

ADHIKA INC. GALA DINNER AND AUSTRALIAN NURSES AWARDS .....	28088
ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATIONS .....	28093
ARMIDALE DISTRICT BUSINESS CHAMBER.....	28086
ARMIDALE PRIMARY SCHOOL STATE SPORTING REPRESENTATIVES .....	28110
ASQUITH BOYS HIGH SCHOOL WORLD'S GREATEST SHAVE.....	28109
AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT .....	28035
AUSTRALIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT MARIANNE SALIBA .....	28105
AVALON BILGOLA AMATEUR SWIMMING CLUB.....	28086
BANKSTOWN CITY NETBALL ASSOCIATION.....	28085
BARRACK POINT AND SHELLHARBOUR SURF LIFE SAVING CLUBS.....	28108
BLACKTOWN HOSPITAL EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT .....	28061
BLACKTOWN INTERNATIONAL SPORTS PARK.....	28063
BLAKE BELL, STATE BASEBALL PLAYER .....	28106
BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.....	28030, 28046, 28071, 28071
CAMDEN SCHOOL LEADERS PARLIAMENT HOUSE VISIT .....	28091
CHALLONER HOUSE.....	28066
CHILD PROTECTION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2013 .....	28034
COAL SEAM GAS PROHIBITION (SYDNEY WATER CATCHMENT SPECIAL AREAS) BILL 2013.....	28035
COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT .....	28058
COMMUNITY RECOGNITION STATEMENTS .....	28084, 28105
CRIMES AMENDMENT (INTOXICATION) BILL 2014.....	28034, 28072
CRONULLA ESPLANADE AND SEAWALL .....	28106
CRONULLA SUTHERLAND JUNIOR RUGBY LEAGUE ASSOCIATION.....	28109
CRONULLA LINE OPAL CARD ELECTRONIC TICKETING SYSTEM .....	28098
DAMIAN KING, JOG OUT OF FOG .....	28108
DECLAN DRAKE, YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBER .....	28109
DETECTIVE SERGEANT CHRISTIE HOULDIN.....	28107
DISTINGUISHED VISITORS .....	28058
DYLAN JOBSON, STATE RUGBY LEAGUE AWARD.....	28109
EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHING SCHOLARSHIPS .....	28106
EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE.....	28066
EL SALVADORIAN COMMUNITY CELEBRATION .....	28084
FESTIVAL OF THE MOST HOLY CRUCIFIX.....	28086
GADEN SENIORS CENTRE.....	28087
GENERAL SIR PETER COSGROVE, AC.....	28085
GRACEADES COMMUNITY COTTAGE.....	28086
HAWKESBURY ELECTORATE SCHOOLS .....	28100
HUNTER EXPRESSWAY .....	28089
IKEA MARSDEN PARK.....	28108
INNER WEST LIGHT RAIL EXTENSION .....	28059, 28104
JAMIE NEWMAN, VOCATIONAL EXCELLENCE AWARD .....	28108
JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL MATTERS.....	28071
KINROSS WOLAROI SCHOOL WORLD'S GREATEST SHAVE.....	28087
KYE CORNALL, WORLD BAREFOOT SKIING CHAMPION .....	28085
LACHLAN CAMPBELL, CHARITY FUNDRAISER.....	28107
LEGAL PROFESSION UNIFORM LAW APPLICATION BILL 2014.....	28047
LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE .....	28056
LIFE CYCLING CAMPAIGN .....	28085
LIVERPOOL ELECTORATE NEWROZ CELEBRATIONS .....	28088
LIVERPOOL JOBS .....	28088
MAITLAND SPORTSPERSON OF THE YEAR AWARD RECIPIENT MADDISON ELLIOTT ..	28087
MALTESE WELFARE ASSOCIATION QUIET ACHIEVERS AWARDS .....	28099
MR HUGH CAVILL.....	28058
MUNOZ CHILDREN BENEFIT NIGHT .....	28086
NATIONAL SERVICEMEN'S MEMORIAL .....	28102
NATIONAL YOUTH WEEK WOLLONDILLY .....	28105
NATIONAL YOUTH WEEK.....	28092
NORTHCONNEX MOTORWAY .....	28101
OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF OF NEW SOUTH WALES STAFFING .....	28043

ORANGE ELECTROLUX PLANT.....	28090
ORANGEVILLE-WEROMBI RURAL FIRE BRIGADE SEVENTIETH ANNIVERSARY .....	28097
ORGANISED CRIME .....	28058
PALLIATIVE CARE .....	28081
PAYROLL TAX REBATE SCHEME (JOBS ACTION PLAN) AMENDMENT (FRESH START SUPPORT) BILL 2014 .....	28077
PENRITH CITY FESTIVAL.....	28105
PETITIONS .....	28071
PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE SPOT REZONING.....	28095
PLANNING AND PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT.....	28103
PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS.....	28088
PROJECT YOUTH KICK START PROGRAM .....	28108
PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE.....	28070
QUESTION TIME .....	28058
RANDWICK LITERARY INSTITUTE .....	28099
REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE.....	28065
ROCKDALE ARTS FESTIVAL .....	28087
SAVING OUR SPECIES .....	28094
SHELLHARBOUR SHARKS FOOTBALL CLUB .....	28106
ST MARYS LEAGUES CLUB .....	28106
STATE INFRASTRUCTURE .....	28062
STEEL MAGNOLIA AWARD RECIPIENT MICHELLE DAVIS .....	28087
SUGARLOAF STATE CONSERVATION AREA MINE SUBSIDENCE .....	28068
SUPERINTENDENT BRUCE EDWARD LYONS, APM .....	28054
SYDNEY CITY CENTRE ACCESS STRATEGY .....	28050
TAFE CHANGES MORATORIUM (SECURE FUTURE FOR PUBLIC PROVISION OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING) BILL 2014 (NO 2).....	28030
TEACHING SERVICE AMENDMENT (TRANSFERS) BILL 2014.....	28046
TINGHA TIGERS RUGBY LEAGUE CLUB .....	28107
TRANSPORT SERVICES .....	28069
TRIBUTE TO DR JOHN LAMBERT .....	28109
TRIBUTE TO JANDA TANNER.....	28086
TRIBUTE TO JOHN SAUNDERSON .....	28109
UNITED SERVICES UNION .....	28107
UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN SYDNEY LIBERAL CLUB.....	28085
WESTMEAD HOSPITAL UPGRADE.....	28096
WIDEVIEW PUBLIC SCHOOL WORLD'S GREATEST SHAVE .....	28110
WOLLONDILLY ANGLICAN COLLEGE HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE ACHIEVEMENTS.....	28107
WOLLONDILLY TALENT FACTOR.....	28087

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday 27 March 2014

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

**The Speaker read the Prayer and acknowledgement of country.**

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

### Notices of Motions

**General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) given.**

### **TAFE CHANGES MORATORIUM (SECURE FUTURE FOR PUBLIC PROVISION OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING) BILL 2014 (NO 2)**

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

### Second Reading

**Mr JAMIE PARKER** (Balmain) [10.04 a.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The TAFE Changes Moratorium (Secure Future for Public Provision of Vocational Education and Training) Bill 2014 (No 2) represents a crucial first step towards safeguarding TAFE as an important public provider of vocational education. The bill seeks to reverse the attacks on TAFE by the former Labor Government and the Coalition Government. This bill aims to do three things: First, freeze funding to private providers at appropriate levels; secondly, to reverse fees rising for students; and, thirdly, to immediately stop this Government's Smart and Skilled market that will force TAFE into a race to the bottom with low-cost, low-quality private providers.

Following years of cost cutting, rising fees, privatised training and job losses TAFE needs an urgent plan to safeguard its future. TAFE is being pushed to the brink by this Government's budget cuts and the privatisation agenda. When this is combined with years of neglect under Labor, we can see New South Wales is now looking at a future with a much diminished TAFE. TAFE students are being asked to pay more in order to receive less. Class sizes will rise, the range of courses will shrink, and time to help individual students will all but disappear. I am particularly concerned about local TAFEs in my electorate. Many constituents who are worried about the impact of cuts and privatisation on their courses have contacted me.

In my electorate there is a TAFE facility in Annandale that is mainly used for construction and Petersham TAFE, which is on the other side of Parramatta Road outside my electorate. Following the State electoral boundary redistribution the Ultimo TAFE, or the Sydney Institute, will move into my electorate. Members have heard of the funding cuts to the fine arts courses that have had a significant impact on the creative and cultural vibrancy of the arts community. The arts community is the backbone of so many businesses and is responsible for positive cultural effects in the inner west, the community I represent. Local TAFE students are being seriously impacted by cuts to the Sydney Institute.

According to figures requested by The Greens, Sydney Institute saw the removal of at least 66 full-time permanent equivalent staff in 2013, including 55 teachers. The rhetoric from the Government about delivering for TAFE is not being reflected on the ground. These are not just changes in provision in order to keep up to date with modern requirements, as the Minister stated, but a reduction in the capacity of TAFE to deliver. The Sydney Institute has seen a reduction of 66 full-time permanent equivalent staff that included 55 teachers.

The plans by the Sydney Institute to shed staff and elite courses in the work and study pathways facility were exposed as preparation for the impact of the Liberal Government's Smart and Skilled competitive training market. That is the agenda. TAFE managers are preparing for the introduction of this competitive training

market. Under the proposed so-called reforms core funding places, which account for 87 per cent of current faculty enrolments, will be replaced by training entitlements that will be available to only 23.5 per cent of current students. Foundation studies have been hardest hit and it appears the Higher School Certificate course may no longer be offered at Ultimo TAFE. This year Ultimo TAFE has lost commercial cookery, information technology and English as a second language teachers. It has also lost teachers in foundation studies, especially science, and migrant education consultants.

This bill will take fees for TAFE courses and funding for private providers back to the 2010 level and freeze them there. The bill insists that the Minister for Education introduce policies that ensure TAFE is a dominant provider and specifically that no policies are introduced that will increase competition for and undermine TAFE. This bill is a moratorium that will reverse the damage caused by TAFE budget cuts and fee increases that were begun by the former Government and have been continued by this Government. It will halt the so-called Smart and Skilled market and remove the need for TAFE managers to cut courses, slash staff and destroy support programs in preparation for Smart and Skilled, which is scheduled to begin on 1 January 2015.

It is important to be clear: This bill is not about to create a future for TAFE; that is a task we are all challenged with. This bill invites every member of Parliament, TAFE manager, teacher and student to enter into debate on securing a future for TAFE. The bill will stop the destruction that TAFE currently faces. For the first time in the 120-year history of TAFE and its predecessors we are confronting the real prospect of a future where public provision of vocational education and training is no longer dominant but is in a state of collapse. Budget cuts of more than \$800 million in the forward estimates will see 800 jobs disappear from TAFE. In answer to a question on notice from The Greens in the other place the Minister for Education advised that 395 jobs disappeared from TAFE in 2013. That means that the O'Farrell Government is only halfway towards its target of cutting 800 jobs from the system.

I note that Dr John Kaye from the upper House has raised this issue. I will repeat some of the points he made for members of this House. When we released the figures publicly, Pam Christie, the Director General of TAFE, appeared on Robbie Buck's radio program on the morning of 11 March 2014. She echoed the comments that we have heard from the Minister for Education that we are talking down TAFE. She seemed to suggest that criticising Smart and Skilled or trying to defend and protect TAFE is talking down TAFE. In fact, the opposite is true: Those of us who are fighting against the provisions the Government is introducing and the neglect of the former Government are standing up for TAFE and vocational education. We are defending the staff and the teachers and protecting the future of this State by working to save TAFE.

It is important to examine the comments Ms Christie made. In answer to questions by Robbie Buck she said, "We are talking about the opportunity to really look carefully at how we deliver services and where demand is for our services." It is extraordinary for Ms Christie to put forward that point considering that she has presided over a TAFE system that has significantly reduced support services for people with special needs, outreach programs and all-important second-chance learning and undermined opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities to learn cooking and food skills at places such as the North Sydney Institute. Despite this we are told that we are talking down TAFE and that they are simply looking carefully at demand for its services. The reality is that there is strong demand across TAFE and trying to deliver services with 400 fewer staff is nigh on impossible. Ms Christie provided an interesting insight into her view as Director General of TAFE when she said:

But like any business our customer needs are changing. We are constantly reviewing the way we operate and our customers are telling us that they want services delivered more flexibly.

The Director General of TAFE is not running a business; she is running a public service. Of course, TAFE needs to be responsive but it is an organisation that is critical to social justice and positive education outcomes. Robbie Buck went on to ask, "When you say customers, you are talking about students?" Her reply was, "Yes, students, and employers though, because they are an important part of your business." That goes to the heart of the thinking that has infected not only many in this place but also seems to be driving the department. They think that the customers, as they are called, are buying and selling individual pieces of knowledge and they are creating pieces of value-added human capital.

We say that vocational education and training is about creating people who can engage in our society as active and productive citizens. The concept of citizenship is lost when the market triumphs and it becomes all about impersonal transactions with no responsibility to produce outcomes for a socially just society. We disagree. We believe that a public provider such as TAFE has an important social justice responsibility to deliver citizens to this State and nation. It is important to recognise that this year's review of government

services spoke strongly of how TAFE has responded to demand for its services. Fundamentally, TAFE responds to the demands of the community. Recently the chair of the Committee on Economic Development, of which I was a member, presented the committee report on skill shortages in New South Wales. As part of that inquiry we travelled around the State and visited different communities. All members—even one as pro-TAFE and pro-public education as me—were genuinely surprised by the level of support for TAFE shown by the business community, the chambers of commerce, individuals, employers looking for staff and the community in general, especially in rural and regional New South Wales.

