million project, which was jointly funded with the Shoalhaven City Council. This scheme now provides reticulated sewerage services to some 350 residents and the large number of visitors to this beautiful area of my electorate. The new Kangaroo Valley Sewerage Scheme comprises a pressure pipe collection network pumping sewage from individual properties to a modern membrane bioreactor wastewater reclamation facility. The completion of this project provides the Kangaroo Valley community with a modern, reliable and centralised sewerage scheme to treat the wastewater to a high standard.

On Saturday 23 February 2013 I attended a barbecue breakfast at the Church of the Good Shepherd in Kangaroo Valley to thank the many volunteers who helped with building and fundraising for the Kangaroo Valley Footpath, which I was certainly a strong advocate for when I served as a councillor on Shoalhaven City Council. I acknowledge Reverend Andrew Paterson who attended and I appreciate the support of the church for hosting this event. Indeed, Kangaroo Valley is not one of those communities that waits for government to achieve things. It rolled up its sleeves, got on with the job and delivered that project, with so many in the community making that contribution. I thank a number of the volunteers who were involved in delivering that project. As a councillor I was pleased to help and continue to help as a State member of Parliament.

In February this year I presented the Kangaroo Valley Pioneer Museum with a cheque for \$30,000 to assist with the construction of a new conservation shed. Not only will the construction of the new shed help with the preservation of many valuable items, but it will ensure that these items remain safe and secure. The volunteers at the Kangaroo Valley Pioneer Museum exemplify the strong spirit of community and volunteerism so synonymous with the Kangaroo Valley area. Elaine Apperley, President of the Museum Settlement Trust, does a marvellous job in supporting history and the historical society. Countless families and young people in particular have had the opportunity to experience life in a different era due to the work of Elaine and the other volunteers.

In June 2012, I announced \$126,000 in funding to help improve road safety in Kangaroo Valley. The Kangaroo Valley Road and Bundewallah Road to Wattamolla Road project involved the installation of curve advisory signs, line marking and raised pavement markers on centre and edge lines. Importantly, this project meant the removal of a large tree obstructing sight distance for local motorists. I have also announced the restarting of essential maintenance work on Moss Vale Road, west of Walker's Lane in Kangaroo Valley. This work involved the removal of old asphalt and the laying of a new road surface. It helped improve road safety and extended the life of the road. I have also announced maintenance work carried out on Hampden Bridge which involved tightening the bridge bolts and replacing girders. The maintenance work followed the significant restoration work carried out in 2011.

I have announced maintenance work on Moss Vale Road and Hampden Bridge at Kangaroo Valley to improve safety for road users, a particularly impressive project given the fact that the Hampden Bridge is the oldest suspension bridge in the country still functioning today. The Government has provided \$600,000 to upgrade Moss Vale Road between Hampden Bridge and Cavan Road to improve travel for all road users and reduce future maintenance costs. The work is currently being carried out in stages and will install a new road surface, widen road shoulders, install new drains and upgrade existing bus bays, gutters and property access. I have also announced \$204,372 for the Kangaroo Valley Environment Group to undertake a project involving 47 sites and 41 separate landowners. The project is aimed at restoring bushland in the Kangaroo River system. This project concentrated on secondary and tertiary weed control, revegetation and increased species diversity. Approximately 103 hectares was treated along 27 kilometres of the Kangaroo River and its tributaries. I congratulate the Kangaroo Valley Environment Group on its tireless conservation efforts as it strives to protect, restore and enhance our local natural environment. In particular, I acknowledge Peter and Rosemary Stanton for the tremendous work they have carried out over many years of involvement with this group.

I have also announced that Crystal Creek Meadows Luxury Cottages and Spa Retreat in Kangaroo Valley had become a finalist for the 2013 Tourism Awards. I congratulate the owners, Christopher and Sophie Warren, on this fantastic achievement, in particular, their frequent contributions to tourism. With a wealth of

local knowledge and a demonstrated commitment to sustainable living, Crystal Creek Meadows is a five-star, luxurious and multi award-winning family-run business that has a reputation for excellence. I was very pleased to join with Her Excellency, the Governor of New South Wales, Marie Bashir, at the official opening night of the Arts in the Valley Festival, and I thank the Governor for her attendance. Kangaroo Valley is a great town with wonderful people and a great environment, and I am so proud to represent them.

DAVIDSON ELECTORATE SCHOOLS

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) [8.13 p.m.]: For the past six years I have had the privilege of hosting school captains and vice-captains of 21 primary schools located in my Davidson electorate on visits to New South Wales Parliament House. Additionally, I have two special schools in my electorate, Sir Eric Woodward at St Ives and Cromehurst at Lindfield, that have students unable to practically attend but who are not forgotten. I am pleased the overwhelming majority of primary schools participate in this annual event. This year 18 of the schools were represented and due to the large numbers the tours, as usual, were divided into two groups on two days earlier this month. The tours involved a welcome, then sessions in the Legislative Assembly Chamber and Legislative Council Chamber for roughly half an hour each, where Chamber support staff kindly assisted.

The afternoon concluded with a brief address from me during afternoon tea. Each student was presented with an achievement certificate acknowledging their leadership in their respective schools. Group and individual school photos were taken to commemorate the visit and were forwarded to each school for their use, as appropriate, with group photos to be published in my December Davidson electorate newsletter. This year the following students participated in the tours: Meha Batra, Daniel Pavlich, Joanna Hill and Junu Choi from St Ives North Public School; Harry Gleeson, Madeline Aarons, Lauren McNamara and Nicholas Kennedy from St Ives Public School; Hayden Zorian, Hannah Walsh, Alec Bathgate and Kate Aston from Lindfield East Public School; Jayse Bergheim, Romi Grauman, Dylan Brett and Rebecca Michels from Masada College; Olivia Trani, Sienna Austin, Mitchell Sieg and Noah DelleMonache from Forestville Montessori School; Joshua Blank and Daya Chadda-Harmer from John Colet School; Madeline Carmody, Oliver Top, Georgie McArle and Luke Ventura from Roseville Public School; Jarrod Skene, Riley Jacka, Ashley McLaren and Max Meikle from Belrose Public School; and James Favos, Alex Woolley and James Moore from Newington College Preparatory School.

Also Marli Volonakis, Cameron Lorking, Tara Forman and Ben Nyar from Corpus Christi Primary School; Nick Dewis, James Miller, Helena Bragge and Laura Galoustian from St Martin's Catholic Primary School; Aaro Gurd, Holly Palmer, Spencer Spalding and Georgie Jaques from Wakehurst Public School; Edward Giles, Samantha Clunies-Ross, Chantel Farahani and Ben Maxwell from Gordon East Public School; Alexa Carey, Josh Bastock, Amy Webb and Felix Warren from St Ives Park Primary School; Oliver Asprey, Jamie Dollman, Gabriella Silkman and Isabelle McLennan from Mimosa Public School; Nicolas Bacon, Ella Hirst, Nicolas Pagano and Elisabeth Woodcock from Pymble Public School; Zoe Ingram and Jessica Cejnar from Roseville College; and Benjamin Anderson, Claudia Topschij, Zachary Williams and Daniel Ritsinias from Kambora Public School. I am delighted to encourage this wonderful group of young leaders in what are undoubtedly formative years for their futures. It is important for us to encourage young people in our electorates to reach their potential both in an individual and community sense. I commend each and every one of those students for their leadership and the potential that they have for the future.

COSTCO CASULA

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Hawkesbury—Parliamentary Secretary) [8.18 p.m.]: This morning I had the great pleasure of attending the opening of the new Costco store at Casula in south-western Sydney, together with the New South Wales Premier, Barry O'Farrell; my parliamentary colleague the member for Menai, Melanie Gibbons; the mayor of Liverpool, Councillor Ned Mannoun; and the deputy mayor, Councillor Mazhar Hadid. The Premier and Minister for Western Sydney, Barry O'Farrell, opened this wonderful new facility and was welcomed by Patrick Noone, the Australian Managing Director of Costco, for the official opening of the State's second Costco retail warehouse and its fifth warehouse in Australia. The opening of Costco Crossroads at Casula, as it is known, demonstrates a confidence in the Western Sydney economy by this international company. Costco Crossroads will provide a significant investment in the local area. Almost 400 jobs have already been created and the warehouse will be open to the public seven days a week. This fits perfectly with the Government's plan to create jobs closer to where people live because it reduces congestion on our roads and promotes more quality family time.

The continuing growth within the Hawkesbury electorate, through newly proposed development areas of Box Hill with 10,000 homes, is supported by employment areas for many thousands of corresponding jobs. Housing development in south-western Sydney is increasing at a rapid pace to provide homes for families in this ever-growing area of metropolitan Sydney. It is therefore vital that employment opportunities are located close to where people live. Observing the best practices of urban and regional design will deliver these outcomes. The introduction of Costco Crossroads will also increase competition and place downward pressure on the price of consumer goods. That is great news for local residents of south-western Sydney, who can get real value for money through the purchasing benefits of bulky goods contained within the Costco facility.

Costco is a household name in the United States. It is the third largest retailer in America and one of the top 10 retailers in the world. The company opened its first outlet in New South Wales in 2009 at Auburn, and the Government is pleased that Costco has decided to expand its presence in this State by opening a second warehouse. New South Wales is a great place to do business, and our ability to attract one of the world's biggest goods and retail warehouse chains to Casula reflects that. Costco's presence in New South Wales could also lead to opportunities for successful State-based suppliers to expand their operations to the company's warehouses around the world.

Contained within Casula Costco Crossroads are hundreds of items of locally produced groceries that have been packaged in bulk quantities, offering bargain prices for local consumers. The company has expressed an interest in opening more stores across Sydney and expanding into regional New South Wales in the future. The Government welcomes such a vote of confidence in the economy. Another Costco store is planned in the Sydney Business Park at Marsden Park, which I had the great pleasure to open in July this year. Once completed the business park will provide employment opportunities for up to 17,000 people in Western Sydney.

Importantly, the business park is located next to the suburb of Mount Druitt. This Western Sydney suburb has a higher than average unemployment rate and the location of this employment hub offers huge potential for the many families living nearby. People being able to walk to work at the business park will also save families time and money. However, the business park must contain fundamental elements to attract people. One of these elements is to secure key anchor tenants such as Costco within the business park. These major warehouses attract huge volumes of people to their stores and the benefits flow on to surrounding smaller retailers and commercial outlets.

Costco is a bulky goods warehouse store, supplying large white goods such as fridges, freezers and washing machines and also entertainment equipment such as flat-screen televisions and sound systems, plus thousands of other items including bulk packaged groceries. It also contains a service station on site for fuel and a fully equipped tyre fitting facility where customers can book in their vehicles and get new tyres while they shop for other items. Under the current definition of bulky goods, these outlets must predominantly supply large items for sale. Costco stores not only supply bulky goods but also a range of bulk packaged, smaller retail items found in supermarkets. However, the concept is not to compete on the smaller retail scale for items found in regular grocery stores but to offer these items in larger quantities and therefore save consumers money.

Costco has developed a niche marketing business opportunity that requires a slight adjustment to the light industrial land use zones in which it undertakes its business. It could never provide the same opportunities to consumers if it was forced to be located within typical retail trading areas because the cost of land would be far too prohibitive for a store of its size. Costco should be congratulated on developing a unique facility and an approach that now provides alternative shopping options for consumers. It provides real competition in this market, which is good news for everyone. I commend Costco for its initiative and the investment it has made in this country. It benefits the economy of both New South Wales and Western Sydney.

SEASONAL FELICITATIONS

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): With the indulgence of members, I will give my seasonal felicitations for the year. First, I thank the Premier, Deputy Premier, Ministers and their officers for their support throughout the year and their work with the office of the Leader of the House to ensure that this Parliament runs smoothly. I thank each and every one of the team because we could not run this place without them. I thank the Speaker, the Hon. Shelley Hancock, for the continuing support and guidance she has shown me throughout the year. I have really appreciated it. I thank her team of Luke, Joe and Gladys. I thank Ronda and her team of Clerks for their support that I have come to rely upon and appreciate as Deputy-Speaker. I cannot let tonight go by without recognising the Whips on both sides of the House. I commend Darryl Maguire

and John Williams and their assistants Rebecca and Rachel. I also commend Richard Amery and Jan from his office. The Whips do all the work needed to coordinate the members of Parliament. As a former Whip, I can assure everyone that organising members is no mean task.

Hansard has experienced a very sad time recently. The depth of their loss was brought home to me the other day when I saw the Hansard team together in the press gallery as the House paid tribute to the late Trevor McDonald. Our thoughts are with them and we appreciate the work that they do throughout the year. I also thank the library and Information Technology Services teams for all that they do. I heard that Richard Amery has rung the information technology team to ask them how to turn off his computer. That is a big step. I do not know who taught him how to turn it on. The Information Technology Services staff stay late every night to support us whenever we need it and they do great work. I also thank the catering staff who keep us fed and the cleaners who keep us clean. We all appreciate what each and every one of them does. I also thank the security staff who do a wonderful job protecting us. No-one can get past them. They always pull up anyone who tries to exit from the wrong door. I thank Ian on the front desk and the Legislative Assembly attendants for everything they do to support us.

I could not conclude without thanking my team at the Lismore office of Bronwyn, Natalie and Annie. On a number of occasions today I heard members acknowledge that electorates depend on the office team while members are away from their office. I thank them for supporting me 110 per cent. I could not ask for a better team. Finally, I add my appreciation to all members on both sides. As Deputy-Speaker I have received wonderful support. I may have been criticised at times, but it was constructive criticism and I appreciate it. On behalf of myself and Deb I wish everyone a safe, happy and holy Christmas and the best of health for 2014.

KIAMA ELECTORATE EVENTS

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) [8.28 p.m.]: Tonight I update the House on a number of events in the Kiama electorate. On Thursday 7 November 2013 I was extremely pleased to attend the launch of a Respectful Relationships magnet and YMCA calendar at the Shoalhaven Entertainment Centre. The artwork, which was inspired by the 2012 program run through Bomaderry Public School, Nowra East Public School and Nowra Public School for year 5 and year 6 students, has been translated into a 2014 calendar. Kids, Family, Community is a dedicated YMCA New South Wales program that assists in building respectful relationships in our local community. The program's goals have been achieved through the facilitator of the program talking to teachers, students and their families and by running community awareness projects such as the 2012 art exhibition and calendar launch.

In 2013 the program is again being run for year 7 students in three public schools—at Shoalhaven High School, Nowra High School and my old high school, Bombaderry High School. In particular, I acknowledge the outstanding contribution of Fiona Lam, the facilitator for the Kids, Family, Community program. Fiona has been diligently visiting local schools and talking to teachers and students about issues such as resilience, bullying, cyberbullying, sexting and protective behaviours. The program draws to an end next month, but the launch I recently attended was also about celebrating the achievements of students who have participated, the schools involved and the community that has supported this important and worthwhile program.

On Friday 15 November 2013 I had the great privilege of attending the CareSouth Gala Dinner at the Shoalhaven Entertainment Centre to celebrate 21 years of CareSouth's achievements in the local community. CareSouth is entering its twenty-first year of supporting children, young people, families and individuals, some living with a disability. It is a not-for-profit organisation and a registered charity, led by a voluntary board of directors including board chairman Jim McEwan, deputy chairman Peter Murphy, Theo Boyle, Nicholas Sims, Christine Cook, Rebecca Keen and my very good friend James Parrish. They all make outstanding contributions. I also acknowledge the hard work and dedication of Deb Tozer, who is the chief executive officer of CareSouth, and the community relations manager, Jennifer Nelson.

CareSouth was established in 1992 and started from very humble beginnings with only one partially funded program and three staff members assisting young people in the Shoalhaven. It now offers eight programs and employs more than 200 people. Its services have expanded from the Shoalhaven into the Illawarra, Southern Highlands, and most recently south-western New South Wales. Its support services have grown from youth homelessness services to foster care, a mentor program, aunties and uncles program, youth accommodation, supervised contact in the Illawarra, Brighter Futures program and disability services. CareSouth provides much-needed assistance to people who are doing it tough in our community. Whether it is troubled youths or families struggling to make ends meet, its important work inspires lives, gives hope and turns everyday achievements into long-term successes.