That public support was one of the reasons why one finding of the conservative-dominated Committee on Economic Development was that TAFE is the backbone of vocational education and it should be adequately funded. When members went out and talked with business owners, entrepreneurs and people from local councils and local organisations we heard that TAFE is delivering, it is responsive and it is doing its job. The capacity for TAFE to do its job is now being undermined by these provisions. The truth is that the TAFE budget has already been cut to the bone. Between 1997 and 2010, using National Centre for Vocational Education Research data adjusted in per student terms and for inflation, the State's annual recurrent contribution for TAFE fell by 48 per cent. If TAFE were still funded in 2010 at the same level per student, adjusted for inflation, as it was funded in 1997 there would be an additional \$962 million in its budget each year. That shows the incredible decline in TAFE funding and proves that TAFE has already been cut to the bone. The data from 1997 to 2010 proves beyond question that the efficiency pressures placed on TAFE by this Government and the former Government are pushing TAFE to the edge.

There is a point where efficiency gains end and exploitation begins. We have seen that through the dramatic casualisation of the TAFE teaching workforce. It is our view that the efficiencies in TAFE that were available were exploited entirely more than 10 years ago and it is TAFE teachers and staff members who will pay the price for any future budget cuts. We have already seen that. A total of 800 jobs are due to be cut and close to 400 have been cut already. Every dollar that is now cut out of TAFE's budget is a course that is lost or shortened, a student whose education is compromised or an opportunity for second-chance learning that is denied. Rising fees during the period 1997 to 2010 have gone from 14.3 per cent of the total cost of educating a student to 23.7 per cent of the total cost of educating a student. Rising fees are closing the doors on young people from disadvantaged backgrounds who, research shows, will not pay additional costs for education and will be driven out of public education and second-chance education.

The serious damage, however, results from the implementation of Smart and Skilled, which is scheduled to begin in January 2015. Smart and Skilled has been delayed twice already as the O'Farrell Government comes to grips with the challenges of trying to rewrite the TAFE and the vocational education systems. At the heart of Smart and Skilled lies a plan to strip TAFE of its core funding for bread-and-butter courses. Certificate I, II and III courses will no longer be funded directly through TAFE. Instead, the money will be given to eligible students as a once-in-a-lifetime entitlement—effectively, a voucher that they can cash in at a public or private provider of their choice.

In effect, Smart and Skilled takes hundreds of millions of dollars out of the TAFE budget and makes the funds contestable in a market about which there is little information. The only information available will be informed by the opinions of the young people who hold the entitlements. The question then arises: What will those young people know about the quality of education and training provided by each of the registered organisations? We must not move to a situation where student choice is driven not by the quality of education but by the course duration or by giveaways or incentives offered by private providers. It is clear that private providers will offer the same courses as TAFE but, as we have often seen, of a lower quality or standard with lower assessment levels and outcomes. That happened in the lead-up to Smart and Skilled.

It is clear that high-speed, low-quality private providers will win this competition. They will change minimum standards, cut corners, avoid expenses—such as dealing with students with special needs or diverse learning needs, students from a non-English background or low socio-economic backgrounds and Aboriginal students. Students who increase costs for any reason may well be turned away by private providers. The competition Smart and Skilled presents to TAFE to recover funding is unwinnable. It is a race to the bottom for training quality not just in the short term but also in the long term, as teachers' salaries and conditions will fall to equal the lowest common denominator, which may be set by the modern award in the National Award System. Community service obligations will be cashed out and will become add-ons. Second-chance outreach and disability support will become nothing but afterthoughts to be provided where they are cost effective, not where they are needed. They will no longer be integrated in the TAFE system and will become things to be added, where the private provider can find a cost-effective way of doing so.

Added to this is a skills list, which supposedly responds to demand. This so-called skills list is one of the things the Committee for Economic Development heard about when visiting rural and regional areas. Members from rural and regional areas will tell us that in New South Wales there are significant challenges in finding quality staff. One of the things TAFE does effectively is to train people. The Minister always uses fine arts courses as an example. These courses have gone from costing a couple of hundred dollars a year to costing between \$8,000 and \$12,000 a year. Fine arts courses are collapsing as a result. Students at Hornsby TAFE were told a week before the fine arts course was due to begin that there would be no course. The Government argues there is no demand for fine arts courses, but the creative arts industry begs to differ.

In a report to the Government the industry said the cuts should be reversed. If one looks at census data for my area one finds that the creative arts play a significant part in my community's economy—not only galleries and artists but also people involved in service provision. This Government may dismiss fine arts as crochet and pottery; the truth is cultural foundations are critical to developing a just and sustainable society. If the Government throws away fine arts courses, their loss will demean us as a State. Across New South Wales people have had to abandon their fine arts studies. They have spoken about wanting to use their education in community arts and creative arts, which should be supported.

In Victoria there was a similar approach and it failed dismally. For the first time Victoria TAFE now provides less than 50 per cent of all vocational education and training. Between 2008 and 2012 the non-TAFE sector share of vocational education and training funding went from less than one-eighth to 41.3 per cent. Contestable funding went from just below one-quarter in 2008 to just below three-quarters in 2012. Now, 71.3 per cent of the vocational education and training budget is contestable and TAFE is losing out. The quality of vocational education and training in Victoria has nosedived. Bizarrely, and against the predictions of those who designed the Victorian market, costs have blown out and vocational education and training truly is in crisis.

We can see the problems in Victoria and that the nature of the private providers and the market is one of those problems. The Australian Skills Quality Authority is responsible for maintaining skills in registered training organisations around Australia. In a report published earlier this year, the authority said that up to half of registered training organisations are potentially misleading consumers. The authority pointed to practices of promising qualifications irrespective of the outcome of assessment and guaranteeing jobs after training. These organisations collect fees in advance that are above the limits set for registered organisations. Most importantly, the organisations set time frames for courses that fall far short of the volume of learning required.

We know that when young people go to TAFE, they can depend on TAFE—whether it is in Sydney or a rural and regional area—to get a quality education. However, evidence demonstrates we cannot have the same level of confidence in private providers. When young people receive a vocational education, that experience and the quality of that education are critical to their future. The concerns of the Australian Skills Quality Authority about private providers should be noted—another reason to protect TAFE by supporting this bill. The authority is the chief regulatory body of vocational education and training in New South Wales.

**Mr John Williams: Doom!**

**Mr JAMIE PARKER:** As the member for Murray-Darling said, its report points to the phenomena that would spell doom for vocational education and training in this State if we do not avert the sudden and rapid growth of private providers. The Industry Skills Council consultation also raised a number of concerning findings. The council found that private registered training organisations have applied:

- An inappropriate use of online learning that lacked work-based context;
- Training delivery that does not provide the appropriate knowledge and skills ... ;
- Inappropriate use of recognition of prior learning;
- Trainers who lack recent industry experience;
- Enrolling students without required prerequisites;
- Delivering training that the registered training organisation is not registered to deliver;
- Training (delivery and assessment) that varies in quality for certain target groups; and
- Pressure to push students through programs quickly to address skill shortages or deliver qualifications for required employment.

That is the finding of the council, a competent and well-known organisation, which highlighted these problems with bodgie private providers. That is another reason not to undermine TAFE by supporting these providers.

John Dawkins is chair of the National Skills Standards Council, which is the national body responsible for establishing skills standards and regulating registered training organisations, as well as the chair of the company that is seeking to move in and dominate the market. In its prospectus, published late last year, it was

open about its intention to gain market share through mergers, acquisitions and partnerships. The future under Smart and Skilled is about warm and fuzzy community-based private providers; it is about dominating vocational organisations out to make a profit for their shareholders—and we do not blame them for that. TAFE is not there to make a profit for shareholders but to educate students—not customers, but students—look after its teachers and provide a future for this State. The role of private providers is to maximise profit for shareholders and within that is an intrinsic conflict when it comes to the provision of information to our community.

If you support the privatisation of TAFE you may as well support the privatisation of primary education—get private companies to run primary and high school education. Why do we not do that? We do not do that because we know the profit motive is in conflict with the objectives we seek to gain from our primary and high schools. Do we really want to reduce the qualifications and quality of training in the sector by creating a corporate provider who is pushing down pay and conditions and ensuring profit is maximised? It is critical that this bill be addressed positively by this Government. I understand the Opposition is looking favourably on the bill, and I thank the Opposition for that. I turn to stories of people in New South Wales, including in my electorate, who have benefited from being educated at TAFE. I sit next to a member of Parliament who received his education from TAFE, something currently under threat by this Government's Smart and Skilled scheme. Government members say they love TAFE, but there have been almost 400 cuts to jobs in TAFEs, with another 400 to come.

**Mr Christopher Gulaptis:** There is a lot of online teaching.

**Mr JAMIE PARKER:** There is online teaching and we recognise that, but we know these cuts are not as a result of online teaching. Online teaching accounts for a very small proportion of the teaching staff cuts, because you still need to write the curriculum, support students and mark student work. The Minister is hiding behind a smokescreen of online training, pretending that that is the reason for the reduction in staff, which we know is not true. As I mentioned, in the Sydney Institute of TAFE many staff have left not because of online education but because of the preparation for war and the competition that will take place under Smart and Skilled when TAFE will have to reduce its standards or fail to attract contestable funding. We do not want to see TAFE destroyed; we want to see TAFE grow and blossom. I thank those who attended a public meeting held recently at Leichhardt Town Hall—representatives from the Teachers Federation, the Australian Education Union and others—who have been fighting strongly for TAFE, not just because they know that it delivers for young people in our community—

**The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser):** Order! I draw to the attention of the member for Balmain that it is now 10.30 a.m.

**Mr JAMIE PARKER:** I will conclude my remarks. Those organisations continue the fight to protect TAFE. I encourage members to strongly consider this bill, especially rural and regional members, and to support it.

**Debate adjourned on motion by Mr Troy Grant and set down as an order of the day for a future day.**

### **CHILD PROTECTION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2013**

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

### **CRIMES AMENDMENT (INTOXICATION) BILL 2014**

**The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser):** I report the receipt of the following message from the Legislative Council:

Madam SPEAKER

The Legislative Council, having considered the Legislative Assembly's message dated 20 March 2014, relating to the Crimes Amendment (Intoxication) Bill 2014, informs the Legislative Assembly that the Legislative Council insists on its amendments disagreed to by the Legislative Assembly in the bill.

Legislative Council  
26 March 2014

NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES  
Deputy President

**Consideration of message set down as an order of the day for a later hour.**

**AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT**

**The Clerk** announced the receipt, pursuant to section 63C of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, of the Auditor-General's Financial Audit Report, Volume One 2014, received out of session and authorised to be printed on 21 March 2014.

**The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser):** It being after 10.30 a.m. the House will now consider General Business Orders of the Day (for Bills).

**COAL SEAM GAS PROHIBITION (SYDNEY WATER CATCHMENT SPECIAL AREAS) BILL 2013****Second Reading****Debate resumed from 20 March 2014.**

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS** (Hawkesbury—Parliamentary Secretary) [10.32 a.m.]: It gives me great pleasure to speak on the Coal Seam Gas Prohibition (Sydney Water Catchment Special Areas) Bill 2013. I state at the outset that I firmly believe that New South Wales needs and must have a sustainable and viable coal seam gas industry. When I say sustainable and viable, I do not mean only from the economic perspective of a company seeking to extract resources from the ground for monitoring purposes. Coal seam gas should be a sustainable and viable industry in order to address the energy needs of the people of New South Wales. It should be sustainable in relation to our agricultural land. As part of a family who comes from and still lives on the land, I understand explicitly the importance of our agricultural industries and agricultural land. The coal seam gas industry should be sustainable also to ensure that the safest practices are applied for the protection of our water resources and our environment.

I commend the Minister for Energy and Resources who today, in the best interests of the New South Wales community, has sent a very clear message to industry that our Government will accept only best practice standards for natural gas operations in New South Wales. Today the Minister has announced a six-month freeze until September this year on processing new petroleum exploration licence applications. During this time the Government will introduce a more comprehensive application process to ensure that accountability and transparency are paramount at all stages of petroleum applications.

At the same time, the New South Wales Office of Coal Seam Gas will be undertaking a complete audit of all existing petroleum exploration licences as well as pending applications. This process will serve to identify and remove individuals or companies that do not have the financial security or industry expertise to meet expected standards, have not met the requirements of their coal seam gas exploration licences, or have submitted deficient applications. A petroleum exploration licence application has just been lodged by a company named Ceemac, I believe.

**Mr Troy Grant:** It is Ceemac.

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS:** I greatly appreciate the support from the Parliamentary Secretary for Natural Resources, who understands this issue explicitly. He has just confirmed that the company is indeed named Ceemac. Ceemac has lodged an application for a petroleum exploration licence in the suburb of Bilpin, which covers areas of sensitive national parks in the Blue Mountains.

**Mrs Roza Sage:** Correct.

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS:** I acknowledge the presence in the Chamber of the very effective and efficient member for Blue Mountains, who understands fully the importance of protecting our natural environment. She is working hard to ensure the protection of her natural environment in the very important area of the Blue Mountains. Today the Minister for Energy and Resources has increased the fee for a petroleum exploration licence from \$1,000 to \$50,000. The initial \$1,000 fee was introduced by the former State Labor Government in 2002, but this Government believes that is manifestly inadequate. By increasing the fee to \$50,000 it is expected that only reputable organisations will apply for petroleum exploration licences, thereby ensuring experienced, professional organisations are at the core of any petroleum operations taking place in New South Wales. Is the member for Murray-Darling seeking the call? I apologise for that rude interruption by the member for Murray-Darling.



**The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser):** Order! I remind the member for Hawkesbury that the Chair will make rulings in this House. Does the member for Hawkesbury wish to take a point of order?

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS:** The member for Murray-Darling was standing behind me for so long I thought I would have to go and get a City of Sydney compliance officer to remove him because it is a no standing zone.

**The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser):** Order! The member for Hawkesbury will return to the leave of the bill.

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS:** The imposition now of a \$50,000 application fee for a petroleum exploration licence will ensure that only legitimate applications will be made. Far be it from me to suggest that someone with their own political agenda may seek to apply for a petroleum exploration licence to put some fear into communities, but that may well be the case when the application fee is only \$1,000. The Minister has increased the fee to ensure that only legitimate organisations apply for a petroleum exploration licence. As I said, I believe that New South Wales needs and must have a sustainable coal seam gas industry because we have to maintain our gas energy resources for the people of New South Wales. The majority of coal seam gas that is mined in New South Wales accounts for only 6 per cent of our needs. As I understand, New South Wales draws on resources from the Cooper Basin in South Australia and Bass Strait to supply us with the remainder of our needs. I understand also that in 30 years since natural gas or coal seam gas mining has been undertaken in this State the only evidence of contamination of surface water has been in the Pilliga—a site owned by the former company Eastern Star Gas and subsequently purchased by Santos. A standing committee established by this Government to investigate issues around coal seam gas did not identify any cross-contamination of underground water aquifers in New South Wales or, indeed, in any State in Australia.

I, together with several members, have had the benefit of a briefing by the Chief Scientist Professor Mary O'Kane. Professor O'Kane was appointed by this Government to thoroughly investigate coal seam gas activities. During that meeting with her a couple of months ago in Parliament House, I asked if she or her team of qualified scientists had identified any contamination of water supplies, ground subsidence, groundwater contamination apart from in the Pilliga, or environmental degradation following their initial six-month investigation into coal seam gas mining in New South Wales. She said that she was not aware of any contamination other than the two incidences of groundwater contamination which had been identified in the Pilliga. The House should note that I am not quoting politicians or anyone involved in coal seam gas activities. I am referring to the eminently qualified Chief Scientist, Professor Mary O'Kane, who has investigated coal seam gas mining in Queensland and New South Wales. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

During the next half hour I will inform my colleagues on the other side of the House exactly where we stand.

**Mr Ryan Park:** We know how this works.

**The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser):** Order! If the member for Keira knows how it works he will be aware that Standing Order 52 provides that the member with the call will be heard in silence.

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS:** Excuse me for speaking while the member for Keira is interrupting. I admire Joe Hildebrand, a very humorous journalist, who hosts an ABC program named *Shitsville Express*. Please excuse me for using that unparliamentary term in this Chamber. When an interview is conducted in a lighthearted manner, sometimes people give very honest answers. They may not feel so confronted in such an environment. Steve Casey, a family farmer at Lismore, supports coal seam gas mining and has a Metgasco well on his property. He believes coal seam gas is good for the country economy and it has been good for his farm. However, his family has been blocked from their farm on several occasions by coal seam gas activists. In this State and country, that is a disgraceful situation.

If farmers enter into a contract to supplement their farming activities and to allow a coal seam gas well or coal seam gas mining on their land—an activity that has been undertaken in this State successfully for 30 years—and they are blocked from their property, it is a sad indictment on activists. A guest on the program hosted by Joe Hildebrand, agricultural scientist Professor Steve Raine from the University of Southern Queensland, who has worked closely with industry and farmers, said that the problems associated with coal seam gas mining in the United States of America are largely in relation to shale gas mining, not coal seam gas mining. Shale gas mining goes much deeper and requires much more pressure for fracking than coal seam gas mining does.

Professor Raine said any problems associated with coal seam gas in this country are due to human error and not complying with proper processes. I could not agree more. He went on to say that coal seam gas is largely considered an export resource and could be Australia's largest contribution to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. That is an important point. As members know, the use of gas reduces greenhouse gas emissions by up to 60 per cent relative to the amount of energy created. As someone who comes from the land, I would prefer an area the size of a tennis court on a large property being used to extract coal seam gas out of the ground rather than kilometres of longwall or open-cut mining for coal. I would support wholly a 60 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by using of coal seam gas, which has a minimal footprint on the ground. I have shared my views with Alan Jones, whom I greatly admire.

I would not begrudge, nor do I believe would any fair-minded Australian, farmers, who sometimes achieve less than three good years out of 10 from their farming activities, the opportunity to sustain their farm, their family and local businesses by having a coal seam gas well on their property. Coal seam gas wells leave a miniscule footprint in terms of the land mass of this great country. However, we must demonstrate, ensure and insist, through the Chief Scientist Professor Mary O'Kane, that appropriate standards are upheld. I clearly state that New South Wales produces only 6 per cent of its current coal seam gas needs. We are importing from other States such as South Australia and Bass Strait to satisfy our needs. We need a sustainable coal seam gas industry, and I fully support that industry continuing under the appropriate process that our Government has outlined.

**Mr JOHN WILLIAMS** (Murray-Darling) [10.47 a.m.]: It is a great honour to follow my colleague and brother the member for Hawkesbury, who spoke so eloquently in this debate on the Coal Seam Gas Prohibition (Sydney Water Catchment Special Areas) Bill 2013. The bill was introduced by the Leader of the Opposition, who is looking like an oyster on a tin plate. He slides all over the place and never stays still. He says one thing one day and another thing the next. In relation to coal seam gas in New South Wales, the former Labor Government handed out exploration licences to coal seam gas exploration companies with no thought about the consequences and the process. I do not think they knew what coal seam gas was.

Dr John Kaye, the upper House spokesperson on behalf of The Greens, thought that coal seam gas mining was a very good idea. He said that the only way we can secure the energy demands of New South Wales going forward was by mining coal seam gas. Those were not his exact words, but he supported coal seam gas exploration and the extraction of coal seam gas; it was a done deal. Members of the Opposition when in government agreed with the Leader of the Opposition and supported coal seam gas but did not really know what it meant. When exploration was being introduced into the State some guy in America made a homemade documentary on coal seam gas called *Gasland* and ran a scare campaign.

It should be noted that during the process of identifying opportunities for extraction and exploration of coal seam gas very little science has been involved and we have been left with the fallout from the former Labor Government's introduction of exploration licences. Nevertheless, this Government has taken a responsible attitude to any possible threats to the environment and is now mopping up the mess left behind through the introduction of those licences. It is interesting that the Leader of the Opposition and The Greens have suddenly seen an opportunity to run a scare campaign on the exploration licences that they introduced. The Leader of the Opposition has turned 180 degrees and is now running a scare campaign on the exploration and extraction licences that Labor issued when in government.

This Government has considered the matter and is now seeking to manage the fallout, which is huge. Many people are running around the country making statements about the threat posed by coal seam gas extraction but they have no scientific data to back up those statements. No-one has produced sound evidence to back up claims that it will pose a threat to the environment. It is just a scare campaign based on a documentary, produced by an amateur—a documentary that most people would regard as garbage. In *Gasland* they show a pretty mangy-looking, emaciated horse.

**Mr Troy Grant:** Was it called Robbo?

**Mr JOHN WILLIAMS:** It certainly resembled the Leader of the Opposition in one of his phases. The suggestion was that the horse was in that state because it drank water affected by methane. Anyone who knows anything about horses knows that a horse will not drink water that is contaminated. If a horse drinks the water, it is good enough for humans to drink. A horse will die alongside water that is contaminated. This documentary is a crazy furphy, it is a beat-up. It was not based on any scientific fact. If we are to make decisions that there is an opportunity for this State to pursue coal seam gas as an important resource for the State, we need scientific data to back up those decisions. We must be aware of any possible threats to the environment, the size of those threats and how to manage them so we can confidently take advantage of this natural resource. In this way people in affected areas can be confident that what we are doing is safe. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

The Government is taking a responsible attitude to this potential hazard for the environment of the State. Labor in government took the opposite approach. Labor members were not prepared to consider the consequences of their decisions. They went ahead and made those decisions based on whatever happened on the day. It was a moving feast. A group of people were running around making decisions that I believe were not in the best interests of the people of New South Wales. They spent money willy-nilly; and they offered exploration licences without considering the possibility of any fallout. Immediately there is some fallout Labor in opposition thinks, "Beauty, we will take this on." They have whitewashed the past. They say they are clean, that they had nothing to do with it. Labor is the only government that has ever handed out exploration licences for coal seam gas.

Honest Opposition members are quite prepared to admit that they got it wrong. The member for Keira said they got it wrong and I say well done to him. The Leader of the Opposition is not saying they got it wrong. He is saying, "We can run a giant scare campaign and do some damage to the Government." This bill is merely part of a scare campaign run by the Leader of the Opposition. For people to have confidence in government they need a stable and responsible government, and they elected one in March 2011. The Government will ensure that it does not take on projects that will damage the environment.

The Government has been left with the exploration licences issued by the former Labor Government. The community is up in arms; they are holding protests over what they believe could be the consequences of exploration and extraction and the Government must address those matters. We have taken a responsible course. We have suspended some of the licences and stopped exploration and extraction; we put them on hold. We can be absolutely confident that there is no threat to the environment of New South Wales. This demonstrates a responsible government. What we saw in the past was an irresponsible government. What is hurtful about this situation is that not only was the former Labor Government irresponsible but it also has condemned this Government for the decisions that it made when in government.

This bill is all about condemning the Government for the consequences of Labor's actions, which is an absolute and utter disgrace. The authors of this private member's bill and the Leader of the Opposition should hang their heads in shame. However, one does not know where the Leader of the Opposition is going because he is spinning all over the place. I recall the Leader of the Opposition speaking in the House about capping public sector wages. He said that the Government had rolled over and continued Michael Costa's initiative announced in the 2008 budget. The Leader of the Opposition thought he could run a scare campaign and have a protest each day of the week. The Leader of the Opposition was all fired up but ran out of steam within a week when he realised the scare campaign was not working. There was clear evidence that he was wasting his time.

The Leader of the Opposition should not worry about introducing a private member's bill to prohibit coal seam gas exploration; this is a responsible Government and we will deal with that matter. We do not need someone who likes to be on the front page of every newspaper to introduce a bill. The Government will manage this matter in the correct manner on behalf of the people of New South Wales. The Leader of the Opposition should worry more about counting his numbers to see how long he will hold his position.

**Mr RICHARD AMERY** (Mount Druitt) [11.01 a.m.]: The Coal Seam Gas Prohibition (Sydney Water Catchment Special Areas) Bill 2013 is a private member's bill introduced by the Leader of the Opposition. The bill states:

The object of this Bill is to cancel petroleum titles relating to coal seam gas, and prohibit the grant or renewal of such titles, in relation to the Sydney Catchment Authority's special areas.

It addresses a concern in the Sydney catchment and around the world about the impact of coal seam gas on the water catchments, water supply and aquifers. Some years ago everybody thought coal seam gas was okay. After all, gas extraction throughout the years had been a safe system and energy source, so there should be no problem now. Coal seam gas exploration licences were issued here and around the world. Then evidence started to accumulate in Sydney and around the world. Concerns were raised in metropolitan areas and farming communities, which many Government members represent. Those opposite are now starting to worry about the impact of coal seam gas processes on the water supply. The two speakers for the Government in this debate did not argue why the bill should be rejected or why it would be wrong to pass it into law. They have no intention of addressing the issue because they do not want to vote on it. But their constituencies are lobbying them, expressing concern.

I note that the member for Wollondilly is in the Chamber. His constituents are starting to become concerned because they are in the heart of the Sydney water catchment and they are worried about licences

being issued. When coal seam gas hit the news most people gave it a passing thought: What could be wrong with gas extraction? But the evidence is now accumulating and concern is mounting. The member for Murray-Darling said that the Opposition leader did not admit that the former Labor Government made a mistake. I will quote from the Leader of the Opposition's second reading speech. He said:

As Leader of the Labor Party in New South Wales, I make no bones about the fact that politicians of all sides rushed too quickly ahead of the people on coal seam gas. In saying that, I include the previous Labor Government. Contrary to the claims made by the Coalition, I have never issued a coal seam gas licence. However, I will say that this is an area where the previous Labor Government should have done much better. When I became the Leader of the Opposition, I travelled across regional New South Wales. I listened to the experts. I read the scientific research. I am proud that I stood up and said enough is enough.

That is contrary to the argument put in this House by the member for Murray-Darling, who said the Opposition leader did not admit that the former Labor Government made a mistake. But this is not just about the Labor Party. I will quote a couple of passages from a letter to *The Land* newspaper—maybe even some of the new members of The Nationals have heard of that publication. Fiona Simpson, President of NSW Farmers, stated:

It is not just the Nationals who should take heed of events at Narrabri—

Ms Simpson was referring to coal seam gas extraction in the country—

but the whole of the Government. With a new and responsive Minister there is an opportunity to convince—

**Mr Troy Grant:** That is Jeremy Buckingham.

**Mr RICHARD AMERY:** This is Fiona Simpson.

**Mr Troy Grant:** Turn the page over; table it.

**Mr RICHARD AMERY:** I will table it if you like. I am quoting Fiona Simpson.

**Mr Troy Grant:** You are advocating Jeremy Buckingham's letter.

**Mr RICHARD AMERY:** Are you saying that I am not quoting Fiona Simpson?

**Mr Troy Grant:** I am saying that that is Jeremy Buckingham's correspondence.

**Mr RICHARD AMERY:** I will table it—in fact, I will frame it for you.

**Mr Troy Grant:** Point of order: The member for Mount Druitt is citing quotes from Fiona Simpson from NSW Farmers. However, he is holding a document that is a publication of Jeremy Buckingham, a member in the other place. Rather than misleading the House, the member should table the document and make it clear that he is advocating correspondence from Jeremy Buckingham, The Greens member and gold medal scaremonger from the other place.

**Mr RICHARD AMERY:** I accept the point of order.

**The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser):** Order! The member for Dubbo has requested that the member for Mount Druitt table the document, and he has offered to do so.

**Mr RICHARD AMERY:** Absolutely. The letter was circulated by a member of The Greens.

**Mr Troy Grant:** Another Labor-Greens alliance.

**Mr RICHARD AMERY:** Is that what you are saying about Fiona Simpson? I am quoting only Fiona Simpson. She further states:

With a new and responsive Government Minister there is an opportunity to convince Cabinet it must address these concerns with consistent policy that addresses the Chief Scientist's concerns, giving communities the confidence that balance will be retained and above all else our food and water producing lands will be protected.