Tonight is the last night sitting of this House before we break for Christmas so I take this opportunity to supplement your remarks, Mr Deputy-Speaker. I pay tribute to all the Clerks at the table, who do a wonderful job, led by Ronda Miller. I thank the Hansard staff and all the parliamentary attendants. I thank the Premier and the Ministry, as well as my friends in the Opposition, who play an important role in this place.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Does that include the member for Wollongong?

Mr GARETH WARD: It also includes the member for Wollongong. I thank the Speaker and you, Mr Deputy-Speaker, for your good humour and your friendship. I also thank the Speaker's panel, with whom I work. I take this opportunity to thank my committee staff. In this place I chair the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters. I thank Jason Arditi, Leon and Rachel for the wonderful support they provide to the committee. I am so blessed to have very good committee staff. I really appreciate their support.

It would be remiss of me not to thank my very hardworking electorate staff. Ben Blackburn has been working with me since I won the 2011 election and is of wonderful assistance to me and my community. I am very grateful for his friendship and support. I thank Nikkie Macey, who recently left my office to join the office of the Federal member for Gilmore, but I also welcome Melissa Jobson, who is doing a wonderful job in a very tough role in electorate office two. I thank Paul Ell, who started at Shoalhaven High School, was dux of the school, came from difficult beginnings but is doing a great job in my office. I thank Bryan Fishpool, Jack Johnson, Sam Tedeski, Paula Turnbull and volunteers Margo Johnson, Robyn Bramley and Sylvia Marshall, all of whom greatly assist in my office. I also thank the staff involved in moving my office recently. David Auert and his team did a wonderful job in ensuring that I got new premises and I am very pleased with it. I wish everyone a very merry Christmas and a safe return to their electorates, and I hope they come back reinvigorated for what will be a happy New Year.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Hawkesbury—Parliamentary Secretary) [8.33 p.m.]: I echo those sentiments. I wish everyone who works in Parliament House a merry Christmas and a safe New Year. I thank everyone from the cleaners, the catering staff in the dining room, the people on the front desk, our wonderful Clerks and the administrative staff, especially those in payroll. I thank everyone in Parliament House who puts up with the antics of the politicians in the New South Wales bear pit, otherwise known as the New South Wales Legislative Assembly. They all deserve a medal.

Private members' statements concluded.

[The Deputy-Speaker (The Hon. Thomas George) left the chair pursuant to resolution at 8.34 p.m. on Thursday 21 November 2013.]

Thursday 28 November 2013

[Continuation of sitting of Thursday 21 November 2013.]

[The bells having been rung, the House resumed at 10.45 a.m. with the Deputy-Speaker (Mr Thomas George) in the chair.]

DEPARTMENT OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Report

The Deputy Speaker tabled the report of the Department of the Legislative Assembly for the year ended 30 June 2013.

Ordered to be printed.

DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY SERVICES

Report

The Deputy Speaker tabled the report of the Department of Parliamentary Services for the year ended 30 June 2013.

Ordered to be printed.

CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN**Report**

The Deputy Speaker announced the receipt, pursuant to section 190 of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998, of the report of the Children's Guardian for the year ended 30 June 2013.

Ordered to be printed.

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORTS

The Clerk announced the receipt, pursuant to section 63C of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, of the following reports:

- (1) Financial Audit Report for 2013, Volume Six, received 26 November 2013.
- (2) Financial Audit Report for 2013, Volume Seven, received 28 November 2013.

MR IAN DICKSON, PARLIAMENTARY ETHICS ADVISER

The Clerk informed the House of the receipt of correspondence from Mr Ian Dickson giving notice of his resignation from the position of Parliamentary Ethics Adviser, effective 31 December 2013.

CRIMES (APPEAL AND REVIEW) AMENDMENT (DNA REVIEW PANEL) BILL 2013

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

STATUTE LAW (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL (NO 2) 2013

Message received from the Legislative Council returning the bill with amendments.

Consideration of Legislative Council's amendments set down as an order of the day for a later hour.

WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY AMENDMENT BILL 2013

Message received from the Legislative Council not insisting upon its amendment disagreed with.

PLANNING BILL 2013

Message received from the Legislative Council returning the bill with amendments.

Consideration of Legislative Council's amendments set down as an order of the day for a later hour.

PLANNING ADMINISTRATION BILL 2013

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

PLANNING BILL 2013**Pre-audience**

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [10.49 a.m.], right of pre-audience: I intend to advise the intentions and concerns of the Government regarding the Legislative Council's amendments to the Planning Bill 2013. As members would recall, the Liberal-Nationals Government was elected in March 2011 with a clear mandate to overhaul the planning system. What New South Wales Labor left was a legacy of corruption at the highest levels, and we have seen that played out before the Independent Commission Against Corruption over the past 2½ years. The Liberal-Nationals Government promised to overhaul the planning system with a view to

providing a streamlined, modern planning system that returned local planning powers to communities through their councils, removing the infamous part 3A, which was the conduit to Labor's most corrupt activities, and ensuring that the new planning system addressed the massive shortfall in housing and employment left to us by Labor.

Through 2½ years of unprecedented consultation, we then presented to the Parliament new planning legislation which delivered on these commitments. In the first 100 days of government we removed part 3A and ensured that all State significant development—that is, private development—is dealt with at arms-length from the Minister. In the Planning Bill 2013 and the Planning Administration Bill 2013 that we presented to the Parliament a few weeks ago we delivered a new framework that was the outcome of a green paper, a white paper, a draft bill, thousands of hours of consultation, scores of meetings throughout the State, briefings to the community and industry and, most importantly, constant briefings to the Labor Opposition and briefings offered to the crossbench.

Let me address in more detail what the people of New South Wales inherited after 16 years of Labor. For years Labor had developed and fostered a deal-for-dollars culture, where part 3A approvals were exchanged for political donations. With the current shadow Minister, Luke Foley, at the reins at Sussex Street, Labor accepted millions of dollars in donations from developers. With a wink and a nod, money was paid in exchange for political favours, for part 3A approvals. The Liberal-Nationals Government committed to clean up Labor's mess, repeal part 3A and deliver on the commitment we had made in our first 100 days in government. At the same time we returned to local communities and councils all development assessment for residential, commercial, retail and coastal projects—full stop, complete, done. Promise made, promise delivered.

We also increased the threshold for regionally significant development from \$10 million to \$20 million and we empowered communities and their councils to make decisions on more major developments. Beyond that, the decisions stayed locally with the joint regional planning panels, which have been so successful. They removed the politics and the opportunity for corruption. In keeping with our promise to remove corruption risks, we handed all remaining State significant development decisions to the NSW Planning Assessment Commission, severing once and for all the opportunities that had been exploited by Labor to make a link between developers and planning Ministers. Labor's financial lifeline had been the link between major developments and decision-making behind closed doors by Ministers—it was a donation-driven culture.

We delivered on our promise to restore transparency, probity and community confidence in decision-making on State significant proposals. The community was given, and can rely on with confidence, the promise that decisions are being made based exclusively on merit, not on some dirty Labor deal. In addition to returning powers to local communities, and ridding the State of a planning regime that led itself to corruption, we recognised when we came to government that new housing starts were at record lows. When the housing market is faltering it is not just young families who suffer—families of all ages suffer, the economy suffers and thousands of builders, carpenters, plumbers and electricians suffer. In Labor's last five years in office housing approvals in this State averaged below 32,000 per annum; getting as low as 26,000 when the Hon. Kristina Keneally was the Minister for Planning. We had the worst performing housing industry in the country year-on-year for more than a decade under Labor.

Since coming to office one of the Coalition's principle objectives has been to restore the housing market. In addition to returning those powers to communities and their councils, and in addition to ridding ourselves of a regime at risk of corruption, we have been intent on restoring the housing market. We have taken steps to unlock housing opportunities throughout New South Wales, with unprecedented infrastructure investment, more land being supplied and very specifically targeted homebuyer incentives. New housing approvals now sit at their highest level in more than a decade. There are more homes and more families entering the housing market, and tens of thousands more jobs for builders and tradies—that is good for them and it is good for New South Wales. We delivered on our commitment to return local planning powers to the community.

Mr John Robertson: Just saying it does not make it right.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: The member opposite should not invite comment about his role in the sale of Currawong.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The Minister will direct his comments through the Chair. The member for Hawkesbury will come to order. The Leader of the Opposition will come to order.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: We delivered on our commitments to return local planning powers to the community, to rid the State of the corrupt activities under the former Labor Government and to improve housing outcomes.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Wollongong will cease interjecting.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Christmas is almost here. Members would do well to settle down. We have been committed to ensuring the return of local powers to the community, to ridding the State of the corruption risks in the planning system, and to improving housing and the economy. So the Government developed, in consultation with the community over 2½ years, the Planning Bill 2013 and the Planning Administration Bill 2013. What we presented met 33 out of 42 leading practice principles as determined by the Productivity Commission and the Grattan Institute, compared with the current planning system which meets 12 of those principles.

The Centre for International Economics says the Planning Bill would enable us to deliver 43,000 more new homes over the next decade than would be built under the current system. There were many points in the process where we published our proposed directions and asked for feedback—when the issues paper was released in 2011, when the green paper was released in 2012, and when the white paper and two exposure draft bills, which set out the details of our forward direction, were released in April this year. We asked for feedback from the community and stakeholders to make sure we had got it right. We have gone out of our way to brief the political parties of this Parliament. I thank the Leader of the Opposition for a number of opportunities to attend meetings in his boardroom to brief his colleagues.

The Government has provided numerous briefings to the Opposition, and it has had numerous discussions with members on the crossbenches. At no time in the past 2½ years did the Labor Party indicate opposition to the direction of the Government on these issues. At no time did New South Wales Labor make a submission on the issues paper, the green paper, the white paper or the draft bills. Instead Labor members waited until this week to table all their amendments. In so doing they have ensured that, if they are successful in making changes to the bills, their actions come at a great cost to New South Wales. The O'Farrell Government has a plan for a world-class planning system that returns planning powers to local communities through their councils, provides a planning structure that addresses corruption risks, and promotes housing and employment.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The Leader of the Opposition will cease interjecting. The Minister has the call.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: At the same time the proposed planning system ensures the protection of our environment and biodiversity. It is a planning framework that will deliver sustainable development with the proper consideration of economic, environmental and social outcomes. Today the Government's intention to return local planning powers to the community, to provide a framework that is corruption resistant, and to get on with providing housing and jobs is at risk.

I turn now to the issues specifically in regard to code assessable development. Removing code assessable development from identified growth areas which are well serviced by infrastructure is a blow to all would-be home buyers and to the wider New South Wales economy. It is a key reform of the bill and was built on the concept of returning planning powers to local communities. It would have ensured for the first time that entire precincts could be planned up front by entire communities, building in the infrastructure needs that they require, and considering, for the first time properly, cumulative impacts. It was looking at the big picture, something Labor is just not capable of doing. It is also a major development application streamlining initiative and would have brought us into line with other States which have better managed growth—Queensland and Victoria.

Mrs Barbara Perry: Queensland has appeal processes.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I remind those who sit on the Labor benches that currently code approval developments in New South Wales are running at 26 per cent—it was 17 per cent when Labor was in government—compared with 80 per cent in Queensland and 76 per cent in Victoria. Is it any wonder that Victoria and Queensland have done far better than New South Wales, yet this has been the core of a scare campaign by Labor. The intent was and is to have up-front strategic consultation with members of the local

community in determining how their area will evolve. It empowers local communities, not the reverse, which is the message from Labor. But after the community has determined how its area will develop it should be a case of get on with it; get on with the housing and get on with the jobs.

Labor, The Greens and the Shooters and Fishers Party have put at risk the capacity of the community to be involved up front in determining how their local area will develop and put at risk the empowerment of the local community to determine how their area will move forward. It has also put at risk about a quarter of the economic benefits—\$150 million per annum—which would have flowed to New South Wales from the planning reforms brought about by this amendment. The Property Council of Australia has noted that:

The changes will escalate risk and red tape for investment, housing production and job creation. These amendments will add to the cost, time and risk of projects by imposing additional red tape and creating a more complicated system.

If these amendments to code assessable developments moved by the unholy alliance in the Legislative Council stand, it is bad news for communities that want to have a say in how their area will develop. It is bad news for those who want to ensure that there is an open, transparent process designed to minimise corruption. It is very bad news for those who want new housing and new jobs. Opponents of the Planning Bill talk about the intergenerational principle. Where is their intergenerational concern when it comes to helping our children and grandchildren achieve the same dream that we have had—that of owning our own home? Sydney has a shortfall of 50,000 homes, courtesy of the existing broken planning system—a legacy of Labor and The Greens.

The unholy alliance of Labor and The Greens in the upper House, aided by the Shooters and Fishers Party, has jeopardised the housing supply our community needs. An unprecedented coalition from key sectors of the New South Wales economy has joined the debate and called on this Parliament to set aside political differences and put the interests of New South Wales first. I remind the House that when amendments were being moved in 1997 under then Labor Minister Craig Knowles, he reminds me, the Coalition moved to work with the Labor Government to achieve the necessary outcomes—an entirely different proposition from the very short-sighted, politically opportunistic approach of the current Labor Opposition.

Mr John Robertson: Talk about how many rallies and objections you went to. You would turn up at little protests about development.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: If the Leader of the Opposition is talking about opposition, the same 40 or 50 people were at some of those meetings around the State.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The Minister will direct his remarks through the Chair.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: That was the sum total. You should have gone to some; you would have actually heard something. Those who have come out in an unprecedented coalition to back this legislation include the Civil Contractors Federation—

Mrs Barbara Perry: It is not true—

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: —the Hunter Business Chamber. Did you say it is not true? Do you read the *Daily Telegraph*? Do you read the *Sydney Morning Herald*?

Mrs Barbara Perry: That is right, and you know it.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Have a look at the full page ad. I think you spend a lot of time out west half asleep.

Mr John Robertson: Hopefully you will take their advice and pass the bill because that is what they said: pass the bill.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Unamended, is what they said. Have a look at the last paragraph, Robbo. You have got to read the whole thing, Robbo. I do not think the Leader of the Opposition has read the bills yet. The unprecedented coalition also includes: the Illawarra Business Chamber, Infrastructure Partnerships Australia, New South Wales Business Chamber, New South Wales Minerals Council, Sydney Business Chamber, Property Council of Australia, Western Sydney Division of the Sydney Business Chamber, and the Tourism and Transport Forum. Many others in the business community are calling for this legislation to pass the Parliament

unamended. It would appear that the handful of Labor members who are in the Chamber obviously do not read the views of the business community, despite the full-page ad yesterday in the paper. I will read part of it. In their words, "The long term job security of hundreds of thousands of people across Sydney and NSW" depend on this legislation. It continues:

Passage of the bill will determine whether or not high value jobs in industries like property, tourism, engineering and construction, mining, services and many more can keep our state economy growing into the future.

In relation to mining issues and jobs, the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union also has some strong views, which I am sure members on the Labor benches have heard. This is first time that Labor can support a planning system that, in the words of NSW Minerals Council chief executive officer Stephen Galilee, "is a step forward in ensuring New South Wales is open for business". It was noted that if the legislation had passed the Parliament it would have attracted:

... the investment needed to secure major projects for NSW, along with the livelihoods of thousands of New South Wales workers and their families.

Furthermore, he said:

... the NSW Parliament has a unique opportunity to send a strong bipartisan pro-jobs message to the people of New South Wales and beyond. It is a chance to say that here in New South Wales 'We're for jobs'.

There are two issues. The first is that clearly Labor is not for jobs, which is the message that has come from the amendments in the Legislative Council. Second, clearly Labor has a complete incapacity, no matter what outreaching this Government does—we have invited them to numerous meetings, briefings and discussions—to adopt a bipartisan approach. Go and tell that to the former Labor Government that was in office for 16 years, because it had a different way of doing business from this Opposition. At least in 1997 it had an open bipartisan approach, before it went off the rails. The views of Brian Seidler, the Executive Director of the Master Builders Association are:

The bill is one of the most significant pieces of legislation to come before the New South Wales Parliament in recent years. We believe it will have a positive impact on communities, business, the environment, and the economic wellbeing, of not only the State of NSW, but the national economy. It is therefore important that those seeking to influence a new planning system must do so objectively with the single desire to ensure New South Wales is the premier State and the gateway of this great country.

The New South Wales building industry is emerging from a fragile state after having contracted to disturbing levels as a consequence of an extensive period of low activity which can be attributed, in part, to a complex and inefficient planning system.

In case members are not aware, the "extensive period of low activity" was when Labor was in government for 16 years. I now turn to the deal done between Labor and the Shooters and Fishers Party regarding the Mining State Environmental Planning Policy. The repeal of the Mining State and Environmental Planning Policy moved by the Shooters and Fishers Party jeopardises New South Wales' biggest export industry and puts thousands of mining jobs at risk, particularly in the Hunter. As the NSW Minerals Council has noted:

It will create more uncertainty for mining communities, deter investment, and threaten thousands of mining jobs and the livelihoods of thousands more working in associated supplier businesses.

This amendment will mean that the economic significance of a resource is no longer a principal consideration for decision-makers when assessing mining proposals. I repeat: If this becomes law economic significance of a resource will no longer be a principal consideration of decision-makers when assessing mining proposals.

Mr John Robertson: Rubbish.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: You say it is rubbish?

Mr John Robertson: It is one of the three principal considerations.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: The Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union has already had a chat with you and made it clear that it has a strong view on this, which you have ignored. You have ignored your union base. This policy specified that the significance of a mineral resource is an important factor but not the only factor in the decision-making process. Environmental and social impacts would have continued to be critical considerations. Importantly, the significance of the resource would not only be considered when the resource is large but also when the relative value of the resource is small compared to the expected impacts of

the project. Also, the criteria used to determine a project's resource significance include some of the most important issues for local communities such as job creation and regional investment. The benefit to the private mining company is not a criterion.

The amendment significantly reduces the certainty that the mining industry has been asking for when it comes to its large investments in this State. It will affect jobs in the regions and cities. These are high stakes for the community and the Labor Opposition has been playing with these high stakes. It has played with people's lives and livelihoods. Labor has run an anti-community agenda and it is at odds with its union base. Labor has attacked tens of thousands of workers, families and the many communities that rely on mining. The Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union has made it clear that it supports this legislation. Members of that union have been to see John Robertson and Luke Foley but they have been ignored. Those members should listen to the people who, unlike them, want jobs and are prepared to support local communities.

Mr John Robertson: And you guys haven't attacked a single worker since you have been in government.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I note the interjections from the Leader of the Opposition. The Leader of the Opposition and shadow Minister Luke Foley let the cat out of the bag earlier this year when they revealed Labor's plan to close down the coal industry. That was their plan. Since that time the Leader of the Opposition has tried to distance himself from that position, which he previously had made very clear. The mining industry contributes \$1.3 billion in royalties to the New South Wales Government and provides funding for our hospitals, schools and roads. The industry supports 150,000 workers in New South Wales. Each one of those workers should know today that New South Wales Labor has abandoned them. I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his interjection which reminded me of that. If the more than 20 current coalmine proposals and extensions were to proceed they would involve more than \$10 billion in capital investment and generate several thousand new direct jobs in New South Wales and at least twice that number in indirect jobs. They have now been placed at risk. Labor, the Shooters and Fishers Party and The Greens members have placed that additional investment and those jobs at risk.

Mr Clayton Barr: Incorrect.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: You say that is incorrect. I will ask the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union and mining industry representatives to talk to you. Maybe you would like to do that—

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The Minister will direct his comments through the Chair. The member for Cessnock will cease interjecting.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I am being tempted by the Labor Opposition's failure to understand the damage it is doing to New South Wales. I turn to the amendments thrust upon the Parliament to require the Government to seek Planning Assessment Commission advice before declaring Public Priority Infrastructure. If this amendment is accepted the Government will be unable to declare major infrastructure projects such as the North West Rail Link, the South West Rail Link, WestConnex or any other major infrastructure project without first seeking advice from the commission.

Ms Linda Burney: What's wrong with that?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: The one-time shadow Minister for Planning asks what is wrong with that. Interestingly, first of all, what is wrong with that is that Labor never did it. Secondly, there is not a Western democracy or government—

Mr John Robertson: You banged on about it in opposition.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Robbo, you do not understand the first thing about planning law or how you are destroying the economy. In the first 100 days of this Government we declared a distinct difference between State significant infrastructure and State significant development. In case you do not know, Linda, State significant development is private.

Ms Linda Burney: Transparency and accountability is what you wanted.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Wake up, Linda. State significant development is private development. That is what we sent to the Planning Assessment Commission. That is where independence and transparency to the

nth degree is necessary because of your party's history. In regard to State significant infrastructure we said that there is no country in the Western world where Ministers and governments do not reserve the right to make those decisions, because it is public infrastructure. The amendment by members opposite will force the Government for the first time in this country's history to effectively cede control over designation of planning for major government infrastructure projects to a third party. That is a ridiculous proposition. The amendment is completely unnecessary and inappropriate. The Planning Assessment Commission is not the appropriate body to advise government on what major infrastructure projects it should choose to fund.

This Government was elected to turn around the economic malaise that Labor created. We were elected to empower local communities, and I have addressed that. We were elected to minimise corruption risk through a better planning system and to provide jobs and housing. Through this amendment the Labor Party has seriously damaged the Government's capacity to turn around the economic malaise that Labor left behind. It will also create unnecessary additional red tape. These amendments come at great cost to the people of New South Wales. They not only will damage the economy but also will hamper our ability to adequately cater for our population growth. As I have indicated in this House on numerous occasions, we anticipate that somewhere in the order of 1.5 million to 2 million people will move to this State in the next 25 years. We need new jobs and new housing. These amendments will substantially impact our capacity to cater for that increased population.

I now turn to the Labor amendment that seeks to repeal the State significant development modification power. The Government had proposed to continue with a provision in the current planning system that the Minister or the Planning Assessment Commission could modify existing State significant development consents. This facility, which has existed in the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act under Labor and Coalition governments and would continue under the Planning Bill 2013, is of major importance to projects such as Barangaroo and mining projects that regularly seek modifications.

If allowed to stand, the effect of the amendment moved by the alliance of the Labor and crossbench parties in the other place will mean that changes that may be considered modifications under current law will be treated as completely new applications. I repeat: Applications for modification that are currently considered modifications under the current law will suddenly need to be treated as completely new applications.

Mr Kevin Conolly: Just to make life harder for everyone

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: It will make life harder for everybody and introduce more red tape.

Mr Michael Daley: Just say thank you, Glenn. We just saved your seat for you.

Mr Kevin Conolly: More delay, more cost.

Mr John Sidoti: More consultants.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: More delay, more cost and more consultants. I thank members on this side of the Chamber for their contributions. It would appear the member for Maroubra does not have a clue about this. It will lead to more red tape, more complexity, more businesses destroyed, less jobs—

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! I call the member for Canterbury to order for the first time. I call the member for Canterbury to order for the second time. I call the member for Hawkesbury to order for the first time.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: —less investment and less certainty for businesses that want to invest in New South Wales. This is just a stupid amendment. How far does Labor want to go to deter or even make it impossible for businesses with major capital investment to operate in this State? It appears as though it has no bounds. These changes will result in entirely new development applications being lodged for these projects, creating time delay, additional costs and uncertainty. It will send a clear message to businesses across the world, "Don't come to New South Wales because New South Wales Labor and a bunch of cronies up in the Legislative Council are trying to make it impossible for you to come here and provide employment opportunities and jobs for the improvement of our economy." Labor is simply incapable of understanding the damage it is doing.

I turn now to the reintroduction of affordable housing levies by Labor. This is a thinly veiled attempt at simple wealth redistribution. There is no question that this Government is committed to ensuring affordable housing. We established a taskforce, a group that has been working across the political divide to establish the

way forward with respect to affordable housing. It is a challenge because the former Labor Government did nothing in this area for 16 years. It is one of the reasons that we have such expensive housing in New South Wales and Sydney and a lack of affordable housing for those who really need it. Labor failed; it did not get it, yet now all of a sudden it suggests that it has the answers. Labor does not have the answers; it did not have them for 16 years and it does not have them now. Labor is trying to ensure that we do not have affordable housing by continuing with these impractical solutions.

The Government is committed to improving affordable housing after 16 years of failure by the former Labor Government but there is no evidence that affordable housing, which is rented out generally to people on low incomes, does anything to make housing generally more affordable for mums and dads who need it. We need to find more innovative ways to provide affordable housing, not just impose levies; that is not the answer. That is what we have now; it is what Labor did for 16 years and it did not work. That is why we have the problem.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! I call the member for Cessnock to order for the first time.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: This amounts to yet another impost on families hoping to enter the housing market. It is another charge, another add-on, another cost and it does not produce an outcome. In a sense there is at least one bipartisan aspect to this, that is, we would all like to have more affordable housing but the current system does not work so why impose it on the new planning system? These changes and myriad other changes make this legislation completely impractical. The Labor Party, The Greens and the Shooters and Fishers Party have treated 2½ years of community consultation with contempt. This group has played piecemeal with the bill in a politically driven, destructive, self-interested approach that has put New South Wales jobs and its economy last.

It is frustrating and concerning that after 2½ years of genuine effort to try to be bipartisan with the Labor Party, after 2½ years of unprecedented consultation—acknowledged publicly on a number of occasions by Labor members—and after reviews across the State in which people have had their say, Labor has come down on the side of a small and noisy minority who have ensured that we are now limited in our capacity to ensure that the community and councils have planning powers returned to them to do the planning up-front that leads to code assessable opportunities. They have made sure that housing opportunities and the growth of the economy will be damaged beyond repair. They have made sure that through game playing a new streamlined and modern planning system that the Government was elected to deliver will be thwarted.

The deals, the games, the shallowness—we reject the lot. We reject Labor's approach to this review of the planning system. As we said, we intend to return planning powers to local communities and councils. We intend to make sure that that is done in every way possible, including looking at entire precincts as part of the code assessable basis. As I said earlier, for the first time communities will be able to sit down together and look at a large area instead of just an individual development application. They will be able to look at an entire precinct and know that their voice is being heard about how their area will grow, how their area will evolve and how their area will provide jobs and housing for the next 25 years and beyond.

This is the first time in New South Wales that we were opening ourselves up to models similar to those used in Queensland, which has 80 per cent code development approvals, and Victoria, which has 76 per cent code development approvals. This would have been the first time that we had a system similar to those operating in Vancouver British Columbia, Seattle Washington, Portland Oregon and Chicago but what have we got? We have the troglodytes of Labor and their mates effectively blocking the bill; they have destroyed those parts that will drive the economy forward through jobs and opportunities and, most importantly, will empower local communities to have a say in how their area will proceed.

The Government now has a period of three months while the Parliament is in recess to work with the community to consider each of the amendments. We will come back to the House in the New Year and determine the matter after further consultation with business and the community on how we can make New South Wales number one again. We will not accept the bastardisation of the bill by the Labor Opposition. Our job is to deliver for New South Wales and we will do that.

Mr RON HOENIG: I seek leave to make a short reply.

Leave not granted.

STATUTE LAW (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL (NO 2) 2013**Consideration in Detail****Consideration of the Legislative Council amendments.**

Schedule of amendments referred to in message of 26 November 2013

- No. 1 Page 6, schedule 1.8 [1], lines 13–18. Omit all words on those lines.
- No. 2 Page 6, schedule 1.9 [2], lines 35–37. Omit all words on those lines.
- No. 3 Pages 7 and 8, schedule 1.12 [1] and [2], line 32 on page 7 to line 8 on page 8. Omit all words on those lines.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [11.27 a.m.], on behalf of Mr Greg Smith: I move:

That the House agree to the Legislative Council amendments.

I indicate that the Government accepts the amendments.

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

Motion agreed to.

Legislative Council amendments agreed to.

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

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

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [11.29 a.m.]: I move:

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

- (1) The taking of up to six private members' statements forthwith.
- (2) At the conclusion of private members' statements, the taking of community recognition statements until 12.30 p.m.

I thank members for attending.

Mr Michael Daley: It was worth it, just to listen to that erudite speech of yours.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I thank you, Michael, for your ongoing interest and observations about speeches.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The Leader of the House will direct his comments through the Chair.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Members should be thanked for attending the House on the ringing of a long bell, and I do thank them. I indicate that, as promised by the Government, we intend to ensure that those in attendance have some opportunities to speak. Our intention, unless someone is demanding more in which case they should speak to me, is to take up to six private members' statements forthwith and at their conclusion we will take community recognition statements until 12.30 p.m., if that is acceptable to the Clerk.

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

Motion agreed to.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): On behalf of the Speaker and the team, I wish everyone who is present or is leaving the Chamber a safe, happy and holy Christmas and trust that you all have a great holiday and break from Parliament. I look forward to seeing you back here in late February.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

NEPEAN RIVER GREEN BRIDGE

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Parliamentary Secretary) [11.33 a.m.]: I inform the House about the Nepean River Green Bridge project, which is a truly exciting opportunity for the Penrith region. The Green Bridge, which is its working title until we formally name the bridge, is designed to provide safe and accessible pedestrian access across the Nepean River. Along with the significantly improved safety aspects of the proposed bridge, the design improves our communities' access and engagement with our wonderful Nepean River. For the first time since construction of the Victoria Bridge in the 1800s, the people of Penrith will be able to see the river when crossing it. Extensive community consultation has taken place through the development phase of this bridge, including community workshops, a number of Roads and Maritime Services community updates and considerable coverage in the local press. Community consultation has guided the project steering committee, the Penrith City Council and Roads and Maritime Services towards the delivery of the Nepean River Green Bridge.

Throughout the design phase the steering committee has considered pedestrian safety, pedestrian access across the river, Penrith council's Nepean River Precinct Plan and community groups who use the Nepean River for recreation and other activities. In addition to that, the Penrith council's strategic vision "Future of Penrith—Penrith of the Future" was referred to. Ki Studio won the concept design with its truss design that allows for a clear span of approximately 175 metres, which allows for an uninterrupted eight-lane rowing course under the bridge. Even with so much of the competitive rowing happening at Sydney International Regatta Centre, the design we have chosen still protects the river as a rowing venue.

Recently I announced a revised location of the landing of the bridge on the eastern bank of the river. This involves moving the landing from Old Ferry Road to a location approximately 42 metres from the southern end, on the riverbank side, of the old log cabin site. The western bank landing remains unchanged at Punt Road. This design amendment reflects changes in the local landscape since the log cabin fire and community feedback. We have also worked with the owner of the old log cabin site to show the development options that can be integrated with the bridge. Construction of the Green Bridge is due to begin in late 2014.

Complementing this project is the Jane Street extension. During the recent Federal election \$70 million was allocated to this important project comprising \$35 million from both the Abbott and O'Farrell governments. The Jane Street extension will remove the infamous Jane Street-High Street dogleg, ease congestion along Mulgoa and Castlereagh roads and allow for a smoother flow of traffic off Victoria Bridge. It is important to note that Roads and Maritime Services is working towards a preferred design and that the design of this road is yet to be finalised. Roads and Maritime Services is considering straightened alignments between Victoria Bridge and Jane Street that do not include an intersection at Ladbury Avenue. Some constituents have asked me if there is an option to duplicate Victoria Bridge. In my view, this is highly unlikely. Given the flooding propensity of surrounding Emu Plains, it is unlikely we will see major residential growth to warrant such an upgrade.

There are also significant constraints on the land near Victoria Bridge that include acquisition of large amounts of private property on both riverbanks, heritage implications of both existing property and Victoria Bridge and the tight turn alignment of the Great Western Highway as it approaches Victoria Bridge on the western side of the river. Victoria Bridge faces congestion in peak periods. However, on the whole the bridge performs well. The Jane Street extension will improve peak traffic flows as well as north-south movements on Mulgoa Road. The Green Bridge will also encourage greater active transport between Emu Plains and the Penrith central business district. It is worth noting that the distance between Emu Plains station and the Penrith Plaza is only 2.1 kilometres.