It is signed by Fiona Simpson, President of the NSW Farmers Association. Her letter was circulated to all members by Jeremy Buckingham, MLC, of The Greens. As requested by the Government, I lay the document

on the table for the information of members. It is interesting that the member for Dubbo, who is a member of The Nationals, should take a point of order rejecting the words of the President of the NSW Farmers Association. In conclusion—I do not want to play into the Government's strategy—

**The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser):** Order! I remind members that interjections are disorderly at all times. Labor members will come to order. The member for Mount Druitt will be heard in silence. The member for Dubbo will cease interjecting.

**Mr RICHARD AMERY:** I look forward to receiving more assistance from the member for Dubbo. I ask anyone reading this debate about coal seam gas to note that extensions of time were granted to the two Government members. I ask them to note also the content of those contributions. The Government members' intention was to take up the time of the House until 11.30 a.m., when time for the debate expires. I put that on the record. But the Government will not get away with it. At 11.30 a.m. the debate will be interrupted and debate on the bill will be adjourned to the next sitting of Parliament. In the middle of April the bill will lapse and the Leader of the Opposition will have to resubmit it. However, the Government will not avoid a vote on coal seam gas. Government members will not be allowed to run and hide from that issue. They will not filibuster without putting their name on the Hansard division list showing how they have voted on progressing this bill through Parliament. I support the bill. I will be interested to see how Government members behave for the remainder of the debate.

**Mr ROB STOKES** (Pittwater—Parliamentary Secretary) [11.08 a.m.]: I was fascinated by some of the comments of the member for Mount Druitt, who has had a big week. The restoration of imperial honours must be important to a noted monarchist like him. Sir Richard said some interesting things but I found it particularly odd that he spoke at some length about this being some sort of filibuster. If he thought it was a filibuster why did he speak for so long, particularly when he had nothing useful to say?

This is a bill for an Act entitled Coal Seam Gas Prohibition (Sydney Water Catchment Special Areas), but it is really a bill for an act of legislative repentance by the Labor Party. I was fascinated when the member for Mount Druitt said that when coal seam gas first came along they all thought it was okay. He said they did not realise there were any problems with it. In other words, he said that the then Government did not look into the threats, risks or science of coal seam gas. That is an extraordinary admission. When a new technology or energy source comes along it is not good enough to say, "We thought it was fine." That is not what governments are elected to do. People elect governments to make sound decisions on the basis of science and reason; not to say they will give something a go and see how it flies. The precautionary principle that the Greiner Liberal Government introduced into legislation clearly provides:

Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation.

If the former Labor Government had been doing its job properly it would have explored the concerns, threats and risks associated with a new energy source before granting petroleum exploration licences across New South Wales for a song, and in many cases to two-bit companies that had been established only a few days before they applied for a licence. The fact is that sound and good governments inquire into the science before they take actions that have consequences. That is why I truly think this bill is a venal and hypocritical attempt at some sort of legislative atonement for past sins. The problem is that actions in government have consequences. It is one thing for Labor Party members to say they now realise that they should not have granted all those licences and think it is a good idea to cancel them. It is another for them to go on to say that, because they know the decision will crystallise actions for damages, they will oust the jurisdiction of the courts and say that people cannot seek compensation retrospectively for what Labor did.

Governments cannot work like that. Governments need to provide certainty and predictability so that people can make investment decisions. We know that serious concerns surround this issue, and the Chief Scientist and her office are investigating those concerns scientifically. The problem this introduces is that, if the Labor Party says it is going to retrospectively oust the jurisdiction of the courts to determine matters of compensation for one issue or industry, what does that mean for every other investor in New South Wales? What message does it send about the predictability and certainty of processes and investment decisions in this State, particularly when investors could invest in a range of other countries and jurisdictions? The hypocrisy is breathtaking. Every time concern is expressed that a bill might be ousting the jurisdiction of the courts the Opposition—

**Mr RYAN PARK** (Keira) [11.13 a.m.]: I move:

That the question be now put (S.O. 86).

**The House divided.**

*[In division]*

**The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser):** Order! Members will come to order. Those who are meat eaters should be aware that today's barbecue will now be held on level 9 because of the inclement weather. Those who are vegetarians may disregard this notice.

**Ayes, 21**

Mr Barr	Mr Hoenig	Ms Tebbutt
Ms Burney	Ms Hornery	Ms Watson
Ms Burton	Mr Lynch	Mr Zangari
Mr Collier	Dr McDonald	
Mr Daley	Mr Park	
Mr Furolo	Mrs Perry	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Greenwich	Mr Piper	Mr Amery
Ms Hay	Mr Robertson	Mr Lalich

**Noes, 57**

Mr Anderson	Mr George	Mr Provest
Mr Aplin	Ms Gibbons	Mr Roberts
Mr Ayres	Mr Grant	Mrs Sage
Mr Baird	Mr Gulaptis	Mrs Skinner
Mr Barilaro	Mr Hartcher	Mr Souris
Mr Bassett	Mr Hazzard	Mr Speakman
Mr Baumann	Mr Holstein	Mr Spence
Ms Berejiklian	Mr Humphries	Mr Stokes
Mr Bromhead	Mr Issa	Mr Stoner
Mr Brookes	Mr Kean	Mr Toole
Mr Casuscelli	Dr Lee	Ms Upton
Mr Conolly	Mr Maguire	Mr Ward
Mr Cornwell	Mr Marshall	Mr Webber
Mrs Davies	Mr Notley-Smith	Mr R. C. Williams
Mr Dominello	Mr O'Dea	Mrs Williams
Mr Doyle	Mr Owen	
Mr Edwards	Mr Page	
Mr Elliott	Ms Parker	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Evans	Mr Patterson	Mr Rowell
Mr Gee	Mr Perrottet	Mr J. D. Williams

**Pair**

Ms Mihailuk

Mr Sidoti

**Question resolved in the negative.**

**Motion negatived.**

**Motion by Mr ROB STOKES agreed to:**

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to restore my speaking time.

**Mr ROB STOKES** (Pittwater—Parliamentary Secretary) [11.23 a.m.]: First, I will comment on the previous exercise. I suggest that anyone unfortunate enough to read the *Hansard* for this debate would not believe that was a substantive move by the Labor Party. The Opposition was simply seeking to gag members of this House and prevent them from speaking on the Coal Seam Gas Prohibition (Sydney Water Catchment Special Areas) Bill 2013—which is clearly an uncomfortable bill about uncomfortable past activities. It is fascinating that The Greens' member in the lower House did not turn up for the vote, probably because he recognises it was not a vote on a substantive issue. The Labor Party was playing politics and trying to gag members from having their say on an issue that is important to the people of New South Wales.

**Mr Richard Amery:** We will have the debate; we will put it to the vote.

**The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser):** Order! The member for Mount Druitt will come to order. He has made his contribution to the debate.

**Mr ROB STOKES:** The member for Mount Druitt wants to gag debate. No, let us give everyone in this House the opportunity to speak on an issue that matters to people across this State.

*[Interruption]*

I note the interjection from the gallery and agree that the Labor Party should be ashamed for trying to gag debate on this important issue, which should be discussed.

**The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser):** Order! The member for Miranda will come to order. If he continues to interject he will be removed from the Chamber.

**Mr ROB STOKES:** As Parliamentary Secretary with responsibility for energy, it speaks volumes that that those opposite sought to gag me. As we know, energy policy is far too important to the State for the Opposition to play politics with it. Energy policy should be determined on science, not on ideology. I noted everything the Leader of the Opposition said. I will take his advice on rewiring my house but I will take the advice of the Chief Scientist when it comes to matters of hydrology and groundwater. That is precisely what this Government is doing: We are doing the science first. That is completely in keeping with the precautionary principle of making sure that law is based on science. As the member for Heffron would know, unnecessary law is bad law. This is perfidious populism designed to clog the statute books with laws that are not necessary. It is an attempt to introduce legislation on an issue that is already the subject of a moratorium while the scientific studies are continuing. This is unnecessary scaremongering and Labor members should hang their heads in shame for engaging in a cynical exercise in legislative atonement and populism.

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) [11.27 a.m.]:** We have before us the Coal Seam Gas Prohibition (Sydney Water Catchment Special Areas) Bill 2013, which is a guilt-driven measure from the Leader of the Opposition. It contrasts with the Government's approach, which involves prudent evaluation of scientific analysis and facts, with important input from the NSW Chief Scientist. The highly respected Chief Scientist, Professor Mary O'Kane, is developing and handing down important advice and recommendations, which the Government will consider properly. The Leader of the Opposition is guilty because his side did the wrong thing in the past. The member for Keira is his hangman. He courageously made the comment:

The wrong was to allow coal seam gas exploration and extraction to take place in some of the most sensitive lands in our community. It is a wrong that should never have happened.

Labor made a mistake and now attempts to expunge its guilt. The Leader of the Opposition evokes memories of Lady Macbeth—

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order: With 60 seconds remaining for debate, I seek leave to move a motion to extend the debate.

**Leave not granted.**

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA:** The Leader of the Opposition evokes memories of Lady Macbeth trying to remove the blood from her hands using water.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order—

**The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser):** Order! I suspect the member for Maroubra is seeking to make a political point. The standing orders provide that debate may continue until 11.30 a.m. The member for Maroubra will resume his seat.

**Mr Michael Daley:** The Parliamentary Secretary just said that this is an important issue. In accordance with his statement, I ask that the time for the debate be extended.

**The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser):** Order! Leave is not granted. The member for Maroubra will resume his seat.

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA:** Just as Lady Macbeth attempted to use water to remove the blood from her hands—

**Mr Barry Collier:** Out, damned spot.

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA:** Out, damned spot, out; you are correct. The Leader of the Opposition is attempting to use water to expunge his guilt, and it will not work. His guilty conscience appears to be the reason he has swung to an extreme position so diametrically opposed to the position that Labor formerly took. He can pace this Chamber trying to leave his guilt behind him but it will follow him like an ugly shadow, because that guilt has been admitted by his hangman the member for Keira, by the member for Miranda and by the member for Heffron. Most members on the other side realise that the way in which they were derelict in their duty was appalling. The Government has been prudent and we have taken appropriate measures. While I would love to say more, I understand that, due to the time, the debate has to be adjourned.

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

**The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser):** Order! It being 11.30 a.m. the House will now consider General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices). The member for Maroubra will be directed to leave the Chamber if he continues to interject. The member knows the standing orders. Standing Order 52 provides that members with the call have the right to be heard in silence.

### **OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF OF NEW SOUTH WALES STAFFING**

**Debate resumed from 20 March 2014.**

**Mr BARRY COLLIER** (Miranda) [11.30 a.m.]: I am pleased to speak on the notice of motion moved by the member for Wallsend. The sheriff is an ancient office that goes back to before the Norman Conquest. The Office of the Sheriff was established first in New South Wales by the Third Charter of Justice in 1823, around 191 years ago. The colonial records of New South Wales note that in 1824 the duties of the sheriff included executing all judgements, decrees and orders of the Supreme Court, carrying out death sentences and minor sentences passed by the courts, acting as coroner and running the jails.

Obviously, many of those duties have disappeared over the years—death sentences have been abolished and sheriffs no longer act as coroners or run the jails. Today there are two main roles performed by the Office of the Sheriff: either as a sheriff's officer or as a court officer. Sheriff's officers play a key role in the administration of justice in New South Wales. Sheriff's officers work with the jury system to establish juries and swear in witnesses and handle exhibits. Administering the jury system alone is a massive operation involving more than 200,000 citizens every year. Sheriff's officers serve, execute and enforce court orders as well as writs and fines issued by the courts. Importantly, they also provide security for the Supreme Court, the District Court and the Local Court. In so doing, the uniformed sheriff's officers ensure the safety of judges and magistrates, lawyers and the public in all New South Wales courts and tribunals.

Magistrates and judges, lawyers working in the criminal justice system at all levels, witnesses attending court, people providing support at court—such as officers from Probation and Parole and Corrective Services and the people who assist women and children with domestic violence matters coming before the court—know the important role the sheriff's officers play in maintaining court security. At times this may involve the sheriff's officer detecting and preventing persons from carrying concealed weapons into the court; maintaining order in the court precincts by keeping accused persons and their families apart from prosecution witnesses, and stopping defendants in domestic violence matters hanging around outside or near doorways to domestic violence support rooms where they sometimes try to intimidate people coming before the court, particularly women.

Court officers employed by the Office of the Sheriff also play an important role in the administration of justice, as those lawyers who appear in the District Court and higher criminal courts—including the Attorney General—well know. They assist jurors during the empanelling process; they call and swear in witnesses during the trial; they communicate jurors' questions and comments to the judge; they advise the judge's associate when the jury is ready to deliver its verdict; and, importantly, they ensure strict confidentiality and privacy are maintained for jurors from the beginning to the end of the trial. As a former solicitor for the Director of Public Prosecutions who appeared in District Court criminal trials and appeals and as a barrister who appeared in criminal trials and occasionally in the Court of Criminal Appeal, I find it most disturbing that a District Court judge has complained on many occasions about the shortage of sheriff's officers in his court at Newcastle.