Future roads should service future growth. With this in mind, I believe that a better long-term option would be a river crossing at the end of Russell Street, Emu Plains, which could service any future development at Penrith Lakes. It also would provide an alternative to Victoria Bridge when accessing northern Penrith from the west. The Nepean River is at the heart of the Penrith community: It is part of our spirit. Most importantly, it belongs to everyone. For too long historical planning decisions meant we developed around our railway station rather than our river. Now more than ever it is critical to bring our river and our city together. The Nepean River Green Bridge project is a major step towards making that happen.

STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE

Mr ANDREW FRASER (Coffs Harbour—The Assistant-Speaker) [11.37 a.m.]: I pay tribute to our State Emergency Service, not just in Coffs Harbour but throughout the State. Mr Deputy-Speaker, as you and

I know, at this time of the year the North Coast quite often is subjected to storms. The Coffs Harbour electorate is in a subtropical zone and almost daily tends to experience very savage afternoon storms. A fortnight ago a storm wrought havoc across the southern part of the electorate in the Boambee-Bonville area and to some extent through the western side of the electorate. Some hailstones were as big as tennis balls and the majority were as big as golf balls, and they tore properties apart. Bill Roffey and his team from the State Emergency Service responded to 429 calls in a matter of a few hours and completed approximately 190 calls within 24 hours. There were 16 teams mending roofs and patio windows on properties, et cetera, and the place looked a bomb had exploded.

The selfless State Emergency Service volunteers drop everything that they are doing to assist people in need. The house of one of my electorate office staff was damaged and it was fortunate that water did not enter the structure. However, the insurer told me that Campbell's house will require a new roof. Another member of staff at my electorate office, Diane, had several panels of her brand-new car dented and her daughter's car was written off owing to the severity of the hail damage. More than 800 cars were damaged in the Coffs Harbour local government area in that short period of hailstones. The destruction included damage to trees that had been blown down and damage to farms. Mr Deputy-Speaker, I am sure you empathise with blueberry growers whose bird netting was absolutely trashed and flung to the ground.

I return to the State Emergency Service and the selfless volunteers who drop everything to do jobs that no-one else can do. They cannot call on assistance from other emergency services such as the Rural Fire Service or the Fire and Rescue NSW because only State Emergency Service volunteers are qualified to climb onto house roofs in dangerous circumstances and tie down tarps to protect property. When we consider that they are doing that in bad weather, they need more than a pat on the back; they deserve a medal. On occasions those volunteers work on properties five or six metres off the ground without the safety precautions that builders and tradesmen employ and often they work during perilous weather conditions, including lightning and hail.

Work health and safety regulations do not permit tradesmen to work under the conditions that these volunteers do. I place on the record today my thanks to Bill Roffey and his team, and all the other State Emergency Service teams that operate during storms and fires, for keeping us safe and looking after our welfare while putting their own lives and welfare at risk. I thank them and wish them the best for Christmas. Let us hope the storm season is finished for the year. I hope that the emergency services get some time off to relax with their families and that our communities continue to support them in the great work they do.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): I am sure every member in this House joins the member for Coffs Harbour in thanking the State Emergency Service and all the volunteers in the various emergency response organisations. It is a difficult time of year on the North Coast. I am sure the State Emergency Service in the Coffs Harbour electorate appreciates the thanks of the member for their efforts over the past few weeks.

THE JUNCTION WORKS DISABILITY SERVICES

Dr ANDREW McDONALD (Macquarie Fields) [11.42 a.m.]: On 22 November last week I attended the opening of The Junction Works service centre at Austral. The Junction Works has been providing services to the community of south-west Sydney for more than 25 years. Its mission is to create new possibilities in people's lives. The Junction Works focuses on caring for the community and providing youth and disability services to improve the lives of many of the most vulnerable people in our society. It also improves the lives of those in poverty or managing a disability by working with the local community and volunteers. An important factor in the provision of services is continuity and being there for the long term. The Junction Works has been offering its services for the past 25 years.

The new service centre is vital to the future of south-west Sydney. The new centre provides office space, praying rooms, a teaching kitchen and performance studios for the local community. A second stage development will commence in early 2014 with the establishment of a new Cowpastures Community Nursery and Social Enterprise Centre. The magnificent centre at Austral was built within seven months of the first sod being turned. I pay tribute to the builders, Paynter Dixon. The work by this highly ethical and professional company on this centre has been extraordinary. Chris Campbell, who has been the Chief Executive Officer at The Junction Works for the past two years, spoke with great passion about the contribution of the staff and volunteers. Ms Helen Lyons, chair of the board, was also present for this great day of celebration.

One of the many innovative programs that The Junction Works provides is a kitchen and catering service. Mel, Lesley and Patsy provided the catering for this celebration. I strongly recommend the catering

service they provide to all members and the wider community; the food is simply delicious. The program allows people with a disability to give back to the community by preparing and serving food. It is vital that they have such an opportunity, rather than just receiving from the community. The food is truly delicious and, for some days, I have been enjoying the food they gave me to take home. It tastes even better as the days progress. The catering on the day was wonderful.

As Chris Campbell stated, it is a venue for ideas. There soon will be 300,000 new people in the community, many of whom will have a disability or have family members with a disability. This service now is well and truly able to provide the continuity of care that they will need for the next 25 years. The new facilities ensure that The Junction Works is ready for the exciting National Disability Insurance Scheme. The Junction Works makes a difference every day to the people of south-west Sydney. I know from my experience as a doctor that it always provides assistance promptly and does so with a smile. The Junction Works' commitment is recognised by the entire community. The highlight of the opening was the brilliant speech given by Michael Pangallo, who finished school at Mater Dei in 1999 and has been attending day programs at The Junction Works for 13 years. He spoke brilliantly of his experience with The Junction Works and the respect with which he has been treated.

Michael said that he likes the Spark Festival, which is the only arts festival in Australia specifically designed for the needs and interests of people with an intellectual disability. It is produced annually by The Junction Works and runs over three days. This year it was held at Stanmore Park and was a great success. Michael has certainly benefited from the opportunities of the Spark Festival. Auntie Kaye Bussell gave a moving welcome to country and praised the facility. In south-west Sydney we are rich because we have each other and live in the land of opportunity. The Junction Works' new facility will be the gift that keeps on giving for many years.

THE JUDICIARY AND AUNG SAN SUU KYI

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Parliamentary Secretary) [11.47 a.m.]: Last night at the Opera House I attended the conferral of honorary degrees by the University of Sydney and the University of Technology, Sydney on Aung San Suu Kyi, one of the great figures of the world and one of my heroes. She is someone who renounces violence and stands up for the fundamental freedoms that we love and cherish in Australia. I thank both universities for their gracious invitation to attend this auspicious event and the very fitting conferral of the degrees on someone with enormous moral authority.

Dr Suu Kyi spoke last night about her goals of democracy, human rights and national reconciliation in Burma—Myanmar. I am sure that all members wish her and the Burmese people well in the ongoing struggle for those ideals. Dr Suu Kyi emphasised that Burma's constitution has to be amended to ensure an independent judiciary and the rule of law. What was noticeable in what Dr Suu Kyi said last night was the absence of any need for a grandiose bill of rights, but rather her repeated reference to the need for an independent judiciary and the rule of law. As the festive season approaches and we scurry around giving each other gifts, I thought it important to note in this House what a great gift we have in our legal system in Australia and New South Wales, namely an independent judiciary and the rule of law.

We have in Australia a judiciary that is uncorrupted, is virtually without any history of any allegation of corruption, and is highly educated, impartial, independent and conscientious. The judiciary is made up of men and women who, in the interests of serving the public, have commonly taken large pay cuts when they assume their positions. The judiciary works long hours and hears cases day in and day out. I recognise that there is a problem of a lack of public confidence in our criminal justice system. A 2007 international survey suggested that only one-third of Australians had confidence in the criminal justice system. As legislators, members in this House have to take that lack of confidence very seriously. There is no room for smugness, complacency, talking down to the community or dismissing community concerns as illegitimate. But we as legislators also have a responsibility to defend the judiciary and the judicial system and to uphold the great goals of an independent judiciary and the rule of law. As community leaders we need not only to take account of community expectations and where the judicial system sometimes fails to meet them, but also to defend one of our great institutions and engage with the community about its great achievements in an informed debate.

A survey published by the Australian Institute of Criminology in February 2011 dealt with a 2010 study that involved 700 jurors in Tasmania. The study investigated what informed members of the public really

think about sentences. Prior to the trials on which those jurors sat, they were asked about sentencing generally and their attitudes reflected the predominant community attitude that sentences are too lenient. However, after having sat through a trial and sentencing submissions, 90 per cent of the jurors thought that the sentence was within a fair range. In fact, most of them said that they would have handed down a more lenient sentence. The study demonstrates that informed laypeople generally think that the judges are getting it right. Of course, that does not mean that examples like the Thomas Kelly case do not arise when decisions are out of line with community expectations.

It may therefore be appropriate for the courts to develop sentencing guidelines or, if necessary, to do what has been done in reforming the common law of the civil law, namely legislative intervention. However, that intervention should not take the form of fixed minimum sentences or elected judges, which are a recipe for partiality, favouritism and, ultimately, corruption. There is no evidence that mandatory sentencing reduces the incidence of crimes. In fact, it reduces the incentive to plead guilty and leads to arbitrary and capricious results. Judges can sometimes get it wrong, so robust and rigorous criticism is therefore always appropriate. However, we as community leaders need to be respectful in making that criticism. Finally, on this last sitting day of the year, I wish all members and staff, and my constituents in Cronulla, all the blessings that the good news of Christmas brings to mankind and a happy, healthy and prosperous year ahead.

WHITE RIBBON DAY

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [11.52 a.m.]: On Monday 25 November 2013 the Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre and the Fairfield Men's Network hosted the launch of the White Ribbon Day 2013 campaign in Thomas Ware Plaza, Fairfield. The event was very well received with a large number of community groups, businesses and residents there on the day to show their support for the White Ribbon Day campaign. White Ribbon Day is a 16-day campaign to end violence towards women. The campaign was kicked off in style with a number of speeches from local community leaders and performances from several local cultural and community groups. It was very warming to see our community band together in support of the White Ribbon Day campaign. As the member for Fairfield, I was very proud to see so many local residents advocating for such a tremendous cause.

Mr Simon Emsley and Ms Alison McLeod facilitated the smooth running of the festivities, which included multicultural performances by members of the Assyrian, Uruguayan and Khmer communities. Without such community involvement in spreading the message and engaging people to make real change for the future, remarkable campaigns like White Ribbon Day would never come to fruition. White Ribbon Day aims to engage men in the campaign to end violence against women and asks all Australian men to challenge those attitudes and behaviours so that we can begin to drive real change in our community. Domestic violence is not simply physical or sexual assault. It can be psychological, social or financial abuse, as well as intimidation and stalking. Victims of these deplorable acts are not only unfortunate statistics on paper; they are wives, sisters, mothers, daughters, friends and colleagues.

The objective of the White Ribbon Day campaign is to drive real change throughout our communities and to encourage people to speak out against violence against women. Violence against women is a serious problem throughout the world, and Australia is no exception. The Australian Bureau of Statistics data indicate that one in three Australian women over the age of 15 have reported having experienced physical or sexual violence at some time in their lives. This means that there is a very good chance that every one of us here would have someone in our families who has been the victim of violence. It is statistics like these that highlight why every member in this Chamber has shown their support for White Ribbon Day, along with individuals and community groups.

People throughout this great country have thrown their support behind this amazing campaign and have echoed the important message that violence against women is not to be tolerated and that it must be stopped. We all believe that violence against women should stop. It is through people like us and people outside this place spreading the message and reinforcing the point that violence against women will not be tolerated that we will drive change throughout this nation. I believe that everyone should stand up against and put an end to such deplorable acts.

United as a nation we can do what is right and we can help by spreading the message that violence against women will not be tolerated. I congratulate everyone involved in promoting White Ribbon Day and those who worked tirelessly to make the Fairfield launch the resounding success that it was. I implore all members to spread the word that violence against women will not be tolerated. We should encourage others to ensure they do not sit by idly and allow such acts to continue. We should speak up against violence towards women and together we can ensure a brighter tomorrow.

INNER-CITY SCHOOLS

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) [11.56 a.m.]: With more families with children moving into and staying in the inner city there is a growing need for increased and updated education infrastructure. I draw the attention of the House to the results achieved in inner-city education since I became the member for Sydney a year ago. In my first week I met with the Minister for Education, Department of Education and Communities representatives, Lord Mayor Clover Moore and City of Sydney chief executive officer Monica Barone to discuss the shortage of primary and secondary public school places. In response to my question, the Minister established the Inner City Schools Working Party, which includes representatives of the Department of Education and Communities, the City of Sydney and the Ultimo Public School Parents and Citizens Association in the first instance.

The working party was to first address the primary education needs of the Pymont-Ultimo area and then move on to address the need for increased high school places. Ultimo Public School is at capacity with 307 students and the catchment area is growing rapidly, with 898 more babies born in inner Sydney in 2011 compared to five years earlier, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics. As Kirsty Needham reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald* earlier this year:

Families are no longer moving out in search of big backyards but are staying put, enjoying the great parks, access to the best museums, swimming centres, convenient shopping for time-poor working parents, and the company of lots of other young children.

Following a detailed and cooperative process, the working party reported on three options at the end of August: redevelop the Ultimo site; build a larger school in Ultimo; or build a new larger school. In response to my September question, the Minister confirmed that the Department of Education and Communities is now working on a business case for a new or expanded primary school in the Pymont and Ultimo area. Yesterday the department reported that it would seek funding in next year's budget to build a new and bigger Ultimo public school able to cater for 1,000 students on the former City of Sydney Wattle Street depot site. This option was unanimously supported by the Inner Sydney Schools Working Party. I congratulate all those who have worked on this project.

The Ultimo Public School community deserves credit for its work to resolve this matter, and I commend the cooperative approach taken by all. I believe that the community's proactive and helpful approach, including taking departmental officers on tours of key sites, helped to achieve progress. I will be pushing for child care, including after-school care, to be provided on the new site. There are huge waiting lists for access to these vital supports for families with children. Just this week another constituent contacted me saying he or his partner would have to give up work because there is no child care available. The working party process will now address increased comprehensive public high school needs in the inner city. It will be vital that parent and community groups, such as the Community for Local Options for Secondary Education [CLOSE], are invited to participate in and contribute to their local knowledge to the process. Based on my dealings with the Community for Local Options for Secondary Education, I know that it will be cooperative and proactive in driving the action that is needed.

In response to my question earlier this year, the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure agreed to work with the Minister for Education to ensure that Central to Eveleigh precinct redevelopment proposals include consideration of childcare and educational facilities. While this development is some time off, this site should be considered as an option by the working party. Currently, students in my electorate have limited public high school options, with central Sydney schools at capacity or facing massive new enrolments. Catchment boundaries have been altered as a short-term solution. The Minister for Education agreed to my calls to consider greater access to selective high schools for local students, and the Department of Education and Communities is reviewing this policy.

According to a recent Reachtel poll I commissioned, increasing the local student intake at selective schools, such as Sydney Boys High School, is supported by nearly 90 per cent of my electorate. I hope this option provides some short-term relief. Many more students in my electorate will now attend Alexandria Park Community School. Following my visits to meet the school principal, teachers, students, and the parents and citizens association I have asked for the school to be provided with direct bus services and important senior campus facilities upgrades. The Sydney electorate's many and diverse families have built a strong sense of community. It is vital to have infrastructure in place and to plan now for future child care and school needs in order to strengthen that community. I commend the department, the Minister, the City

of Sydney and all the parent and community groups in the Sydney electorate for this collaborative work to achieve these outcomes. I call on the New South Wales Government to urgently fund a new Ultimo Public School.

Private members' statements concluded.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! Pursuant to earlier resolution, the House will now proceed to community recognition statements.

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION STATEMENTS

MARK GARDNER HAIR SALON LOCAL BUSINESS AWARD

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.00 p.m.]: On 13 November 2013 at the Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards I was delighted to present Mark Gardner Hair Salon with the Best Hairdresser in the Sutherland Shire award. Mark Gardner is a 35-year-old business that operates from five salons across the Sutherland shire and St George area, including Sylvania Waters and Caringbah. The local newspaper reported Mark Gardner thanking all the clients who voted for Mark Gardner Hair Salon, adding that he was honoured and proud to win the prestigious award. I add my congratulations.

FAIRFIELD MULTICULTURAL FESTIVAL

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [12.01 p.m.]: On 24 November 2013 I attended the Fairfield Multicultural Festival at the Bonnyrigg Community Centre, which was hosted by the NSW SLASA, or Spanish and Latin American Association for Social Assistance. The event showcased African, European, Asian and South American cultures while fundraising to help support those affected by the recent disaster in the Philippines caused by Typhoon Haiyan. I congratulate NSW SLASA on hosting the successful event. I commend the Community Relations Commission and Fairfield City Council for throwing their support behind such an amazing organisation, whose primary focus is assisting members within our community and abroad.

BIRTH OF OLIVER GALLOWAY MORRISON

REDEEMER BAPTIST SCHOOL PRESENTATION DAY

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills) [12.02 p.m.]: Recently I spoke about the departure of Jason Morrison from radio 2UE, but for every departure there is an arrival. I am delighted to report to the House the arrival of Oliver Galloway Morrison, born on Thursday 21 November at 7.21 p.m. to Jason and Heidi at North Shore Private Hospital. Oliver weighed 3.73 kilograms and measured 52 centimetres. With dark hair and blue eyes, he looks remarkably like his big brother, Charlie. Now home with mum and dad, Oliver is sleeping well and is a lot quieter than his dad—which Heidi is counting as a blessing.

Yesterday I had the pleasure of attending the annual presentation day at Redeemer Baptist School in my electorate. As I have mentioned to the House previously, Ronan Duraisamy was the winner of the annual Baulkham Hills Christmas Card Competition and was thrilled to be presented with his award. I had the honour also of presenting a gold award to Miriam Poyitt and a silver award to Cameron Frost for their entries in this year's Board of Studies Write on Competition. This year students submitted 500-word entries on what could easily be termed a photo of Superdog, in a striking red shawl. Congratulations to Ronan, Miriam, Cameron and all award winners at Redeemer Baptist School this year.

THE HORIZON RESIDENTS WAYSIDE CHAPEL FUNDRAISING DINNER

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) [12.03 p.m.]: I congratulate the residents of Darlinghurst apartment building The Horizon on their recent and very successful fundraising dinner for the Wayside Chapel. The annual dinner is expected to raise more than \$60,000 to help the Wayside Chapel continue its vital work in helping and caring for some of the inner city's most vulnerable people. The event was organised by The Horizon's executive committee and I take this opportunity to highlight the contribution of Diane Vertigan, Mark Broadley and Peter Reeves in making the night such a success. My husband and I were honoured again to attend the dinner and greatly appreciate the invitation from Harold Melnick and Michael Choong. The dinner was emceed by James Valentine and included speeches from Claudia Karvan, and Wayside pastor and chief

executive officer Graham Long, who was recently named the New South Wales Local Hero. The event also included an impromptu performance by Hugh Sheridan. I commend the Horizon for leading the way in showing what a vertical community can achieve.

JIM RAMSEY, BIRDMAN OF WORONORA

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Menai) [12.04 p.m.]: Jim Ramsey has worked at Woronora Cemetery for the past 38 years. He looks after and trains the 100 white pigeons the cemetery keeps on site. Mr Ramsey, who is known by some as the "birdman of Woronora", previously raced pigeons and has loved the breed since he was six years old. Mr Ramsey believes the birds are an appropriate addition to funerals as they have been trained since mid-2010 to circle the cemetery in a gesture symbolising love and peace. These major bird release performances also occur for special services, such as Mother's Day. I released the birds as part of Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day, providing a lovely addition to the service. It is believed Woronora Cemetery is the only Australian cemetery with its own bird loft.

TORONTO TIDY TOWNS AWARDS

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) [12.04 p.m.]: I congratulate Toronto Tidy Towns Committee on its fantastic work in my electorate and on winning three awards at the recent Keep Australia Beautiful NSW Tidy Towns Awards. Toronto won the Overall Town category in its division for the third time in six years. It also won the Cultural Heritage Award for its National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee [NAIDOC] celebrations, and the Wildlife Corridors and Habitat Conservation Award for the Coal Point threatened species project. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the hardworking efforts of Kelly Hoare and Lyn Pascoe, who are the driving force behind Toronto Tidy Towns, and the many other local people and organisations who contributed to these events.

WILL ROWELL COMEDY PERFORMANCE

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) [12.05 p.m.]: I congratulate my son Will Rowell, who is in year 5, on his recent success at his school's local talent quest. Will's performance was absolutely brilliant: a comical performance like nothing seen before or since the days of Jerry Seinfeld. Will's comedy act was witty, topical and extremely funny. It was astounding for a year 5 student to come up with such material. He devised the performance himself and even wore a suit to give it more flair. Of course, as a proud dad I have bragging rights and filmed the performance. I could not be more proud of him. I am lucky to be Will's dad and look forward to getting some tips from him to use in the Chamber next year.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): He must have got his talent from his mother.

SYDNEY SANSKRIT SCHOOL

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) [12.06 p.m.]: The Sydney Sanskrit School held its annual Samskrutotsavam celebration on Sunday 17 November. I was pleased to be present, as I have on many previous occasions. The event saw the launch of the annual school magazine, *Medha*, and a bilingual CD in the Dharawal and Sanskrit languages. The retention and rise of the Sanskrit language is not just an example of multiculturalism; it goes to something more fundamental within human civilisation, granted how long the language has been used and its cultural role for a range of other languages. It has been said that Sanskrit's linguistic significance is similar to that of Latin for the current languages of Europe. Consular representatives from Thailand and the Republic of India were present at the celebration. Thanks for the school's achievements go to the students, parents and teachers, with special acknowledgement to school principal, Dr Meena Srinivasan, and School Committee President, Dr Lakshmi Satyanarayana. I acknowledge also Karthi Subramaniam, who gave the vote of thanks on the day.

KU-RING-GAI CREATIVE ARTS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AWARDS

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) [12.07 p.m.]: I congratulate and express my pride in Mikaylie Page, Sarah Viapiana and Eloise Burrows, recent school leavers from Ku-Ring-Gai Creative Arts High School, on winning a NAB Schools First Student Award for their wellbeing project. Following the 2013 Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Youth Forum, Mikaylie, Sarah and Eloise developed a proposal to enhance student wellbeing and to help students cope with the stresses and difficulties of daily life in year 12. The girls partnered with the Black

Dog Institute and "headspace" to develop a support strategy for fellow students. Once again, I acknowledge the hard work and dedication of Mikaylie, Sarah and Eloise. They have demonstrated remarkable excellence. I wish them all the best with this fantastic initiative and in their future post Higher School Certificate careers.

TRIBUTE TO PATRICK "PAT" JOSEPH MURRAY

Mr RICHARD AMERY (Mount Druitt) [12.08 p.m.]: It is with deep regret that I report to the Parliament the passing of Patrick Joseph Murray, known as Pat, on 23 November. Pat was born on 6 March 1934. He came to the Mount Druitt area where he became very involved with his local community. Pat was a Life Member of the Rooty Hill RSL Club when he died. Pat's life is too broad to recognise here, but I ask the House to recognise that he was a butcher by trade and an active member of the Australian Meat Industry Employees Union, becoming a full-time organiser in 1975. He joined the Australian Labor Party in 1965 and in 2005 was awarded life membership. Married twice, Pat is well loved by his extended family. Between them, he and his wife, Barbara, proudly had nine children, 20 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren. Since 1965 no elected member—including Roger Price and me—has not had the benefit of Pat's sound advice and loyal support. I offer to Barbara and that great large family our deepest sympathy on the passing of Pat Murray, a true Labor man.

ALBURY ELECTORATE COMMUNITY ACHIEVEMENTS

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) [12.09 p.m.]: Congratulations to all our talented students from Albury Public School, Holbrook Public School, Albury High School, James Fallon High School, Billabong High School, Corowa High School and Wewak Street School who are participating in the 2013 Schools Spectacular. Wewak will be participating for the first time in the disabled dance group section. I am looking forward to being part of the audience and applauding their achievements.

Last Friday the Minister for Mental Health and Minister for Healthy Lifestyles launched the River 2 Recovery project on the banks of the Murray River at Albury. This mental health project, organised by St Luke's and Wodonga TAFE, saw participants study at TAFE and assist in the construction of five rowboats, which set out on an 11-day journey down to Lake Mulwala accompanied by volunteers from the Albury and Border Rescue Squad. Congratulations to everyone involved. I congratulate Alan Poole and Rose Croxford on being selected to represent Australia in Bocce at the Special Olympics Asia Pacific Games in Newcastle next week. Good luck, Alan and Rose.

MATILDAS FOOTBALL TEAM

Ms NOREEN HAY (Wollongong) [12.10 p.m.]: I congratulate the Australian Women's Football League, the Matildas, who played at the Wollongong stadium on Sunday and beat China 2-0. Katrina-lee Gory and Tameka Butt performed superbly in scoring the goals. I also recognise the goalie, Lydia Williams, who saved a couple of would-be definite goals. I also recognise Stuart Barnes of WIN Stadium, which is a great venue, and the Venues NSW representatives who were in attendance. It was wonderful to see Australia beat China. We hope the Matildas will do the same in the second round and that it will be in front of a full house.

TRIBUTE TO PETER OLSEN

Mrs ROZA SAGE (Blue Mountains) [12.11 p.m.]: It is with great regret that I inform the House of the passing of a Blue Mountains Liberal Party stalwart and my dear friend Peter Olson. He will be sadly missed. Peter joined the Liberal Party when he was just 15 years old and was a member for 65 years continuously. He described himself as a "Menzie's Liberal" and was always focused on achieving good outcomes. He came to the mountains in 1995 when he joined the local branch, where he served faithfully on the executive committee until his death this year. He also served in general conferences and was always there at elections, helping in booths at pre-polls. Peter had a strong sense of conviction. When something needed to be said he said it, but always with good grace and his cheeky humour. As his illness took hold, one of his last wishes was to be able to vote and see the Liberals win Federal government. He lived long enough to see this happen, and died happier for it. He is survived by daughter, Kylie, and son, David, and many grandchildren. He will be greatly missed.

WHITE BAY COMMUNITY MEETING

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [12.12 p.m.]: I highlight to the House the 57 residents who attended the meeting I called to address noise pollution and traffic issues from the cruise ship terminal at White Bay. I congratulate them on raising their concerns before all those present. I particularly thank the committee of

Clontarf Cottage for allowing us to use that building, which is a fantastic heritage site in Balmain. I also acknowledge the great work of the local precinct committee in raising this issue. I will take the matter to Sydney Ports and to port users. I want to ensure that the concerns of the residents are expressed, and I thank them for their efforts in raising the issue over many months. I look forward to a positive resolution and assure all Balmain residents that we will do our best to highlight their concerns and recognise the excellent work of all those who seek to improve the amenity and environment of the local area.

ST BENEDICT'S CHURCH AND ST GERTRUDE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mr ANDREW ROHAN (Smithfield) [12.13 p.m.]: I was honoured to attend on Wednesday 20 November a mass at St Benedict's Church in Smithfield, which was followed by the blessing of the parish chapel at the St Gertrude Primary School. The mass was attended by a large number of school students who filled the church. His Grace Bishop Terry Brady conducted the mass and the blessing of the parish. Thanks to Mr Warren Loy, principal of St Gertrude Primary School, for his kind invitation to me to attend the ceremonies. Also present was Mr Dan White, Director of Catholic Education. Thanks to teachers, staff and parents for supporting the school and for providing refreshments at the end of the ceremonies.

CENTRAL COAST SPORTS AWARDS

Mr CHRIS SPENCE (The Entrance) [12.13 p.m.]: I congratulate the 2013 Central Coast Sports Awards recipients on their outstanding achievements and commend their wonderful contributions to our region's sporting community. Sports Star of the Year was awarded to Lachlan Tame for surf lifesaving and kayaking. Masters Sport Star of the Year was awarded to Paul Lemmon; Sports Star with a Disability was Rae Anderson; Club/Association of the Year was the Mingara Athletics Club; Team of the Year was the Central Coast Mariners; Volunteer of the Year was Linda Holton; Junior Sports Star of the Year was Matthew Graham; Official of the Year was Shayne Hayne; Indigenous Sports Person of the Year was Jarrad Hayes; and Mark Wilson, Kay McVicker, Beverly Andrews, Rick Julienne, Julie Bartlet and Diane Dale were all awarded for their outstanding service to Central Coast Sports. I also congratulate all finalists and runners-up for 2013 and wish each of them great success in the coming years.

DEATH OF THE HON. WILLIAM LLOYD LANGE, A FORMER MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) [12.14 p.m.]: I recognise the passing this past week of the Hon. William Lloyd Lange at the age of 76. Born in Wagga Wagga, and most recently a resident of Pymble in my electorate, Lloyd joined the Legislative Council of the New South Wales Parliament in 1974. At that time he had already provided major service to the Liberal Party, including through its State Executive. Previously a Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council, from 1984 to 1986 Lloyd was Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party and Opposition spokesman for minerals and energy.

Upon retiring from the Legislative Council in 1986, he served in many senior governance-type roles in the private sector and as a partner of an executive search firm. Having made substantial contributions during his parliamentary career in the area of public finance and with the Public Accounts Committee, Lloyd kindly advised me when I was appointed chair of that committee in 2011. I extend my sympathies to Pamela, his wife of 50 years, his children and wider family, and thank them for sharing him with the New South Wales public.

MOOREFIELD GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL JULIANNE BEEK

VOLUNTEER VANESSA REEVES

Mr JOHN FLOWERS (Rockdale) [12.15 p.m.]: I congratulate Julianne Beek on her appointment as principal of Moorefield Girls High School, Kogarah. Mrs Beek was formerly the deputy principal of Concord High School. Mrs Beek has fulfilled her new role with enthusiasm and she embraces the school motto, "Inspiring young women", as part of her commitment to her students. Mrs Beek continues to do an outstanding job as principal and we wish her all the best for the future.

I congratulate Vanessa Reeves, a tireless and dedicated worker for the Rockdale community. She is an outstanding example of what it is to be a good citizen. Many individuals and community groups have substantially benefitted from Vanessa's charitable activities. Some of the activities that Vanessa is involved with are Dress for Success, justice of the peace services, Australia's Biggest Morning Tea, Red Shield Appeal, Vinnie's winter appeals and education talks, and she decorates nursing homes.

ESSENTIALS FOR HOME LOCAL BUSINESS AWARD

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.16 p.m.]: On 13 November Essentials for Home in Cronulla won the Specialised Retail Business category in the 2013 Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards held at Cronulla Sharks. I congratulate Essentials for Home, which offers a range of products for home living including indoor and outdoor furniture, kitchenware, napery, ambient candles and Christmas decorations.

SACRED HEART PRIMARY SCHOOL VILLAWOOD MUSICA VIVA CONCERT

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [12.17 p.m.]: On 6 November I attended the Musica Viva in Schools concert at the Sacred Heart Primary School, Villawood. The event went off without a hitch and was very well attended, with performances by musical touring group Teranga. Musica Viva in Schools has been providing students and teachers with the opportunity to listen to and learn from live and interactive performances by professional musicians. It also provides interactive resources directly to the classroom. I commend Musica Viva in Schools for its outstanding achievements and commitment to providing such an amazing service to schools throughout the nation over the past 32 years. I also congratulate Sacred Heart Primary School, Villawood, for organising such an amazing event and for its ongoing efforts to ensure that each and every one of its students receives every opportunity to allow them to grow and flourish in whichever field they desire.

SYDNEY SECOND AIRPORT SITE

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) [12.18 p.m.]: I congratulate the Stop Wilton Airport Group and the Wollondilly community on their hard work in ensuring that a second airport will not be built in Wilton. A recent Federal Government report has effectively ruled out Wilton as an option. We have been amazed by what the former Labor Government spent on a report when those funds could have been put into much-needed infrastructure. I thank my colleagues the member for Camden and the member for Campbelltown and my Federal colleagues the member for Macarthur and the member for Hume as well as Wollondilly Shire Council, Camden Council and Campbelltown City Council. It is a joint effort. I also thank the Wollondilly community for their ongoing support.