The court system is not just about magistrates, judges, barristers, solicitors, prosecutors and witnesses for the prosecution and defence. Sheriff's officers have a longstanding, important role to play in the courts and the criminal justice system and, quite clearly, cutting their numbers must interfere with the smooth administration of justice in the State. Cutting sheriff's officer numbers in Newcastle, or in any other court for that matter, not only



puts the safety of all court users at risk, but it leads to unnecessary delays and increased costs for all participants in the justice system. I welcome this timely motion brought on by the member for Wallsend and I urge the Attorney General to urgently address this issue, review decisions to cut the number of sheriff's officers and, at the very least, to restore the number of sheriff's officers at courthouses at Newcastle and throughout New South Wales.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST** (Tweed—Parliamentary Secretary) [11.35 a.m.]: I speak against the motion moved by the member for Wallsend. Since I have been a member of Parliament I have learnt that it is very important to allow professional people to make professional decisions, whether it is in relation to staff allocations, policies or directives. There is a real danger in this place of political interference in the operations of hardworking public servants, whether it is the sheriff's office, the police, doctors, nurses, teachers or whoever. It behoves us to listen to those professional people in their different areas and to be guided by their advice.

I have been advised that the Newcastle sheriff's office, which provides security for the Newcastle courthouse, is suitably staffed to provide adequate security and court support. Staffing requirements have been assessed based on risk levels and a comparison with similar court structures across the State. The member for Wallsend alleges that the shortage of sheriff's officers is causing delays to criminal trials at Newcastle courthouse and that the number of sheriff's officers at the Newcastle courthouse has been halved since 2002.

I have also been advised that while there has been a decrease in the number of sheriff's officers located at the Newcastle courthouse since 2002, staffing needs at the Newcastle courthouse have changed since that date; for example, there has been a decrease in the amount of enforcement work required of sheriff's officers. Staffing needs at the Newcastle courthouse are periodically reviewed by the Office of the Sheriff. A statewide review commenced this financial year. As I said, I believe it is very pertinent to listen to the professionals in their areas and to be guided by their advice; they are the ones talking to people at the front line and they are the ones who are empowered through statute and other means to run those organisations efficiently in order to service the wider community of New South Wales.

Security procedures are in place to ensure the security and safety of all judicial officers and court users. Effective controls such as full-time perimeter security, closed-circuit television coverage, access control, duress alarms and roving officers are in operation throughout the day. All officers are tactically trained with the ability to engage, if necessary, to defuse any potential threat. There have been no significant delays to criminal trials due to staffing requirements. I am aware of three recent incidents that caused a slight delay to criminal trials. Two of these incidents were due to the need for sheriff's officers to attend with witnesses in remote witness rooms and the other was due to a court officer who was required to deal with jurors' inquiries following an evacuation the previous day.

In these incidents, staff were in attendance in the court within minutes. While these incidents are regrettable, they were caused by operational or communication issues, not staff shortages. With the information given here, I repeat that we should respect the professional managers we put in place. We should be guided by their wisdom and experience and execute what they ask for. In this case, we are doing exactly that.

**Mr RON HOENIG** (Heffron) [11.40 a.m.]: I am pleased that the member for Tweed feels that he should respect professional people on the ground who are making these decisions. I am sure he would respect the view of Judge Maiden when he apologised in open court when it became clear that there would not be sufficient sheriff's officers in Newcastle, which caused a delay in a criminal trial. The Office of the Sheriff is an age-old office; it existed prior to the Norman Conquest. It has always been an essential part of the judicial system since before the Magna Carta was executed by King John at Runnymede. But I can say this: The professional people whom the member for Tweed respects are endeavouring to operate with an ever-shrinking budget that is affecting the justice system. Treasury boffins have compromised their ability to carry out their professional duties while they continue to operate.

The Office of the Sheriff and the functions of the sheriff's officers are essential for the wheels of justice to continue to turn. In addition to ensuring that courts run smoothly, they are also responsible for security in courts. The policy of decades ago that I supported, when police officers were removed from the court constable role of providing security and replaced by sheriff's officers, was the independent way to go. But sheriff's officers have been replaced by court clerks and attendants, which has left court users exposed in terms of lack of security.

Many courts sitting throughout regional New South Wales have only one sheriff's officer. For example, if the District Court and the Local Court are sitting at the same time, one sheriff's officer is required to manage the security of both of those courts. At times the District Court is sitting at a specific location and the sheriff's

officer must be present; if the Local Court is sitting at the same time it has no sheriff's officer to protect the bench, practitioners or other court users. Part-time Corrective Services officers are often utilised. They are not part of the court security system so people are exposed. If accused in a courthouse in regional or country New South Wales attempted a breakout from the dock, they could do so with considerable ease. It is only through cooperation that the system works.

In addition to performing security duties, sheriff's officers undertake fieldwork such as executing writs, attending to evictions and serving divorce orders and other documentation. They are being squeezed. Their travelling allowances have been reduced. Indeed, sometimes they are required to drive back on the same day after attending to duties, sometimes taking five and six hours. It is not working. It is an incremental exercise that has occurred for some time. Heads of jurisdiction have been able to run their own budgets for their own budgetary reasons which then, for example, impact on the operations of other organisations. Sheriff's officers are dedicated and hardworking, but they are underutilised due to a lack of funding.

**Ms SONIA HORNER** (Wallsend) [11.43 a.m.], in reply: I thank the member for Port Stephens, the member for Miranda, the member for Tweed and the member for Heffron for their contributions to this important debate. Unfortunately, the member for Port Stephens spent most of his time waxing lyrical about bridges in Port Stephens, not about sheriff's officers in the Hunter. That revealed the extent to which members opposite are concerned about this issue, whereas we know it is a real issue in the area. The member for Port Stephens admitted that the number of staff in the Sheriff's office had decreased. The member for Tweed said that it is important to make professional decisions, and I agree. I guess it depends on what the decisions are based.

I ask the member for Tweed: Is cutting the number of sheriff's officers to the extent that a District Court judge is forced to publicly voice his frustration about the shortage of sheriff's officers causing delays in criminal trials acceptable? Is the judge not a professional person trying to do a professional job? The member mentioned that the workload of sheriff's officers had decreased. Where is that occurring? As far as I am aware, the current workload of sheriff's officers is more than they have ever had before, and at the same time their budget is being squeezed. The member for Tweed said that there are more closed-circuit television cameras in the vicinity of courthouses and so on. He almost made out that the courthouses of 2014 are bastions of harmony and wellbeing, but that is not my understanding. Security is required by human beings at courthouses to protect staff and other people.

The member for Heffron mentioned that professional people in courthouses are dealing with an ever-shrinking budget for the functioning of the courts, hence the shortage of sheriff's officers, particularly when one is sick. They are simply not replaced. Let us be honest: This is not about the Liberal Government making courthouses safer for everyone; it is about saving money. Importantly, the member also referred to the fieldwork undertaken by sheriff's officers; they are being squeezed by additional duties with less time in which to do the work. That is impacting on what is happening in the courts. The member for Miranda talked about the history and importance of sheriff's officers in Australia, the security they provide in the courts and the order they maintain. He said that sheriff's officers are vital in ensuring that the administration of a court is smooth and well handled. He argued—and I agree—that we need to restore the number of sheriff's officers in Newcastle courthouse.

In conclusion, I ask the Government to support and address the issue of staff shortages and to understand that the District Court judge was making a strong statement about staff shortages. I have heard mention that East Maitland courthouse will be closed. I ask the Attorney General to address that issue and come clean on whether the courthouse will be closed, where the staff will go, what will happen to court matters and where people will go if they have court proceedings. Finally, I say to the Government: This is an important issue. It is about safety and security. I ask the Government to support this important motion.

**Question—That the motion be agreed to—put.**

**The House divided.**

**Ayes, 20**

Mr Barr  
Ms Burney  
Ms Burton  
Mr Collier  
Mr Daley  
Mr Furolo  
Mr Greenwich

Ms Hay  
Mr Hoenig  
Ms Hornery  
Mr Lynch  
Dr McDonald  
Mr Park  
Mrs Perry

Mr Piper  
Ms Tebbutt  
Ms Watson  
Mr Zangari  
*Tellers,*  
Mr Amery  
Mr Lalich

**Noes, 57**

Mr Anderson	Mr Gulaptis	Mr Roberts
Mr Aplin	Mrs Hancock	Mrs Sage
Mr Ayres	Mr Hartcher	Mr Sidoti
Mr Baird	Mr Hazzard	Mr Smith
Mr Bassett	Mr Holstein	Mr Souris
Mr Baumann	Mr Humphries	Mr Speakman
Ms Berejiklian	Mr Issa	Mr Spence
Mr Brookes	Mr Kean	Mr Stokes
Mr Conolly	Dr Lee	Mr Stoner
Mr Constance	Mr Maguire	Mr Toole
Mrs Davies	Mr Marshall	Ms Upton
Mr Dominello	Mr Notley-Smith	Mr Ward
Mr Doyle	Mr O'Dea	Mr Webber
Mr Edwards	Mr Owen	Mr R. C. Williams
Mr Elliott	Mr Page	Mrs Williams
Mr Evans	Ms Parker	
Mr Flowers	Mr Patterson	
Mr Fraser	Mr Perrottet	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Gee	Mr Piccoli	Mr Cornwell
Mr George	Mr Provest	Mr Rowell

**Pairs**

Ms Mihailuk	Mr Casuscelli
Mr Robertson	Mrs Skinner

**Question resolved in the negative.**

**Motion negatived.**

**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) [11.59 a.m.]: I move:

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

- (1) Government business to take precedence of all other business forthwith until 1.30 p.m.
- (2) The introduction without notice of the Teaching Service Amendment (Transfers) Bill 2014.

Some urgent Government business needs to be addressed in that the Attorney General will make his second reading speech on the Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Bill 2014 and the Minister for Education will make his second reading speech on the Teaching Service Amendment (Transfers) Bill 2014. I apologise for the short interruption to private members' business but as soon as those two second reading speeches are concluded the House will return to private members' business.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

**TEACHING SERVICE AMENDMENT (TRANSFERS) BILL 2014**

**Bill introduced on motion by Mr Adrian Piccoli, read a first time and printed.**

**Second Reading**

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI** (Murrumbidgee—Minister for Education) [12.01 p.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time

This Government is proud to have passed the Government Sector Employment Act 2013, which commenced operation on 24 February 2014. The Government Sector Employment Act created a new public service, with

principal departments and related executive agencies. The Government Sector Employment Act 2013 has, as one of its objects, the development of a modern, high-performing government sector that is efficient and effective in serving the Government in the delivery of services to the people of New South Wales and that has effective and fair employment arrangements, management and leadership.

The Teaching Service of New South Wales is, of course, a significant part of the government sector and is committed to this object. One of the consequences of the Government Sector Employment Act was the repeal of the former Public Sector Employment and Management Act 2002. The former Act contained provisions for the temporary and permanent transfers of staff within public sector agencies. Those provisions, namely sections 86A and 87, applied to staff employed in the Teaching Service and underpinned the transfer processes for staff employed in the Teaching Service, including teachers in New South Wales government schools. In contrast, the internal transfer provisions contained in the Government Sector Employment Act do not encompass the Teaching Service. This bill is necessary to introduce an equivalent statutory power to apply to the Teaching Service.

The secretary of the department is responsible for the general conduct of the functions and activities of the Teaching Service and has a broad power to take such action as the secretary considers appropriate in the circumstances. It is reasonable to ensure that the secretary's broad powers continue to be reinforced with an explicit statutory power to transfer teachers and other educational staff. The purpose of the bill is to restore the substantive effect of the transfer provisions that were formerly contained in sections 86A and 87 of the repealed Public Sector Employment and Management Act. The amendments proposed will, in substance, restore to the secretary an unambiguous statutory power to transfer staff of the Teaching Service. In this sense, the bill can be regarded as maintaining the status quo. The bill, if passed, will not require the secretary to depart from any of the department's current staffing practices or procedures.

In areas of the government sector where services are delivered across the State, the employer will typically have an express power to transfer staff. For example, equivalent transfer provisions are contained in the Police Act 1990. The amendments proposed in this bill are, in substance, consistent with the equivalent provisions that apply to other parts of the government sector. The internal transfer power is essential in New South Wales government schools as it ensures that teachers can be relocated between schools to reflect changes in student enrolments over time. In an organisation that delivers educational services in over 2,200 schools throughout New South Wales, the power to transfer staff in appropriate cases assists the department to deliver equitable and quality education to students across the State, including rural and regional areas. The education of students is the core business of the Teaching Service.

This bill will ensure that the transfer processes for teachers in New South Wales government schools will continue to be underpinned by a legislative power that is both transparent and unambiguous. The bill also contains some minor amendment of a statute law nature, for example, changing references from "Director-General" to become references to the "Secretary" and removing other references in the Act to legislation that has been previously repealed. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned on motion by Mr Ron Hoenig and set down as an order of the day for a future day.**

## **LEGAL PROFESSION UNIFORM LAW APPLICATION BILL 2014**

**Bill introduced on motion by Mr Greg Smith, read a first time and printed.**

### **Second Reading**

**Mr GREG SMITH** (Epping—Attorney General, and Minister for Justice) [12.06 p.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Bill 2014. This bill will apply the provisions of the Legal Profession Uniform Law as a law of New South Wales, as well as providing supporting provisions for the regulation of the legal profession in this State. The Legal Profession Uniform Law is a piece of nationally developed legislation which was recently passed by the Victorian Parliament. The uniform law was originally developed under the auspices of the Council of Australian Governments [COAG] from 2009 to 2011

with the aim of delivering harmonised regulation of the legal profession across all States and Territories. The Council of Australian Governments established this project as part of its microeconomic reform agenda under the national partnership to deliver a seamless national economy.

New South Wales is proud to be a launch partner of this important regulatory initiative, which will deliver benefits for individual lawyers, law firms and consumers of legal services alike. The Victorian Attorney-General and I will continue to encourage other States and Territories to sign on to these reforms so the benefits can be enjoyed on a truly national basis. Since 2011, Victoria and New South Wales have continued to improve the Council of Australian Governments taskforce's legislative package and have made a range of changes to simplify its administration and substantially reduce regulatory costs. These changes also ensure that existing regulatory structures at the local level can continue to be used to provide the efficient and effective delivery of regulatory services. Many of these changes were made in response to feedback from other States and Territories, through the Standing Council on Law and Justice as well as the Council of Chief Justices of Australia and New Zealand.