WORLD AIDS DAY

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) [12.18 p.m.]: This Sunday, 1 December, is World AIDS Day, a day that raises awareness across the world and in the community about the issues surrounding HIV/AIDS. It is a day for people to show their support for people living with HIV and to commemorate those who have died from the disease. Amazing progress in drug treatments means that HIV can be managed as a chronic health condition, and the Government has developed a new strategy to address HIV in conjunction with key community representatives. The Ending HIV campaign encourages people to be tested and consider early treatment in order to take control of their health and help prevent new infections.

This week I joined the Minister for Health, the member for Coogee, representatives from the Department of Health and ACON to launch a pop-up rapid HIV testing clinic at Taylor Square. I understand that many people have already been tested at the pop-up clinic and thank the Government for its support in encouraging gay men in my electorate to test regularly and get results quickly. In my electorate the Surry Hills Community Drug Action Team will again hold a stall at the local market, informing and educating community members about HIV and its prevention.

MOOREBANK SHOPPING VILLAGE

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS: [12.19 p.m.] I thank the *Liverpool Leader* for its recent "Shop Small" article that focused on Moorebank Shopping Village. Shop owners have gone through a hard time recently having lost a major centre. It is great to see community awareness of Moorebank Shopping Village and it is a reminder to support local businesses. This part of Stockton Avenue was once home to a vineyard; it has now been transformed into a busy shopping village. I visit many street stalls and take the opportunity to shop there at the same time. The article also mentions the business Cake It Away. When the Premier visited the area in the lead-up to the election he purchased a cake for everyone on the campaign bus from that shop, which everyone enjoyed. Cake It Away has been there for 20 years and the newsagency, a well-supported business, has been there for 30 years. I also mention a factory in Moorebank that makes 9,000 Victa mowers every week and employs 83 local people.

FILIPINO AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY OF THE HUNTER VALLEY

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) [12.20 p.m.]: I wish to acknowledge the wonderful efforts of the members of the Filipino community of my electorate and region, who through the Filipino Australian Society of the Hunter Valley have donated much-needed goods to victims of Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines. Goods delivered to the society's hall at Boolaroo have been received, sorted and dispatched to assist victims in their time of need. Funds have also been raised to assist those in need in these hard-hit areas. In particular, I acknowledge the hard work and inspiration of President Rebecca Macdonald and Secretary Bob Bell—who has been working from the isolation of Canada. I also acknowledge the enthusiastic members and friends of the Filipino Australian Society of the Hunter Valley for their assistance.

CLIFTON ADOLESCENT AND FAMILY SUPPORT

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) [12.21 p.m.]: I acknowledge the outstanding work of Clifton Adolescent and Family Support, better known throughout Sydney's north-west as CAFS. Mission Australia's Clifton Adolescent and Family Support is an early intervention service that supports young people who are at risk of homelessness or who have recently left the family home. In particular, I note the Me, Myself and I program. That program offers a creative approach to combat low self-esteem in teenage girls and responses to issues of mental health in young people—a topic I am passionate about. Indeed, the program has been so successful that it has generated interest across the State. I thank Kirsty Winn and Julie Acton for their development of the program, and the staff at Clifton Adolescent and Family Support for their ongoing commitment to the families of our community. They do a remarkable job in difficult circumstances.

SYDNEY PEACE PRIZE 2013

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) [12.22 p.m.]: On 7 November the 2013 Sydney Peace Prize was awarded to the impressive and extraordinary Dr Cynthia Maung, an ethnic Karen who fled her native Burma during the 1988 pro-democracy uprising and who was declared an insurgent and terrorist by the military regime. She then established the Mae Tao Clinic on the Thai-Burmese border. Each year, 700 staff treat more than 150,000 refugees, migrant workers and orphans. Many of these patients are in border refugee camps. A vast amount is done with very little money, but this is now under threat because of funding cuts to the Australian foreign aid budget. The peace prize is organised by the Sydney Peace Foundation. Jane Singleton is the new foundation director. She has replaced the well-known and distinguished Emeritus Professor Stuart Rees who, thankfully, remains as chair of the foundation. Stuart's work as a long-term director has contributed to the success of the foundation. He also plays a significant and important role in Sydney's public affairs. Since 1988 the Sydney Peace Prize has been awarded annually to a diverse range of individuals such as Sir William Deane, Xanana Gusmao, Hanan Ashrawi, Patrick Dodson and Noam Chomsky.

LEBANESE INDEPENDENCE DAY

Mr ANDREW ROHAN (Smithfield) [12.23 p.m.]: On Friday 22 November, in the pouring rain and windy weather, I attended the Holroyd City Council for a tree planting ceremony at the Old Children's Museum in Holroyd Gardens. The tree planting ceremony commemorated 70 years of Lebanese independence. The afternoon was a great success despite the weather. The Australian-Lebanese community were acknowledged for their contribution to the State and the nation. Many distinguished leaders from the Australian-Lebanese community braved the storm to attend. Among them was my friend and parliamentary colleague the member for Granville, Mr Tony Issa, mayor of Holroyd City Council, Nasr Kafrouni, and Lebanese Ambassador to Australia, Dr Jean Daniel. Many other distinguished guests were in attendance, including the member for Fairfield, Mr Guy Zangari. I thank the Australian-Lebanese community for its contribution to this nation.

WHITE RIBBON DAY

Ms NOREEN HAY (Wollongong) [12.24 p.m.]: I acknowledge the dedication of the Wollongong Women's Centre, Women's Legal Services, the domestic violence workers based at the Lake Illawarra Area Command and those in my electorate who every year help to raise awareness and fight the dreaded incidence of domestic violence. I acknowledge also the good men in my electorate who supported White Ribbon Day and spoke out against domestic violence. They have helped to show perpetrators of domestic violence that it is also not acceptable to men. I am grateful to everyone who helps to reduce the incidence of domestic violence.

UNITED HOSPITAL AUXILIARIES OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Mr CHRIS SPENCE (The Entrance) [12.25 p.m.]: I acknowledge the tireless efforts of hospital auxiliaries in my electorate and throughout New South Wales. In 2013 branches of the United Hospital Auxiliaries raised more than \$9.75 million for local health districts. I congratulate Thelma and commend the Long Jetty Auxiliary for its exceptional efforts in raising \$25,428 at the recent auxiliary fete, as well as the committee and stallholders who participated in the event. I also thank the Ourimbah Auxiliary for its outstanding fundraising efforts totalling \$9,951. Local hospital auxiliaries are an integral part of the Central Coast Local Health District. I commend Matt Hanrahan, Chief Executive Officer of Central Coast Local Health District, for the longstanding support he gives to our auxiliaries and the Long Jetty Hospital.

RENEWABLE ENERGY INNER WEST PROJECT

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [12.26 p.m.]: I draw to the attention of the House the work of a fantastic community group in my electorate called Renewable Energy Inner West. This community organisation has come together in order to invest in renewable energy in partnership with local business. Renewable Energy Inner West was originally initiated by my office, but it has now blossomed into an independent organisation. It works with a range of organisations such as About Life, which is led by the very capable Jodie Stewart, who is also the president of the Chamber of Commerce. I also acknowledge Renewable Energy Inner West members: Rupert Daniel, Derek Bolton, Daniel Kogoy, Cameron Kelly, Dominic Case, and Alice Simpson-Young. They do a fantastic job in ensuring that we invest in renewable energy to benefit local businesses, the environment and the community.

TRIBUTE TO BARRY WATKINS

ALICE JENKINS NINETIETH BIRTHDAY

Mr JOHN FLOWERS (Rockdale) [12.27 p.m.]: I congratulate Barry Watkins of Banksia, known as the "happy baker", on his contribution to the recent Bake Someone Happy campaign, which led to the auspicious title of "best house husband", which was fully supported by his wife, Sandra. I ask that the House recognises Barry in his role as carer for his four-year-old daughter, Allegra, who shares the results of his love of baking for her. I congratulate also Mrs Alice Jenkins of Beverley Park on the celebration of her ninetieth birthday on 1 June 2013.

SUPER ITALIAN FESTIVAL

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [12.28 p.m.]: On 24 November I attended the Super Italian Festival at Liverpool Catholic Club. This year marked the fifty-third year of the annual Super Italian Festival by the committee of San Vittorio and Madonna delle Grazie. There was an amazing turnout on the day. I was joined by local representatives, residents and community groups. I congratulate the committee on hosting another successful festival. I commend the Liverpool Catholic Club for being a major sponsor of the event and for providing its resources and services on the day.

JAMES LESLIE MCMAHON, A FORMER FEDERAL MEMBER FOR SYDNEY

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) [12.29 p.m.]: Today I inform the House that a new biography entitled *James Leslie McMahon: As He Sees It* has been donated to the Parliamentary Library. Les McMahon, as he is better known, started his working life as a plumber, gasfitter and drainer. However, that trade would not be his lifelong career; he found himself called to public service. In 1967 he served on Sydney City Council and was subsequently elected to Leichhardt council in 1968 and 1971. In 1975 he became the member for Sydney in the Commonwealth House of Representatives. In 1983 Les was appointed a commissioner of the New South Wales Conciliation and Arbitration Commission, a position he held until his retirement in 1993.

In addition to a flourishing public life, Les was married for 60 years to his wife, Patricia, who passed away in 201. I know Les's son Michael McMahon very well, having appointed him general manager of Burwood Council when I was mayor of Burwood. Very appropriately, Les's biography has been written by Michael's son Lee McMahon, who decided to commit his grandfather's life to writing after hearing his 80,000 word contribution to the Australian Parliamentary Oral History Program.

Community recognition statements, by leave, taken forthwith for an additional 30 minutes.

THE RUBENS ROCK GROUP

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) [12.30 p.m.]: I congratulate local rock group The Rubens from Menangle, recently named *GQ* magazine's Band of the Year. The Margin brothers—Sam, 25, Zac, 23, and Elliott, 20—drummer Scott Baldwin and bass player Will Zeglis have previously been awarded with Triple J's Album of the Year and the Australasian Performing Right Association [APRA] Rock Work of the Year for their single *My Gun*. They have also toured with Bruce Springsteen, The Black Keys and Grouplove. The band is now focusing on compiling its second album after its debut self-titled album reached number three on the Australian Recording Industry Association [ARIA] charts. I am proud of this great band from Wollondilly. I wish them all the best.

NATIONAL DAY OF CLIMATE ACTION

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) [12.30 p.m.]: I congratulate GetUp! Action for Australia on holding the very successful National Day of Climate Action on 17 November 2013. Some 60,000 Australians participated in the event at Prince Alfred Park, including thousands in Sydney who braved the rain. The sea of umbrellas was indicative of the strong conviction of Sydneysiders that serious action needs to be taken on climate change and that all levels of government should work together to address this growing crisis.

WITHAM'S COFFEE SMALL BUSINESS AWARDS

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) [12.31 p.m.]: I celebrate the achievements of a wonderful small business in my electorate, Witham's Coffee. Owners Lance and Gill Witham live and breathe coffee. They have been roasting their own special coffee blends for almost 20 years. They worked out of Artarmon and Waverton, before moving to 5 Salisbury Road, Hornsby, a few years ago. Local residents, tradies and visitors flock to the small espresso bar for their daily coffee hit. Witham's Coffee not only is popular with locals—having recently won the *Hornsby Advocate's* best small business of the year award—but also has won awards at the Sydney Royal Easter Show. The residents in my electorate are very hardworking people. Businesses, including Honings Bakery, The Refinery, Thyme Square and Bunker Bean, were also voted as businesses of excellence. I note that those businesses also serve Witham's coffee. It is excellent to see small businesses flourish in Hornsby and I wish them all the best for future success.

JOHN HUGHSON, LANDCARE PROJECTS OFFICER

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) [12.32 p.m.]: I acknowledge the wonderful contribution to Landcare in my area made by John Hughson, who is something of a local legend in the organisation. John has been involved with Landcare in Lake Macquarie for more than 14 years. Last week he stepped down from his role as Landcare Projects Officer. John has been a driving force behind the development of Lake Macquarie Landcare—one of the most extensive, active and effective networks in the State. His enthusiasm for the natural environment and his knowledge of local reserves are unparalleled. I understand he will continue to work with the organisation in a voluntary capacity. This will mean that Landcare and local schools will continue to benefit from his passion and invaluable experience. For more good news people can go to my new website www.gregpiper1.com. I thank everybody in the House for their work during the year. I wish you all and my constituents the best for Christmas and the New Year.

WHITE RIBBON DAY

Mr ANDREW ROHAN (Smithfield) [12.33 p.m.]: On 25 November 2013 I attended the White Ribbon Day event organised by the Cabramatta White Ribbon Day Committee and the Men's Network for Family Safety at Thomas Ware Plaza in Fairfield. White Ribbon Day is a symbolic and important day to remind us to say no to violence or abuse, especially against women. I do not doubt that many in this House believe in gender equality and, importantly, in safe and productive workplaces. Violence against women is a serious problem in Australia—at least one woman is killed every week by a current or former partner. White Ribbon Day, the world's largest male-led movement to end men's violence against women, is a constant reminder that we must remain vigilant and continue to send this important message to the wider community. The event was strongly supported by my local community.

NEW SOUTH WALES COUNCIL FOR CIVIL LIBERTIES

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) [12.34 p.m.]: Today I acknowledge the fiftieth anniversary of the New South Wales Council for Civil Liberties [CCL]. The fiftieth anniversary was celebrated at a dinner held on Friday 25 October 2013. Supreme Court Justice Carolyn Simpson, who had been a committee member of the

Council for Civil Liberties from 1973 and who was elected Council for Civil Liberties president in 1975, gave an address. Michael Kirby, who first joined the Council for Civil Liberties in 1964 and was made a life member in 2011 following his retirement from the High Court, gave a video address. The event also marked the end of Cameron Murphy's reign of about 15 years as Council for Civil Liberties president—the new president is Stephen Blanks.

The New South Wales Council for Civil Liberties has worked closely with governments and members of Parliament at State and Federal levels throughout its 50 years. As a non-party-aligned organisation it has a strong history of cross-party membership and support from government, opposition and crossbench members. This has had significant benefits for the protection of civil liberties and the rule of law in New South Wales and nationally. It remains an important relationship as Australian Parliaments currently face significant and complex civil liberty challenges.

TRIBUTE TO CRAIG POPPLETON

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.35 p.m.]: Today I recognise the contribution to the Pittwater community of Craig Poppleton, a local builder and surf lifesaver. Craig is a patrol captain and an instructor with Bilgola Surf Life Saving Club and a member of the Westpac Life Saver Rescue Helicopter crew. He has received bravery awards for his work in surf lifesaving and he is the holder of a gold medallion. Craig suffered a neck injury in the surf last weekend and he is currently in hospital. The prayers and best wishes of members of this House and me are with Craig, his wife, Cathy, and his family. We wish him a very speedy recovery.

WHITE BAY CRUISE TERMINAL

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [12.36 p.m.]: I draw the attention of the House to the excellent and consistent work of many members of my community to ensure appropriate development and the protection of the environment and our precious urban amenity. I have previously mentioned in this House people who have been involved in supporting efforts to have a better result at the White Bay Cruise Terminal: John Stamolis, Libby Horrobin, Gill Hazel, John Chancellor, Kerin Cox, Valerie Larnach and Virginia Mullins, who have contacted my office about improved air quality and amenity in the local community; as well as residents who are fighting for an appropriate outcome on the former Labelcraft and Kolotex site in Leichhardt: Kristna Gurney, Kiri Dumont and Charles Shepherd. Collectively these people demonstrate the best of the local community and highlight the need to protect and enhance it for future generations. I will continue to work closely with them to ensure a very positive result on these issues.

ROCKDALE ELECTORATE COMMUNITY CELEBRATIONS

Mr JOHN FLOWERS (Rockdale) [12.37 p.m.]: I congratulate Christos and Eleftheria Georgiou of Bexley on the celebration of their sixtieth wedding anniversary on 26 July 2013. I also congratulate Mrs Assunta Spanhel of Brighton-le-Sands on the celebration of her ninetieth birthday held on 4 August 2013 and Mrs Ivy Doris Ball from Rockdale on the celebration of her ninetieth birthday held on 22 July 2013.

SYDNEYCARE

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [12.37 p.m.]: I congratulate SydneyCare and its volunteers on their tremendous work in packing boxes to assist those who lost their homes in the recent New South Wales bushfires. The group has been packing a large number of necessary goods including food hampers, general household goods, personal care items and other necessities. SydneyCare and its volunteers have been assisting organisations out of its warehouse at Yennora. I also offer my heartfelt thanks to the hardworking, dedicated individuals and organisations that are providing ongoing relief for those in dire need. They are making a real difference throughout this State.

HOLY TRINITY ANGLICAN CHURCH CONCORD WEST 100TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) [12.38 p.m.]: On 10 November 2013 it was my pleasure and privilege to attend the 100th anniversary service of the Holy Trinity Anglican Church at Concord West. The church was opened and consecrated in late 1913 as a result of the generosity of Miss Love, who bequeathed the land on which it still stands, and Dame Edith Walker, who provided the funds for the church's construction and fit-out. It was an auspicious beginning and since then the parish has grown and flourished.

Over the past 100 years the Holy Trinity Anglican Church has witnessed and supported the people of Concord West through great economic, political and social change. It has stood through two world wars, economic depressions, rapid and ongoing technological change, and has even survived the hosting of the Olympic Games on its doorstep. The church reaches out to the local community in many various and exciting ways. In addition to church services it provides many activities, including English classes, youth classes, Bible study classes and teaching scripture in local primary schools. Not only are the efforts of the present parish to be congratulated but also those of previous generations of parishioners. Together their vision and foresight have helped and inspired many, many people and they are to be commended and celebrated.

SERGEANT ROBERT MINNS, ROTARY POLICE OFFICER AWARD

Ms NOREEN HAY (Wollongong) [12.39 p.m.]: Today I congratulate Sergeant Robert Minns of the Wollongong Local Area Command on being awarded Rotary's New South Wales Community Police Officer of the Year. Sergeant Minns has served in the Police Force for almost three decades, joining when he was 20 years old. He is a representative of the Police Association, and I have had many dealings with him in this capacity, ensuring that the rights and conditions of his fellow officers are maintained. Sergeant Minns is a selfless individual who is well known among his peers for his fundraising efforts for the families of murdered police officers Senior Constable David Rixon and Detective Inspector Bryson Anderson. Sergeant Minns is a dedicated, hardworking officer who is a credit to the force. I congratulate him on receiving this prestigious award.

MITTAGONG RSL BRIGADE AID

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) [12.40 p.m.]: I congratulate Mittagong RSL. Yesterday I was invited to visit the club so that I could be presented with a cheque for \$10,000 for this weekend's fundraising brigade aid which will go to helping our local Rural Fire Service. I thank the general manager, Craig Madsen, who organised the event with his 35 staff, who were there on the day. I thank operations manager Liz Beszant, catering manager Alan Cunninghame, market manager Daniel Marmont, administration manager Ross Pinkerton, and duty managers Donna Hailes, Ray Drayton and Di Morton. I thank also the board for deciding to donate the money: President Graham Milbank, Vice-President Roger Cole, Vice-President Ross Cowley, and directors Phillip Moscott, Brian Smith and Stephen Spence. On behalf of a very proud community I thank Mittagong RSL for its kind donation.

SYDNEY GAY AND LESBIAN BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) [12.41 p.m.]: I recognise the important contribution to Sydney's business community made by the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Business Association, a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to professional support and development of gay men and lesbians throughout Sydney and New South Wales. It aims to increase corporate and individual business opportunities for regular members and hold regular networking business events. I was honoured to attend a business event recently and update them on the gay and lesbian reform progress made in this Parliament.

MONA VALE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.41 p.m.]: I recognise the success of the renewed Mona Vale Chamber of Commerce, following a proud history of representing the interests of local retailers and commercial light industrial businesses that together have built Mona Vale into Pittwater's thriving central business district. The renewed Mona Vale Chamber of Commerce is ably led by Aaron Hendrickson, the outgoing manager of the Mona Vale branch of Westpac Bank; John Gavagna of Residential Real Estate, Simon Dunn of Dunn Legal, Trent Clancy of Clancy Gourmet Meats, John Beale of John Beale Management Group, John Scatt of Lindfield Partners, Carmelina Stillone of Audio Boutique, and Kevin Fouche of Pixelfish. This group, together with other members of the chamber, have served Mona Vale's business district well. Recent successes have included the successful Mona Vale markets, its successful advocacy for a major new car park for Mona Vale, and its ongoing support for the Mona Vale commercial district.

SALVADORAN IMMIGRATION THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) [12.42 p.m.]: I recognise the thirtieth anniversary of the commencement of Salvadoran immigration to Australia. This was celebrated at an event held on Saturday

13 July. It was organised by Salvensyd-Salvadorans in Sydney who work closely with New South Wales Spanish and Latin American Association for Social Assistance [SLASA]. The event celebrated the achievements of Salvadorans in Australia. In attendance was the recently appointed Ambassador of El Salvador to Australia, Mr Manuel Gutierrez-Ruiz. El Salvador experienced significant conflict; there were great struggles aimed at making its society fairer and more egalitarian. The assassination of Bishop Oscar Romero in 1980 for speaking against military repression and the denial of human rights attracted worldwide headlines. There has been a peace process and the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front [FMLN] is currently in government. The developments in their land of origin are watched closely by Salvadorans in Sydney, who have also added to the rich, vibrant and successful multiculturalism in the area I represent.

SOUTH WESTERN SYDNEY AWARDS 2013

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) [12.43 p.m.]: On 7 November this year I was delighted to attend the South Western Sydney Awards for 2013 at Sydney Olympic Park Sports Centre. At this special event we were treated to many outstanding performances by the talented students attending our State's public schools. The event is a regional initiative which showcases the talents of students in the area of creative and practical arts, as well as recognising individuals, schools and/or groups of schools that have made a significant contribution to the achievements of the goals of the New South Wales education department and to the promotion of public education in New South Wales. I congratulate all the students who performed on the evening, as well as all the staff and parents who not only supported them but also gave generously of their time to make the event such a success. I also congratulate all the individuals and schools that received awards. I am proud to be part of the Government that not only promoted and supported this event but that is also doing such great things to support the education of all our young people..

FRIENDS OF THE EARTH AUSTRALIA

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [12.44 p.m.]: I draw the attention of members to the fantastic work of Friends of the Earth Australia and the Malaysian-based Himpunan-Hijau environment organisation. I acknowledge the work of members of my community who have been involved in the project relating to the Lynas advanced material plant based in Malaysia. In particular, I acknowledge the role of Wong Tack, chairman of Himpunan-Hijau, who I met this morning in order to hold a press conference on this and other matters. Seet Ping came to highlight the issue of a Lynas rare-earth facility and the export of environmental risk from Australia to Malaysia. I have visited the plant in Kuantan. I acknowledge the more than one million Malaysians who have signed a petition to draw the attention of not only this Parliament but also the Federal Parliament and the wider community in Australia to the risks being presented to these local community members. I want to ensure that the House hears the voices of those one million plus signatories and the need for significant change. I encourage Lynas to change tack to reduce the impact of the safety risks on the local community.

[Business interrupted.]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Community Recognition Statements

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [12.45 p.m.]: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to permit the taking of community recognition statements until 1.15 p.m.

Earlier I suspended standing and sessional orders to allow community recognition statements to extend to 12.30 p.m. It is now slightly past 12.30 p.m. so I again move to suspend standing and sessional orders to enable members to continue with their current enthusiasm until 1.15 p.m. At that time, if it looks like members want to continue I will come back and talk to them.

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

Motion agreed to.

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION STATEMENTS

[*Business resumed.*]

WOLLONDILLY ELECTORATE BRIGADE AID

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) [12.46 p.m.]: I further acknowledge major contributions made to this weekend's brigade aid raising money for our local Rural Fire Service. I thank our local radio station, C91.3, which donated \$2,000 while on air yesterday. I also thank Campbelltown Catholic Club and Michael Lavarato for the club's generous donation of \$5,000. I thank Wollondilly Council and Wingecarribee Council for their donations of not only money but also services. That is absolutely fantastic. I thank also Derks Produce and Bradcorp Community Trust, among many others. Such people ensure that our community goes from strength to strength.

LEBANESE INDEPENDENCE DAY

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [12.47 p.m.]: On 22 November 2013 I attended a tree planting ceremony at the Merrylands Kids Museum. The event was hosted by the Mayor of Holroyd City Council, Councillor Nasr Kafrouni, and the Lebanese Consultative Committee in celebration of Lebanese Independence Day. Although the rain was bucketing down the turnout was fantastic, and it was inspiring to see so many residents and community leaders there on the day to show their support and to commemorate Lebanese Independence Day. I commend Councillor Kafrouni and the committee for hosting this successful event, and I congratulate the Lebanese community on its 70 years of independence.

WILLIAM WILBERFORCE FOUNDATION

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.48 p.m.]: I recognise and commend to the House the wonderful work of the William Wilberforce Foundation. Recently I was proud to host a breakfast for the foundation in Parliament House. In particular, I thank the William Wilberforce Foundation for its work in supporting community groups and churches to cater for marginalised and disadvantaged Australians, including ex-offenders, addicts and those experiencing family breakdown. I acknowledge and thank Jonathan Green, the national director, as well as John Saddington, a former rector of St Marks Anglican Church in Avalon in my community, and the work of prison chaplains who do such sterling work both with the William Wilberforce Foundation and throughout our prisons.

ITALIAN SOCIAL WELFARE ORGANISATION OF WOLLONGONG

Ms NOREEN HAY (Wollongong) [12.49 p.m.]: I recognise and congratulate the Italian Social Welfare Organisation of Wollongong [ItSoWel] on winning the NSW Community Relations Commission National Multicultural Marketing Award. The Italian community organisation won the award for its documentary *My Backyard, Your Backyard* in the community category. It captures footage of Italian backyards in Wollongong. The film highlights the dedication of Italian residents in maintaining their backyards and illustrates how their efforts have not only had a positive impact on their wellbeing and sustainability but also enabled them to strengthen cultural ties with their Italian family, friends and neighbours. I extend my sincere congratulations to ItSoWel executive officer Giovanna Cardamone, ItSoWel president Renato Garnero, Sandra Pires, Ty Gamer and Lorna Kaer on their contributions to winning this award. I wish them all the best with their future endeavours.

EURELLA COMMUNITY SERVICES

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) [12.50 p.m.]: I congratulate Eurella Community Services on the sixtieth anniversary of its incorporation and particularly on the wonderful work it has done over that time in the inner west of Sydney, including in my own electorate of Drummoyne. The story of Eurella is remarkable. In the 1940s, a retired teacher from Presbyterian Ladies College Sydney and a group of parents of intellectually handicapped children and young adults joined forces to form an association for the general teaching and wellbeing of their children. In this endeavour they were supported by Rotary, the police citizens club, local councillors and members of Parliament. These organisations and the New South Wales Government continue to support this organisation today.

It is said that "individually we can do some things, but collectively we can do everything". This is certainly true when one considers Eureka's achievements and just how far it has come in its first 60 years. I congratulate Eureka Community Services on its sixtieth anniversary and look forward to watching what this amazing and inspirational organisation achieves in its next 60 years.

COALFIELDS CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) [12.51 p.m.]: I acknowledge the Coalfields Cancer Support Group for the wonderful fundraising work they do, with proceeds being donated to Newcastle's Calvary Mater Hospital for research equipment. The group was established in 1999 and all its members have been touched by cancer in some way. The group has a goal of raising \$500,000 for the Calvary Mater Hospital, and they are closing in on it. Over the past 10 years they have raised \$418,500. Every member is a volunteer and money is raised mainly through raffles, bus trips, selling crocheted rugs, and social evenings and donations. Some of this group's wonderful committee are: Marie Main, president; Mary Kennedy, assistant president; Barbara Merrick, treasurer; and Laurel Mears, secretary.

WOLLONDILLY BUSHFIRES

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) [12.52 p.m.]: On Monday I had the great pleasure, along with Minister Katrina Hodgkinson, of congratulating staff from the Sydney Catchment Authority and the National Parks and Wildlife Service for saving vital water supply infrastructure during the recent Wollondilly bushfires. The fire sped from Balmoral across the Hume Highway and into the special area of the catchment, with winds of up to 80 to 100 kilometres per hour. The Nepean water filtration plant located there supplies 24,000 residents of Picton, Bargo, Thirlmere and The Oaks. The quick response by the officers protected critical water supply infrastructure and kept water running in Wollondilly.

If the water filtration plant had been destroyed, the main water supply to Wollondilly would have been disrupted. It would have affected not only the drinking water supply to homes but also the availability of water to the firefighting effort for a significant period. I take this opportunity to thank the brave staff of the Sydney Catchment Authority and the National Parks and Wildlife Service for their quick thinking and outstanding response.

VISAYAN ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) [12.53 p.m.]: I recognise the Visayan Association of Australia. The association held its tenth anniversary function on Saturday 24 August at the All Saints Catholic Church Liverpool parish hall. The association is made up of Australians of Filipino background and is ably led by its president, Jhun Salazar. The association aims to maintain and develop Visayan culture and pursue social and religious development. Additionally they have a strong charitable focus on helping people in the Philippines.

The event held on 24 August was no different—it aimed to raise money for their charitable purposes. Others present at the event included Cen Amores, founding president of the Alliance of Philippine Community Organisations [APCO]; Josephine Maynard, president of Fil-Oz Liverpool and Districts Incorporated; and Carol North-Samardzic. The Visayan Association is another good example of multicultural Sydney, especially south-west Sydney and most particularly Liverpool.

PITTWATER BUSINESS LIMITED

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.54 p.m.]: I recognise and commend to the House the wonderful work done by Pittwater Business Limited, a networking community developed under the aegis of Pittwater Council. It sponsors all sorts of business groups, from traditional high street businesses through to home-based businesses and micro businesses throughout the Pittwater district. It has been operating successfully for more than seven years. I commend all the incoming directors, many of whom have been long-serving. They include the chairman, Jeff Banks, Andrew Blunden, Richard Morgan, Shayna Price, Gail Fitzpatrick, Peter Lever, Ryan Fitton, Bill Adams and John Scutt. I acknowledge the wonderful work they do advocating for the needs of the business community throughout Pittwater and acknowledge that next week they are having their annual fundraiser in support of the NSW Rural Fire Service local brigades, which service our district so faithfully.

MOUNT DRUITT NEIGHBOUR AID

Mr RICHARD AMERY (Mount Druitt) [12.55 p.m.]: I would like the Parliament to recognise the good work of Mount Druitt Neighbour Aid, a community organisation comprising volunteers who visit many in

our community. Volunteers visit people at home, take clients to the shops and to medical appointments and, in many cases, are just a friend to many who appreciate their company and assistance. Demand for the service is increasing and a call has been made for more locals to sign up and become volunteers. It is hard to imagine a more worthy role for people wanting to serve their community than being a volunteer for Mount Druitt Neighbour Aid. I wish all those involved in Mount Druitt Neighbour Aid, and all those who are visited by the volunteers of this great organisation, a very merry Christmas and all the best of good health for 2014.

ITALIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY BUSINESS AWARDS

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) [12.55 p.m.]: I congratulate the Italian Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Australia on their business awards gala dinner last night at Le Montage in Lilyfield. I commend the chairman, Joseph Carrozzi; the chief executive officer, Mr Nicholas Carè; and the many great Italian Australian companies for their contribution to this great State and indeed this country. I commend Vittoria Coffee, Carla Zampatti, Nick Scali and Nat Zanardo to mention just a few. Whether it be in the fields of fashion, food, engineering, motor cars or the arts, Italians continue to lead the world. It was a great night from one of the leading chambers of commerce in the world.