The uniform law aims to simplify and standardise regulatory obligations, cutting red tape for law firms, especially those operating across participating jurisdictions while still providing for a significant degree of local involvement in the performance of regulatory functions. The principles of co-regulation, with involvement for the profession in critical areas of regulatory responsibility, are preserved, while consumers of legal services will also benefit from greater consistency of experience across jurisdictions and from improvements to consumer dispute resolution processes. The uniform law provides for the establishment of two new bodies that will set policy and ensure consistent application across participating jurisdictions, being a legal services council and an admissions committee, together with a commissioner for uniform legal services regulation. The offices of these bodies will be located in Sydney, although the council will draw its membership from both New South Wales and Victoria. The Attorneys General of participating jurisdictions will act jointly as a standing committee in relation to various aspects of the scheme. The uniform law, and the bodies established under it, will continue to provide for the profession's involvement in a co-regulatory model.

In addition to a formal role in nominating members of the legal services council and admissions committee, the Law Council of Australia and the Australian Bar Association will have a legislatively enshrined role under part 9.2 of the uniform law to develop uniform rules relating to legal practice, legal professional conduct and continuing professional development for solicitors and barristers respectively. At the local level, as I will explain shortly, the Law Society of New South Wales and the New South Wales Bar Association will continue to play a critical role in administering critical parts of the uniform law within New South Wales. I do not propose to give a detailed summary of the functions of the council and the commissioner or other bodies under the uniform law as they are well documented in the second reading speech of the Victorian Attorney-General when he introduced the uniform law into the Victorian Parliament. However, I will briefly outline some of the key benefits of the multi-jurisdictional regulatory scheme. Economic benefits will flow to all parts of the legal profession, big and small, as a result of shorter, less complex and uniform legislation. This includes law practices that practise in a single jurisdiction only. Well over 500 pages of legislation or regulation will be reduced to just 200 pages.

Lawyers will practise seamlessly across jurisdictions under uniform legislation and regulatory standards which replace disparate legislation, regulations and rules across the participating jurisdictions. This will reduce compliance costs for firms operating across New South Wales and Victoria, particularly in the border towns of Albury and Wodonga. For example, these firms will be able to maintain a single cost agreement for both States and the same trust account management software. The legal profession will also have a direct role in the formulation of the regulatory standards through nomination of members of the legal services council and the admissions committee. For consumers the benefits will be several. Consumers will enjoy the same protections, rights and remedies across participating jurisdictions. Consumers will have access to new low cost and informal ways to resolve service complaints with law practices. A tailored set of consumer-friendly orders will give consumers access to the kinds of practical remedies they need, such as a simple apology or an order that work be redone at a reduced cost. The legislative duty on law practices to charge fair and reasonable costs and new streamlined cost disclosure requirements will foster better communication and lead to fewer disputes. Billing practices have been strengthened to ensure that principals are responsible for the legal costs charged by their law practices.

For the courts, applications for admission will continue to be processed at the local level, but under uniform rules developed by the new statutory admissions committee applicants will know well in advance what standards they will need to meet to be admitted in either New South Wales or Victoria. I will now turn to the

specific provisions of the application bill before this place. Part 1 includes provision for commencement of the application bill. It is intended that only parts of the bill in the uniform law that are necessary to establish the new regulatory authorities and frameworks for making uniform rules will be commenced initially. The substantive provisions of the uniform law in this bill, which will repeal the Legal Profession Act 2004, will not commence until the uniform rules are in place. At this stage this is not expected to occur until after 1 January 2015. Part 2 includes a number of provisions relating to the application of the uniform law as a law of New South Wales.

In particular section 4 of the bill applies to legal profession uniform law, which is set out in schedule 1 to the Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act 2014 of Victoria as an Act of New South Wales. The uniform law provides for the direct conferral of most of its substantive regulatory functions on local regulatory authorities within each participating jurisdiction. Section 11 of this application bill designates a responsible local authority for each uniform law function. These designations are intended to preserve the functions that those regulatory bodies currently carry out. For example, the Law Society and Bar Association will continue to issue practising certificates. The Law Society and Bar Association will continue to have oversight of practitioner's trust accounting and business practice. The New South Wales Legal Services Commissioner will have complaint-handling functions. The Law Society and Bar Association will also handle complaints about practitioners under delegation from the New South Wales commissioner.

The Legal Services Commissioner, the Law Society and the Bar Association will have powers to investigate practitioners and legal practices for the purposes of matters such as complaints investigation and compliance auditing. The Legal Profession Admission Board will continue to carry out functions in relation to the admission of lawyers in New South Wales. It is also important to note that like the 2004 Act the uniform law preserves the inherent jurisdiction of the Supreme Court to admit and discipline lawyers. Part 3 of the application bill provides institutional arrangements for the local regulatory authorities that will perform functions under the uniform law. In particular it provides for the New South Wales Legal Profession Admission Board and the New South Wales Legal Services Commissioner. It also provides for functions of the New South Wales Bar Association and the Law Society of New South Wales under the uniform law.

Part 4 relates to practising and registration certificates. It includes a number of provisions that support the substantive provisions of the uniform law in relation to practising and registration certificates for lawyers in New South Wales, including provisions for the setting of fees and the issue of such certificates by the Law Society and the Bar Association. The part also contains a number of provisions relating to government lawyers in New South Wales. Part 5 of the bill provides for the Public Purpose Fund and for statutory deposits to be made to the fund from interest payable on general trust accounts. As is currently the case, the Public Purpose Fund will remain as a source of funding for regulatory activities undertaken by regulatory authorities in New South Wales, as well as provide a source of funding for activities of more general public benefit, such as legal aid.

Part 5 also contains provision that the trustees of the Public Purpose Fund are to approve payments from the fund to cover New South Wales liability in relation to the cost of the legal services council and commissioner for uniform legal services regulation in the event that revenue from admission fees is insufficient to cover that liability. The uniform law provides for jurisdictional legislation to deal with matters relating to the assessment of costs. Part 6 of the bill includes provisions carried over from the Legal Profession Act 2004 relating to particular kinds of legal costs. Division 1 authorises costs to be fixed by regulation. It is intended that the schedule of costs in the current Legal Profession Regulation 2005 will be remade following the repeal of the Legal Profession Act 2004. Division 2 of part 6 in schedule 1 of the bill relates to the maximum costs in personal injury matters, and division 3 in schedule 3 to the bill relates to costs in civil claims where there are no reasonable prospects of success. Part 7 relates to costs assessment. The uniform law provides for matters relating to costs assessment to be provided under jurisdictional legislation. The provisions of the bill have modified the existing costs assessment provisions to give the costs assessment rules committee greater power over practice and procedure relating to costs assessment.

Part 8 relates to professional indemnity insurance [PII] and provides a mechanism for the approval of professional indemnity insurance policies for practitioners by the Attorney General. This part also retains the provisions of the Legal Profession Act 2004 in relation to the Solicitors' Mutual Indemnity Fund. This fund exists for the purpose of covering liabilities arising from the collapse of HIH Insurance and it is important that these provisions are carried over to facilitate the resolution of a small number of pending claims. Part 9 relates to fidelity cover and provides for the Legal Practitioners' Fidelity Fund and its management. The provisions in part 9 supplement the substantive provisions of the uniform law relating to contributions to the fidelity fund and claims on the fund where a law practice defaults. Barristers are excluded from these provisions, maintaining the

current position. Part 10 carries over the provisions in the Legal Profession Act 2004 regulating mortgage practices. These longstanding provisions restrict solicitors' mortgage practices due to previous experience with the disproportionate impact of claims on the fidelity fund because of solicitors' dishonest and fraudulent activity relating to mortgage practices.

Part 11 contains provisions relating to the procedures of the Civil and Administrative Tribunal when exercising functions in connection with disciplinary matters. The uniform law provides that matters of procedure in the tribunal are a matter for jurisdictional legislation. Part 12 provides for various registers of information about current and former practitioners to be kept by the Law Society, Bar Association and Legal Services Commissioner. The uniform law provides that the Legal Services Council may keep a register of lawyers, but it also provides that local regulatory authorities can keep registers. The provisions in part 12 substantially reproduce the provisions of the Legal Profession Act 2004 and ensure that the regulatory authorities will be able to maintain the registers they currently keep. Part 13 contains a number of miscellaneous provisions, including provisions enabling regulations to be made; provisions providing protection from liability for persons carrying out functions under the application bill; a re-enactment of provisions from the Legal Profession Act 2004 preventing the appointment of Queen's Counsel; and official schemes for recognising seniority or status of legal practitioners by the Crown in New South Wales.

There are a small number of areas in the uniform law in which variations between the provisions enacted in each jurisdiction are contemplated. As my counterpart in Victoria noted in relation to the Victorian implementation bill, Victoria has made minimal modification to the uniform law. I am also pleased to say that the implementation of the uniform law in New South Wales minimises any variation from the substantive requirements of that law. New South Wales also intends to make regulations exempting some of those current government lawyers who do not hold a practising certificate from the uniform law requirement for government lawyers to have practising certificates. The current Act allows government lawyers to practise without having been admitted. As some of these lawyers gained their qualifications a number of years ago, they would no longer be able to rely upon their degrees to obtain admission. Government lawyers whose qualifications might be considered "stale" by the Legal Profession Admission Board will remain exempt from the requirement to hold a practising certificate. New South Wales also intends to preserve an exception allowing registered industrial organisations to provide free legal services to their members. This exemption allows for a number of unions and professional associations in New South Wales who rely on it to provide services to their members.

Along with Victoria, the New South Wales Government is pleased to lead the implementation of this important reform to the regulation of the legal profession as it continues to expand into new markets. I acknowledge the significant contributions to the development of this legislation made by the stakeholders in New South Wales, in particular the New South Wales Bar Association, the Law Society of New South Wales, the Office of the Legal Services Commissioner, the Legal Profession Admissions Board and the Supreme Court. Several individuals within those organisations have tirelessly contributed to the development of harmonised professional regulation for a decade or more. Their commitment to this goal and their stamina is to be admired. I also acknowledge the support from the profession in New South Wales and recognise the important role that the professional associations have had in progressing the reforms to this point. These are significant and complex reforms. As has been the case with the implementation of other national schemes, it is likely to be necessary to bring further consequential amendments before the Parliament. These future amendments may include some more substantive matters.

For example, the Supreme Court has been reviewing the costs assessment process which is dealt with in part 7 of the application bill. It is expected that implementation of the final recommendations of this review will require some further legislative change. It is also possible that once the Legal Services Council and commissioner begin their work in drafting the uniform rules they may request corrections or improvements to the uniform law or the New South Wales application Act. The uniform law offers the prospect of significantly reduced interstate barriers to seamless national legal practice, while improving consumer protections and safeguarding an independent legal profession. This bill ensures that those benefits will be enjoyed by the lawyers and citizens of New South Wales alike. I commend the bill to the House.

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

#### **SYDNEY CITY CENTRE ACCESS STRATEGY**

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Melanie Gibbons):** Order! I inform the House that in accordance with Standing Order 139 the member for Sydney has submitted an amended notice of motion, which is printed in the *Business Paper*.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH** (Sydney) [12.26 p.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) Supports the Government's Sydney City Centre Access Strategy and welcomes plans to remove bus congestion, improve public transport flow, give priority to pedestrians and close the missing links in the bicycle path network in the central business district.
- (2) Acknowledges the health benefits of active transport including walking and cycling.
- (3) Notes the importance of safe-cycling education programs, such as those conducted by the City of Sydney.

More than 630,000 trips are made to the city centre each weekday and a further 1.27 million trips are made within the central business district by visitors, workers, students and residents. The resultant congestion currently costs Sydney \$5.1 billion a year and is expected to rise to \$8.8 billion a year by 2021. Congestion is not just costly, it is frustrating. It makes the experience of living and working in or visiting the city unpleasant and reduces quality of life as people waste time stuck in traffic. That is time they could spend with their friends and family or doing something productive.

The Sydney City Centre Access Strategy, which was finalised in December, creates a much-needed, long-term comprehensive blueprint to improve all city centre transport modes by removing bus congestion, improving public transport flow, giving priority to pedestrians, and closing the missing links in the bicycle path network. I commend the Government and all agencies involved for the coordinated response that I hope will be a game changer for the future of our city. Plans to reduce speed limits to 40 kilometres per hour in parts of the city centre are vital. Slower traffic will improve safety.

Within the city 92 per cent of trips are made by walking, and city pedestrians make up a larger portion of road casualties than elsewhere in Sydney and the State. Between 2007 and 2011 more than 900 casualties resulted from accidents involving vehicles and pedestrians in the city centre. A pedestrian hit by a car travelling at 50 kilometres per hour is two to four times more likely to be killed than if hit by a car travelling at 40 kilometres per hour. I support pedestrian improvements, including de-cluttering footpaths and reducing waiting times at traffic lights. Constituents regularly report their difficulties and frustrations getting around in the central business district and inner city. As someone who regularly walks around my electorate I am very aware of this.

I welcome the central business district light rail project, which includes a pedestrian and cyclist boulevard along part of George Street. Light rail can carry up to 300 people compared with 60 on a bus and light rail is 97 per cent reliable compared with 19 to 34 per cent bus reliability. Light rail will remove many buses from the central business district that cause congestion, which will speed up travel times and free up road and parking space. Putting bus routes on identified roads and allocating priority roads for private vehicles, taxis and couriers promises to give priority to passengers on public transport, which moves the great bulk of people into and out of the central business district. This relies on an integrated public transport system in which passengers can change modes at interchanges without additional cost or bother. I hope the new Opal ticketing system will support that. The strategy identifies the need for increased rail capacity, which must be acted upon. Anyone who uses railway stations such as Wynyard, Town Hall, Central and Redfern is aware of the peak crush and need for expansion.

As a harbour city, Sydney also needs to use water transport better. I welcome the proposed ferry hub at Barangaroo, which may help with Walsh Bay transport. Plans to connect the missing links within the city centre cycling network will help the Government achieve its goal to more than double the number of bicycle trips in greater Sydney by 2016 from the 2010-11 baseline of 2.2 per cent of trips. People report repeatedly that they will ride their bikes for distances up to about 10 kilometres if safe-cycling infrastructure exists. The evidence confirms this where routes have been provided. Use of the City of Sydney separated cycleways is growing significantly. Over the past 12 months daily trips on the Sydney Harbour Bridge cycleway near Upper Fort Street have increased from 1,795 to 2,248; at the intersection of College, Liverpool and Oxford streets from 1,795 to 2,230; at the King and Kent streets intersection from 1,323 to 1,979; and at the Taylor Square, Liverpool and Oxford streets intersection from 1,728 to 1,900. With more than half of trips in the city centre on weekdays made from adjacent inner-city areas, the potential to grow cycling's share of transport is immense.

School students are significant users of the Bourke Street cycleway and Alexandria Park Community School students are testing the just-completed George Street cycleway. The Sydney City Centre Access Plan will enable construction of the next group of cycleways in the network: Campbell, Castlereagh and Liverpool



streets will be built, linking the Bourke Street and Kent Street cycleways. There is an opportunity for a separated cycleway on Park Street, linking existing bike paths on William Street with Castlereagh Street. About 2,000 bike riders use the existing Kent Street cycleway each weekday. The City of Sydney is extending the cycleway on the southern section to between Druitt and Liverpool streets. These new facilities will help to reduce conflict between cyclists and pedestrians caused by some cyclists riding illegally on footpaths when the road is unsafe. I share community disappointment that the cycleway on College Street will be removed. However, Transport for NSW officers assure me that bike infrastructure supported in the strategy will provide a practical and accessible alternative.

The health benefits of walking and cycling are immense. Australia is on the brink of an obesity epidemic. We are one of the fattest developed countries in the world and over the past decade the number of overweight and obese adults has doubled, with the obesity rate among children also rising. Cycling and walking allow people to exercise while they travel, and building this activity into daily life saves time. Employees who walk or cycle to work arrive less stressed and more alert and are more productive. Walking and cycling do not emit pollution that can lead to serious respiratory health problems among the wider population, which the World Health Organization estimates kill seven million people annually.

As cycling becomes more viable and more people pick up a bike for the first time, safe-cycling education programs that inform cyclists about road rules and increase their confidence become vital. The City of Sydney's education program provides a model for other councils and the State Government to engage with cyclists. The City of Sydney is collaborating with other councils to spread these messages widely and help them run similar engagement programs with cyclists. As our city continues to grow we need an access strategy that removes congestion, encourages non-polluting forms of transport and invests in public transport. I commend the motion to the House.

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA** (Davidson) [12.33 p.m.]: The Government welcomes the support of the member for Sydney and his motion as it relates to the Government's performance and what we are delivering for the people of Sydney. This Government understands the importance of planning for the future. We disagreed with the approach Labor took: announcing projects ad hoc without the relevant research and planning and then ultimately letting down the taxpayers of New South Wales by scrapping those same projects. On 19 December 2013 we released the final Sydney City Centre Access Strategy. The strategy is a key action of the New South Wales Long Term Transport Master Plan, and ensures that the right modes of transport are prioritised in the right places to get the most out of the central business district. This is not a five- or 10-year plan but a 20-year plan for the future of the transport network. The access strategy provides a plan of action to improve how people access the city by light rail, buses, trains, cars, taxis, walking and cycling. It outlines improved city centre access for all public transport, including more ferry and rail services.

The New South Wales Government has already committed to increasing capacity to the city centre by constructing light rail to Circular Quay from Randwick and Kingsford. The introduction of the central business district light rail and the North West Rail Link will result in a significant reduction in the number of buses entering the central business district. In the long term, rapid transit rail along the underground second harbour crossing will generate an increase in services to the central business district of more than 60 per cent from across the whole rail network. We will preserve central business district access for motorists by optimising traffic bypass routes and establishing priority routes around the city centre. We are also establishing a city centre transport task force, a specialist team working 24/7 based at the Transport Management Centre. The task force will control traffic lights, clear incidents and work with the Police Motorcycle Response Team to make sure that central business district transport is always operating smoothly and efficiently, which is what the public expects.

We will maintain access for service and delivery vehicles and promote more deliveries outside peak hours, as well as the use of off-street loading docks. There will be changes to parking in the city centre, with reallocation of some on-street parking spaces to create more room for taxi ranks and loading zones—all good news. The strategy supports improved access to Barangaroo, with the completion of the Wynyard Walk and expanded ferry services. This is the plan the New South Wales Government is delivering. For example, the Government has already shortlisted the major contract to build and deliver the \$1.6 billion CBD and South East Light Rail project. The new light rail project will link Circular Quay and Central, the Moore Park sporting and entertainment precinct—including the Sydney Cricket Ground and Sydney Football Stadium—Randwick Racecourse, the University of New South Wales, and Prince of Wales Hospital at Randwick. I think the member for Heffron would welcome that, and he does.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** As long as it works.

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA:** He welcomes it because it will work. This project will transform Sydney and deliver significant benefits by: improving public transport services to key destinations; delivering services that are 97 per cent reliable, compared with the often unreliable city buses we have now; and providing a catalyst for urban renewal. This is a key part of the Government's wider plan to improve mobility. The Sydney City Centre Access Strategy also includes a blueprint for city centre cycleways to ensure there is consultation on bike paths and that bike paths are planned and built as part of an integrated network—which unfortunately has not occurred in the past—and to ensure the best outcomes for cars, public transport and cyclists. The access strategy outlines the importance of walking and cycling to and within the central business district as part of an integrated transport system. The access strategy will prepare Sydney for future growth and help to create an integrated transport system for customers within the city centre. That is one of the great attributes of our Transport for NSW initiative: the department and the Minister are driving customer-focused outcomes.

I am proud to be part of a government that is led by this Premier and which includes the outstanding Minister for Transport because they and the Government are delivering great things for this city in the central business district and elsewhere. We are not just talking about it; we are delivering. We have got runs on the board and they continue to be put on the board—the future is looking bright. The Government is pleased to support this welcome motion.

**Mr RON HOENIG** (Heffron) [12.40 p.m.]: I am also pleased to support the sentiments of the member for Sydney, whose electorate adjoins my own. I took the opportunity to have a look at the Sydney City Centre Access Strategy, the comments made in the introduction by the Minister for Transport, the Minister for Roads and Ports, and the executive summary. It is an integrated transport strategy. I gave some thought about the origin of the term "integrated transport strategy". Members may be interested to know that the term comes from the 9 December 1982 episode of the television series *Yes Minister*, entitled "The Bed of Nails". In that episode Minister Hacker is tasked with implementing an integrated transport policy for the United Kingdom. The terminology was adopted by the United Kingdom Government and then made its way to Australia and to the State of New South Wales.

The development of an integrated transport policy in the *Yes Minister* episode was a task given to Minister Hacker by the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom for the purpose of creating a lot of activity but no actual achievement. A risk associated with preparing yet another integrated transport strategy is that there will be a lot of activity and no achievement. There has been no genuine integrated transport strategy, other than coloured documents and a lot of activity without any achievement, since 1788. Captain Arthur Phillip planned to land at Botany Bay but found it unsuitable. As the ship left it passed La Perouse and the French Navy and Captain Arthur Phillip ended up in Sydney Cove. Even when our forefathers arrived in Sydney in 1788 their plans went awry.

As to this plan, I caution that its authors are probably the same authors who prepared the same plans for the former Government, and they are probably the same authors who prepared the same plans for the Government before that and probably the Government before that. We know that the Parliamentary Library is littered with integrated transport plans and strategies going back decades. One of the reasons these plans never get implemented is that the funds are not there to genuinely integrate them. Even the light rail system, which can add great value for residents in my electorate, still has not been integrated in that it has not been determined where the buses will and will not go. I am greatly concerned about Nick Greiner's departure from Infrastructure NSW because I thought he was the last hope in ensuring that something tangible happened with a strategy like this. It is not about building one piece of infrastructure such as light rail and expecting that to be the immediate solution to Sydney's problems.

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI** (Drummoyne) [12.44 p.m.]: That was a very interesting contribution by the member for Heffron—the Leader of the Opposition-in-waiting. The Government supports the motion moved by the member for Sydney. This is a government that plans and, more importantly, delivers on the plans. I do not criticise the member for Heffron because the Labor Party had many plans. The difference is that it never delivered on them. Labor had Action for Transport 2010, Action for Bikes 2010, the Metropolitan Rail Expansion Program, the NSW Metropolitan Strategy, the NSW State Plan—the list goes on and on. Labor had the plans but, like many things in the past, it never delivered on them. That remained the case until the departure of the former Labor Government. The New South Wales Government released the final Sydney City Centre Access Strategy on 19 December 2013. It was the State's first dedicated plan showing how people will move in, around and out of the Sydney central business district over the next 20 years.

The strategy provides a street-by-street, mode-by-mode solution to unlock transport capacity and drive investment in Australia's only global city. The strategy shows how light rail—which we had the pleasure of

seeing take to the tracks this morning in Leichhardt—buses, trains, cars, taxis, pedestrians and cyclists will interact in the heart of Sydney. Some of the key initiatives from the strategy include the expansion of light rail from Circular Quay to Central and through to Randwick and Kingsford. I know the member for Heffron will be very happy with that and I will be even happier if it is expanded into my electorate. The strategy also includes a redesigned bus network to provide reliable, high-frequency bus services that do not clog city streets; better outcomes for people walking in the city centre; and a connected network of separated and integrated cycleways that allow the road and public transport network to operate effectively.

The strategy also includes key initiatives such as the rapid transit rail along the underground second Sydney Harbour crossing and new central business district stations to take the pressure off Town Hall and Wynyard in the longer term. The New South Wales Government is focused on delivering the plan, which includes the \$1.6 billion CBD and South East Light Rail project. The light rail will transform the Sydney central business district by improving public transport services to key destinations, moving about 9,000 people per hour in each direction through the central business district and removing about 220 buses from the central business district. Central business district congestion currently costs the New South Wales economy around \$5.1 billion a year, and that figure is expected to rise to \$8.8 billion by 2021. Light rail delivers the best-value solution to this problem. Again, this Government is delivering on its commitments.

Another important project is the Wynyard Walk, which will provide a world-class, fully accessible pedestrian link between Wynyard station and the developing central business district western corridor and Barangaroo. This walkway will allow pedestrians to get from the Wynyard transport hub to the Barangaroo waterfront in approximately six minutes, avoiding steep inclines and road crossings. The plan also preserves access to the central business district for motorists by optimising traffic routes. The Government is delivering on its commitments. The access strategy is an important step towards preparing Sydney for future growth as it creates an integrated system for our customers travelling to and from the city. It is good to know that the member for Sydney is endorsing the Government's plan.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH** (Sydney) [12.48 p.m.], in reply: I thank the member for Drummoyne, the member for Davidson and the member for Heffron for their contributions to this debate and for their support. Recent deaths and injuries of cyclists show that we need to improve education programs for drivers, and constituents regularly contact me asking for action against those cyclists who ride dangerously. All road users need to know the road rules and how to be courteous, but the Government must implement statewide behavioural change programs that complement enforcement operations to help achieve cultural change. This needs to include motorists in all types of vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians. A global city needs a public transport system that can move large numbers of people quickly and safely to where they want to go, and significant work is needed to achieve this in Sydney.

I am pleased that a start has been made on the changes needed after many years of promises and proposals which did not eventuate. I hear regularly from constituents who are constantly waiting for late buses about the need to sort out congestion and get them where they need to go. An important part of my motion is in relation to the health benefits of cycling and walking. I encourage some of the members currently on level nine to put down their fatty steaks and go for a walk or a ride on one of Clover's cycleways, which the Minister for Roads and Ports is currently building. The Sydney City Centre Access Strategy promises to enable growth in the central business district without the current congestion that brings traffic to a standstill, while improving people's experience travelling to, from and within the city of Sydney. I commend the motion to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

#### **SUPERINTENDENT BRUCE EDWARD LYONS, APM**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL** (Northern Tablelands) [12.50 p.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Superintendent Bruce Edward "Bluey" Lyons, APM, on reaching 40 years of service in the NSW Police Force.
- (2) Pays tribute to and thanks Superintendent Lyons for his distinguished service to policing and to the communities of the New England, his inspirational leadership and for being the embodiment of a community police officer.

For many years the face of policing in the New England has been Superintendent Bruce Edward Lyons, APM. Although better known as "Bluey" or "Commander" to those who know him, Superintendent Lyons has served as a police officer in this State for an impressive 40 years—a testament to the man and to the job he loves so much. Arriving at Armidale Police Station in 1999 to serve as the New England Local Area Commander, Bluey quickly established a wonderful rapport not only with the many officers under his command but also with community leaders and the wider community—the law-abiding community, that is. In 2004 he headed to the North Coast as commander of the Richmond Local Area Command before returning to Armidale and assuming the reins of New England again in 2010.

It was my great pleasure to get to know Bluey quite well after last year's by-election. His genuine interest in the local community made an immediate impression—a true community policeman, a country cop through and through. The New England region was the beneficiary of Bluey's influence on policing, and through his hard work and tenacity he marshalled the energies and support of community leaders, his own police hierarchy and the Government to increase police numbers, improve police facilities and drive down crime in the local region. Bluey inspires his officers to do their best, and the crime figures from New England during the past decade and a half speak volumes about his effectiveness as a leader and as a police officer.