BALMAIN ELECTORATE FIRE STATION CLOSURES

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [12.56 p.m.]: I congratulate my local community for coming together to highlight concern around the temporary closure of local fire stations. I highlight in particular the role of the Balmain Rozelle Chamber of Commerce president, Jodie Stewart, who came to see me to highlight concerns held by the local business community. I would also like to thank Jim Cassey from the Fire Brigade Employees Union for attending meetings with me, and the many other members of the local community who have come together to raise their concerns about the temporary closure of the local fire stations. I assure them that I will continue to do my best to work with the Government to ensure that these closures do not continue in the future and that the issue can be resolved in a positive way to ensure the protection of firefighters and of property, and to address the concerns of all those in the local community.

PICTON FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE NSW

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) [12.57 p.m.]: I congratulate the Picton NSW Fire and Rescue Service for working tirelessly to ensure that our community is protected. It has been lobbying State Governments for a very long time to upgrade its facility. I thank the Premier, Barry O'Farrell, and the Treasurer, Mike Baird, for ensuring that \$1 million was allocated in the budget this year towards an upgrade of that station, which in total will cost \$2.3 million. I know when I went there recently and met with the fireys they were absolutely delighted and amazed that the Government is getting on with the job and could still, despite the tough economic circumstances thrust upon it by those opposite, manage to find \$2.3 million to upgrade local services to protect our communities. I thank them for what they do each and every day right across the State.

ITALIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY BUSINESS AWARDS

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [12.58 p.m.]: On Wednesday 27 November 2013 the Italian Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Australia hosted the thirty-fifth business awards gala dinner. The gala dinner recognised business achievements by members of the Italian community in Australia. The award categories were small to medium enterprise, large enterprise and the hall of fame. The 2013 Hall of Fame Award winner was Mr Les Schirato. Award recipients were presented with the Italian Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Australia business excellence awards. Award winners have excelled in fostering relationships between Italy and Australia. Congratulations to the chief executive officer and secretary general, Mr Nicholas Carè, and the chairman, Mr Joseph Carrozzi, for organising the successful gala dinner.

PITTWATER ELECTORATE LIONS CLUBS

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.59 p.m.]: I recognise and commend the work of Lions Clubs throughout Pittwater, in particular the Avalon Lions Club and families such as the Spencer family and the McTaggart family, who have served the Avalon community so well. I recognise the Pittwater Lions Club, of which I am a member, and in particular Ann Sawtell, the long-serving president. Many members of the Pittwater Lions Club have been members for many decades. I acknowledge the wonderful work that the Lions Clubs do, in particular at the annual Australia Day barbeque at Newport Beach and the annual Christmas luncheon they hold to support older people in our community. The Lions Club motto is "We Serve", and in Pittwater they certainly do.

CITY OF SYDNEY PUBLIC SPACE LIAISON OFFICERS

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) [1.00 p.m.]: I commend the skill and expertise of the two City of Sydney public space liaison officers, who work with rough sleepers, street drinkers and others in the public domain. These officers address community concerns about antisocial behaviour, link homeless people with outreach services and negotiate agreements that prevent impacts on safety and amenity. By building good relationships with all parties, these officers prevent the need for police or other intervention, reduce conflict and help people get back on their feet. This requires special attributes including empathy, creativity, personal initiative and a good dose of common sense. They have no formal authority and rely on their ingenuity to achieve positive results, which I regularly hear about their work. These officers are part of the City of Sydney's Homelessness Unit. I recognise their contribution to helping address an ongoing concern in all big cities across the world.

TRIBUTE TO FATHER BOB HAYES

TRIBUTE TO MONSIGNOR VINCE REDDEN

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) [1.01 p.m.]: I congratulate Father Bob Hayes from Five Dock on his contribution to the parish of All Hallows. After 11 years of dedicated service Father Hayes is relocating to a parish in Austral. We wish him all the very best and congratulate him on his many years of service to a great community. I also take this opportunity to congratulate Monsignor Vince Redden of St Marks Drummoyne on his retirement. The community of Drummoyne is richer for his contribution. The Parliament and the community wish Monsignor Vince a very happy retirement.

MEN'S SHEDS

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) [1.02 p.m.]: I acknowledge the great work for communities across Australia that is done by men's sheds. The vision of men's sheds was and is to establish a place for men that enables social interaction and activities to maintain health and wellbeing, support for those members who require it, and to ease the transition from full-time employment to other activities in retirement. The community in my electorate of Cessnock is lucky to have five men's sheds—some of which have been established for a while and others that are fairly new. The men's sheds include Cessnock Shed and Community Garden led by Peter Torenbeek, Branxton-Greta Men's Shed Inc. led by Stephen Wall, Kurri Kurri Men's Shed led by Bill Way, Hawkins Men's Shed with Louanne Riboldi as the contact person, and 2322 Men's Shed led by John Bell.

STURT GALLERY WOODWORK EXHIBITION

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) [1.03 p.m.]: I inform the House of the excellent woodwork exhibition that will be on display at Sturt Gallery, Mittagong, from this weekend until 8 December. Wooden pieces range from fine furniture, instruments and a weaving loom. They are a collection of fine art furniture created by graduates attending the 12-month woodwork course at the gallery. Artists include Charlie Gillings, Dave Read, Doug Rosemond, Geoff Clayton, Seb Stafford and Isabel Avendano. I assure the House that the quality of the woodwork is second to none. I encourage members and the community to attend the opening of the exhibition, which will occur on Saturday at 11.00 a.m., and the graduation ceremony. Once again I take this opportunity to congratulate all those involved.

ST GEORGE ILLAWARRA DRAGONS BRONX GOODWIN

Ms NOREEN HAY (Wollongong) [1.04 p.m.]: I congratulate Illawarra Dragon Bronx Goodwin on the assistance he recently gave to a teenager who suffered an epileptic fit as reported in the *Illawarra Mercury*. Ben Short had fallen off the back of the jet ski of his uncle, Mr Thompson, on Lake Illawarra approximately 200 metres from shore when he began to have the near fatal fit. When his uncle reached him he could see that he was breathing in water and rolled him over, commenced cardiopulmonary resuscitation and called for help. Illawarra Dragon Bronx Goodwin had been jet-skiing before the incident and saw that Mr Thompson was distressed. He commandeered a nearby boat, motored out to the spot where Ben had gone under, brought him to shore in the boat and administered further cardiopulmonary resuscitation. Paramedics were called and Ben was taken to Wollongong Hospital where he spent four days recovering from water inhalation and kidney damage. The paper reported that paramedics later told Bronx and Mr Thompson that if they had not acted when they did Ben would be dead. I commend them both and commend Mr Goodwin for his bravery.

[*Business interrupted.*]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Adjournment****Motion by Mr BRAD HAZZARD agreed to:**

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to provide for the House to adjourn without motion moved at the conclusion of community recognition statements.

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION STATEMENTS

[*Business resumed.*]

MONA VALE HOSPITAL FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Parliamentary Secretary) [1.05 p.m.]: I commend the wonderful work that is being done by the Mona Vale Hospital Jubilee Committee, which is busily organising the celebration on 22 February 2014 of 50 years of service by Mona Vale Hospital to our local community on the northern beaches. In particular, I commend committee chairman Parry Thomas, Gail Carew, Eileen Gordon, Lynn Smith, Jacqui Edgely and others on the committee for their hard work. I also commend volunteers from Mona Vale Surf Club who are working with the committee to arrange a number of events, including an open day, a fundraising gala dinner, a chapel service to offer thanksgiving for the work of the hospital, and a surf club swim being organised by Mona Vale Surf Life Saving Club to raise funds for this vital community facility. It will be a wonderful opportunity to give thanks, to celebrate the service of the hospital over the past 50 years and to look forward to the services that it will provide for the next 50 years.

GREAT IRISH FAMINE COMMEMORATION

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) [1.06 p.m.]: Today I recognise the work of the Great Irish Famine Commemoration Committee, which is responsible for the Famine Orphan Monument at Hyde Park Barracks. The monument, which was unveiled in 1998, is the site of an annual commemoration, held this year on Sunday 25 August. This year's event was attended by Jimmy Deeihaan, TD, Ireland's Minister for the Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht and Chair of the Famine Commemoration Committee in Ireland. The commemoration reflects the enormity of the Great Famine, more correctly known as An Gorta Mor, or the Great Hunger. Famine suggests an absence of food, which was not the case in Ireland in 1845-1852. There was food but it was sent to England while the peasantry starved to death. Of a population of eight million, one million died and one million were forced to immigrate. It was the worst social disaster of the nineteenth century. The population of the island of Ireland has never reached pre-famine levels. It was a defining moment in Irish history. The committee was led capably for many years by Tom Power and is now led just as capably by historian Dr Perry McIntyre. I was pleased to attend this year's commemoration, as I have attended commemorations in previous years.

CITY OF CANADA BAY COUNCIL

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) [1.07 p.m.]: I refer to the contribution of local government to my local community and congratulate City of Canada Bay on its many outstanding awards. I also thank the mayor and councillors for their community service. While we often differ in our opinions on issues, we do our best to deliver outcomes for our community. I wish the general manager, Mr Gary Sawyer, the mayor, councillors, staff and, indeed, everyone in this House a very merry Christmas and a happy new year.

LEICHHARDT COUNCIL PRECINCT COMMITTEES

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [1.07 p.m.]: I congratulate the efforts of our local precinct committees in my electorate which is covered by Leichhardt Council. In particular, I highlight the work of Kevin Condon, Jan Rasmussen, Christina Ritchie, former councillor John Stamilos and other precinct committee members who highlighted to the community the impact of the council's proposed special rate variation. That rate variation, which would have increased rates by up to 5.46 per cent every year for seven years, was the work of the precinct committee.

WOLLONDILLY EVENING VIEW CLUB

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) [1.08 p.m.]: I support Wollondilly Evening View Club, which is raising funds for disadvantaged children by conducting a garage sale over two days from 7 December to 8 December at 14 Peak Road, Buxton. The sale will commence at 8.00 a.m. and conclude at 5.00 p.m. on both days and the money that is raised will go to the Smith Family. Those attending will be able to grab a bargain. Goods for sale include toys, furniture, clothing and household items to name but a few. In encouraging people to attend Jill Burton, publicity officer, said, "We're trying to make as much money as we can for the Smith Family as they have so many great projects and they help disadvantaged teenagers with the costs of going to university." Wollondilly groups do an amazing job in helping those in need. I congratulate the Wollondilly Evening View Club on such a great initiative.

SYDNEY MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITY SERVICES

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [1.08 p.m.]: On 27 November I attended the official launch of the Sydney Multicultural Community Services No. 1A building. I was joined at the launch by members from the community, a number of multicultural service providers, the Hon. Matt Thistlethwaite and the member for Sydney. I congratulate Mrs Rosa Loria and her team on their hard work and commend the Sydney Multicultural Community Services for its successful launch and for its outstanding contributions, working with migrant communities throughout Sydney.

TRIBUTE TO REVEREND PHILIP RAWLINGS

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Parliamentary Secretary) [1.09 p.m.]: I recognise the wonderful work that has been done by Reverend Philip Rawlings and his wife, Helen, at the Pittwater Presbyterian Church, Newport, also known as the "Kirk". After many years of service Philip has announced his retirement and he goes with the best wishes of our community. He is not going far, only to Avalon Beach, but we thank him for his many years of faithful service. I understand that it throws the future of Pittwater Presbyterian Church into some doubt but hopefully a good outcome can be achieved for all those who form part of that parish. I commend Reverend Rawlings for his work.

MARRIAGE EQUALITY

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) [1.10 p.m.]: I recognise the positive impact that the Governor-General's recent comments about marriage have had on the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex community. The Governor-General shared her vision that Australia should be a country where people are free to love and marry whom they choose. That has provided an important affirmation of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex community's identity, sexuality, and loving and committed relationships.

BONG BONG PICNIC RACES

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) [1.10 p.m.]: I congratulate the trainer Stephen Schofield and the owners of horse Beaveroo on their recent win at this year's Bong Bong race day. More than 7,000 people attended the event to see the two former winners Beaveroo and Central Act line up and compete in the event. The two were neck and neck until Beaveroo won by a short head. There is a proud tradition at the Bong Bong Race Club, which was formed in 1886. By the 1980s Bong Bong was the largest picnic race meeting in the world. The club was the first in Australia to: have its races televised in both black and white and in colour; conduct races restricted to lady riders; have a female secretary; and offer stallion services as a prize. Also it was the first club in New South Wales to reintroduce hurdle and steeple races after World War II. I congratulate the club on another successful running of the event and look forward to next year's race.

DISCOVERING AND DISCUSSING ORGAN DONATION TOGETHER PROJECT

Ms NOREEN HAY (Wollongong) [1.11 p.m.]: I congratulate the Discovering and Discussing Organ Donation Together Project on being named the winner in the government category at the National Multicultural Marketing Awards. The Illawarra campaign was formed as a joint initiative between the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District and the University of Wollongong Centre for Health Initiatives. It consisted of a range of community activities aimed at increasing the number of Greek, Serbian and Macedonian Orthodox community members who have access to information on organ and tissue donation.

The Discovering and Discussing Organ Donation Together Project assisted in addressing cultural issues and stigma surrounding the discussion of organ and tissue donation. Following discussions with community members and religious leaders, the project developed a social campaign that was able to address some of these concerns. I congratulate the project leader, Dr Lyn Phillipson, and her team on their award and thank them for the important role they play in the promotion of organ and tissue donation in the community.

PITTWATER CYCLING

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Parliamentary Secretary) [1.12 p.m.]: I commend the many cycling clubs in Pittwater and the businesses and salerooms that support them. Cycling is becoming an increasingly important mode of transportation in Pittwater. I commend cycling to members because it is a wonderful method of commuting and a great opportunity to improve fitness. The Government has listened to the concerns of cyclists in Pittwater and repaired and resurfaced McCarrs Creek Road and Pittwater Road through Bayview, which is a popular cycling route. I urge motorists to display patience and tolerance towards cyclists and encourage cyclists to be responsive to the needs of motorists. We must recognise that we have to share our roadways. I pass on my best wishes to cyclists in Pittwater and throughout the community and hope they stay safe while commuting during the Christmas break.

KELLYVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOL LEADERS

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Hawkesbury—Parliamentary Secretary) [1.13 p.m.]: Today Kellyville Public School captains, prefects and principal, Ms Walker, are visiting Parliament House. These young leaders are provided with this wonderful opportunity each year and today it has been my absolute pleasure to give them a grand tour of Parliament House, including a visit to the upper House. I thank principal Jenny Walker for establishing this leadership program. I encourage other schools in my area and across the State to visit the Parliament and explore its wonderful historical significance as the first Parliament of this country prior to Federation.

TRIBUTE TO FATHER MICHAEL MCLEAN

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [1.14 p.m.]: It is with great sadness that I announce the departure of Father Michael McLean from the John the Baptist parish at Bonnyrigg Heights. Father Michael has been the parish priest for the past eight years. During his time he established the parish pastoral council, conducted the first parish survey, and presided over the expansion building programs of Freeman Catholic College and the John the Baptist Primary School. Father Michael has enhanced the spirituality of the parish. He has also attended the past few World Youth Day events and was a significant contributor to World Youth Day 2008 in Sydney. On behalf of John the Baptist parish, I wish Father Michael McLean all the best as he takes up his new ministry at St Mark's Drummoyne on 1 January 2014.

ADOPT AN ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) [1.15 p.m.]: I congratulate Bargo, Oakdale and Appin Public School students who are taking part in the local Adopt an Environment Program. The program aims to set up recycling stations and food waste reduction activities in schools to help reduce the amount of waste going to landfill. Wollondilly schools are made up of fantastic teachers who support our students. I commend them for helping the students understand the value of recycling. Wollondilly Shire Council has also been behind the initiative and I thank it for its involvement. Mr Acting-Speaker, I wish you and everyone who is still here at the end of our last sitting day a very merry Christmas and a safe and happy new year, and urge everyone to drive safely on our roads.

Community recognition statements concluded.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I wish everyone a merry and safe Christmas and a happy new year. I thank Parliamentary staff, members and members' staff for their hard work throughout the year and look forward to seeing everyone back safe and sound in 2014.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to resolution, at 1.16 p.m. until
Tuesday 25 February 2014 at 12 noon.**