Starting out all those years ago from the Police Academy in Redfern, Bluey's first posting was to the Regent Street Police Station in the heart of the wrong end of Sydney. After just 18 months in uniform, Bluey was off to the Criminal Investigation Bureau [CIB], where he found a home for the next quarter of a century. While there, he was responsible for investigating major and organised crime at State, national and international levels. I have enjoyed spending numerous hours with Bluey in meetings and at functions when he has recalled tales from the past, some of which I cannot share with members. Nevertheless, he has some interesting stories to tell about good old-fashioned policing.

In 1997 Bluey moved to the North Coast, where he was a crime manager for a couple of years before taking on the important role of local area commander both on the North Coast and in New England. Considering the tragedy, violence and sadness that Bluey would have seen over those 40 years, he remains one of the most optimistic and easygoing people I have had the pleasure to meet. He is a great advocate for community policing and encouraging government agencies and community groups to work together in preventing crime and addressing criminal activities when they occur. Thanks to Bluey, there are now systems in place to deliver a coordinated response from the human services agencies in our area, including regular meetings of those agencies, involving council representatives, chambers of commerce, liquor accords and me.

The New England Local Area Command has been made an example of good policing thanks in large part to the contribution of Bluey Lyons over many years. He is an inspirational leader and is the embodiment of a community police officer. Such is the regard in which Bluey is held that at present he is on secondment to the NSW Firearms Registry to head that agency while it undergoes a review. It is our fervent hope that one day we will have the benefit of seeing Superintendent Lyons return to our command to assume leadership of his troops. However, he is doing a fine job during the review of the Firearms Registry and providing a great service to the people of this State. As I said, Superintendent Bruce Edward "Bluey" Lyons, APM, is an inspirational leader. Despite notching up 40 years of service, he continues to serve the great people of this State, an embodiment of good old-fashioned policing, a community police officer. It is a pleasure and a privilege to commend his great service to the House.

**Mr RICHARD AMERY** (Mount Druitt) [12.55 p.m.]: I join the member for Northern Tablelands in recognising 40 years of service by Superintendent Bruce Lyons, and I commend the member for Northern Tablelands for recognising the excellent service of one of New South Wales' finest. Interestingly, Superintendent Lyons is not only celebrating 40 years of service. He has been recognised many times, going back to 1988 when he received the national medal and the NSW Police Medal in 2003. Throughout his years of service he has received acknowledgements, recognition and medals for service and his deeds on duty. It was interesting to hear the member for Northern Tablelands talk about the history of Superintendent Lyons because I was a serving police officer in the 1970s and I thought there was no-one left in the Police Force who went through the old Redfern Police Academy. I graduated from the academy in 1970 and I gather that Superintendent Lyons, with 40 years of service, went through the academy in about 1974.

The member for Northern Tablelands said that Superintendent Lyons' first duty was at the Regent Street Police Station, at the other end of Sydney, which was also my first police station. However, it is no longer the fully operational police station it once was. Superintendent Lyons went to Regent Street just after I left to go to the police prosecuting branch. At that time Regent Street Police Station would have had three shifts of eight

hours per day, and night shifts were changing from the constant three-week night shifts to the seven-day roster, which was introduced in about 1974. Also, the old black police uniform was being phased out in 1973-74. I do not know whether Superintendent Bruce Lyons started off with the lighter blue uniform or the older black one—I will have to ask him one day if we ever catch up.

Superintendent Lyons' service to the Police Force is commendable. Many people join the Police Force and serve for 20 years and get recognised for that. Twenty years, sometimes 30 years, is a long time in the Police Force. Forty years of service by Superintendent Lyons is exceptional: uniform, plain clothes, the Criminal Investigation Bureau, two terms in New England and now the Firearms Registry. Parliament is pleased to recognise an officer who started off, one could say, during a past era in New South Wales policing and who remains relevant in the modern Police Force. I commend the motion and I commend the member for Northern Tablelands for bringing this matter before the House.

**Mr RON HOENIG** (Heffron) [12.58 p.m.]: I join the member for Northern Tablelands to commend Superintendent Lyons' service to New South Wales and recognise his significant achievement. Listening to the member for Northern Tablelands articulate his relationship with and observations about a decorated police officer, one can only speak in glowing terms. For 25 years Superintendent Lyons served in the Criminal Investigation Branch, so he is steeped in the knowledge and experience of some of the worst crimes in society. Superintendent Lyons is certainly a loyal serving police officer to his entire community, not just a person who says what is expected for the purpose of achieving headlines, as would be apparent to everyone in the New England area. On 27 March 2014 an article appeared in the *Armidale Express* headed "New England cop boss speaks in support of Torbay". Despite making no comment in relation to the reasons that the former member for Northern Tablelands resigned, Superintendent Lyons said:

I have met no other person who has won the hearts and souls of the great majority of community members. His integrity and compassion for those he has served I believe is unparalleled.

It is almost unheard of these days for people in public office to maintain their impartial loyalty and views in the face of popular press criticism but it is a testament to Superintendent Lyons that at probably the most difficult time of Richard Torbay's career he was prepared to speak about the former member whom he knew.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George)**: As the Deputy-Speaker and the member for Lismore, I add my congratulations to Superintendent Bruce Edward "Bluey" Lyons, APM, who lives in my electorate. A big part of his career has been at the Richmond Local Area Command. Superintendent Lyons is a true gentleman, who cares about every police officer in his command and those with whom he has previously worked. Superintendent Lyons has always stood by them to provide 100 per cent support in every aspect of their work whether it be at times of a tragedy or on certain cases that need that little bit of extra effort. I congratulate Bluey, as we all know him, or Commander. It has been a privilege to say these few words in support of this motion.

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

## **LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**

### **Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 53/55**

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

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD** (Myall Lakes) [1.00 p.m.]: I update the House on the comments made by the Legislation Review Committee in its recent digest, which was tabled on 25 March 2014. This is the fifty-third digest prepared by the Legislation Review Committee in this Parliament. Six bills were introduced in the sitting week commencing 18 March 2014. The committee made comments about two of these bills. The first was the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Amendment (Victims Impact Statements—Mandatory Consideration) Bill 2014. The bill proposes to amend the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act 1999 to, among other things, require courts to receive and consider victim impact statements before sentencing. The bill allows courts to receive community impact statements in circumstances where no primary victim impact statement or family victim impact statement has been received.

The committee noted that the new mandatory requirement for courts to consider victim impact statements before sentencing may lead to inconsistent sentencing for otherwise substantially similar offences

where a victim impact statement has not been provided. In particular, the committee was concerned that victims of crime with immediate family members and articulate family members may be in a better position to express the effect of the crime than victims of crime with no immediate family or family members who do not have the same capacity to express such sentiments. The committee referred this issue to Parliament for further consideration.

The committee also commented on the Racing Administration Amendment (Sports Betting National Operational Model) Bill 2014, which proposes to amend the Racing Administration Act 1998 and other legislation to regulate betting on sporting events in line with the National Policy on Match-Fixing in Sport. The bill, among other things, introduces some new offences and penalties. For example, proposed section 18C makes it an offence for a betting service provider, such as a bookmaker, to offer a betting service in relation to a sporting event without being licensed and without having entered into an integrity agreement with the relevant sports controlling body. This offence carries a maximum penalty for an individual of \$5,500, or imprisonment for 12 months or both.

The committee noted that this penalty aligns with penalties for similar offences under the Racing Administration Act 1998 and the Unlawful Gambling Act 2009 and that the proposed provisions further the intention of the bill to ensure sport is played honestly and fairly. The committee also noted the new provisions ensure that sporting events on which punters wager money are openly contested and free of manipulation. In the circumstances, the committee did not make any further comments. The committee also highlighted that the Act will commence on a day or days to be appointed by proclamation. The committee prefers legislation of this kind, which may impact on personal rights and liberties, to commence on a fixed date or on assent.

The digest is intended to inform members about provisions in bills before Parliament that may warrant further consideration. The committee hopes the digest is a resource that contributes to robust and informed debate in Parliament on issues of public importance. I thank the staff for their excellent work and, in particular, for the short turnaround due to back-to-back sitting weeks. I also thank each of the hardworking members of the committee, who realise how important the committee and the digest are to members of the Parliament, government agencies and legal practices and the like outside this House. I commend the digest to the House.

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK** (Bankstown) [1.06 p.m.]: On behalf of the Opposition, I refer to Legislation Review Digest No. 53 of the Fifty-fifth Parliament of New South Wales. As always, I acknowledge my fellow committee members: the chair and member for Myall Lakes, the members representing the electorates of Swansea, Rockdale and Parramatta, and our colleagues from the other place, the Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane, Mr David Shoebridge and the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps. I acknowledge the committee staff who have once again delivered a digest to their usual diligent standard in back-to-back weeks, which is undoubtedly a very difficult program for them.

This week the committee considered six bills, including the Ombudsman Amendment (Aboriginal Programs) Bill 2014. The object of the bill is to amend the Ombudsman Act 1974 to provide for the monitoring and assessment by the Ombudsman of designated Aboriginal programs funded under the Opportunity, Choice, Healing, Responsibility and Empowerment Plan for Aboriginal Affairs. The bill will provide for the appointment of a deputy ombudsman for the purpose of enabling the Ombudsman to monitor and assess those Aboriginal programs. I note for the record that the bill does not specify that this person must be an Aboriginal, but the Minister has indicated that the person will be of Aboriginal heritage.

I now turn to the Racing Administration Amendment (Sports Betting National Operational Model) Bill 2014. The object of the bill is to regulate sports betting in line with the National Policy on Match-Fixing in Sport agreed by Australian Sports Ministers in June 2011. State and Territory governments have worked together for quite some time to address the issue of fraudulent sports betting and match-fixing activities with the aim of protecting the integrity of sport. Only recently there was an incident of match fixing in a second tier Victorian soccer competition. This only reinforces the need to ensure that there is integrity at all levels of sport in Australia. The committee considered that the bill will introduce new offences and penalties, including proposed section 18C which will create an offence with a maximum penalty of \$11,000 for a corporation, and a maximum penalty of \$5,500 or imprisonment, or both, for an individual, if a licensed betting service provider offers a bet to a sporting event and has not entered into an integrity agreement with the governing body of the sport.

Proposed new section 17B will authorise the Minister for Sport and Recreation to prescribe a person or body as a sports controlling body for a sporting event. The committee also reviewed the Universities Legislation

Amendment (Regulatory Reforms) Bill 2014. This bill will amend the enabling Acts of nine universities in New South Wales: Charles Sturt University, Macquarie University, Southern Cross University, the University of New England, the University of New South Wales, University of Sydney, University of Western Sydney, University of Wollongong and University of Technology Sydney. The amendments will remove regulatory requirements relating to financial management, land dealings and governing body election procedures of the universities. The regulatory changes aim to give the universities the capacity to generate revenue to fund the objects and principal functions of the university.

The committee considered three other bills, namely the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Amendment (Victim Impact Statements—Mandatory Consideration) Bill 2014, the Community Services (Complaints, Reviews and Monitoring) Amendment Bill 2014 and the TAFE Changes Moratorium (Secure Future for Public Provision of Vocational Education and Training) Bill 2014. I commend the digest to the House.

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

**Report noted.**

## **COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### **Report: Skill Shortages in NSW**

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

**Pursuant to standing orders debate postponed and set down as an order of the day for a future day.**

*[The Deputy-Speaker (Mr Thomas George) left the chair at 1.11 p.m. The House resumed at 2.15 p.m.]*

## **DISTINGUISHED VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I welcome to the Speaker's gallery the Australian Political Exchange Council's eighth delegation from the Philippines, led by the Hon. Esteban Evan B. Contreras, Vice Governor of the Province of Capiz, accompanied by representatives from the Australian Political Exchange Council. The delegation has travelled to regional New South Wales, Canberra and Sydney during their seven-day visit. Welcome to the New South Wales Parliament. It was lovely to meet you at lunchtime today.

## **MR HUGH CAVILL**

**The SPEAKER:** On behalf of the House I farewell Hugh Cavill, parliamentary liaison officer for the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for the Hunter, who will be leaving us. I am sure members, particularly the Minister, will join me in wishing Hugh well in his future endeavours.

## **QUESTION TIME**

*[Question time commenced at 2.19 p.m.]*

## **ORGANISED CRIME**

**Mr JOHN ROBERTSON:** My question is directed to the Attorney General, and Minister for Justice. Last night we again saw gun violence on the streets of Sydney and an innocent bystander shot. On 25 March last year when asked why the Minister had failed to declare a single organised crime gang he told the House he was, "ready to go". Will the Minister inform the House why one year and 234 shootings later he has failed to outlaw a single organised crime gang?

**Mr GREG SMITH:** It is wonderful to receive a question from a member who promised to support mandatory sentencing that will stop intoxicated people from killing and maiming the youth of our country—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will come to order.

**Mr GREG SMITH:** —and then broke his deal with the people of this State and went swimming off to a watered-down Victorian version while dishonestly saying it is the same. I thank the member for his question.

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

**Mr GREG SMITH:** Watch this space with regard to gun laws. The former Government rushed a bill in one day to be covered—

**Mr John Robertson:** Point of order: I refer to Standing Order 129, relevance. Talking about rushed, it is one thing you will never be accused of, that is, rushing to do something.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order. The Attorney General has the call.

**Mr GREG SMITH:** If your Government had got the legislation correct, this Government would be further advanced.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! This is not an opportunity for debate. I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the first time.

**Mr GREG SMITH:** I will not mention the \$3 million bribe.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Dubbo will come to order. Members will come to order. The member for Wollongong will come to order. The member for Toongabbie will come to order.

**Mr GREG SMITH:** There are a number of issues and problems that have arisen and it takes time to work through these things. The legislative framework is in place to do it. The work has to be done. We cannot rush in. We went with the Queensland legislation because it was approved by the High Court. Unlike the failed Labor legislation, the Queensland legislation is evidence based. We have to put together evidence and we are doing so.

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

**Mr GREG SMITH:** I will tell the Leader of the Opposition another thing. If he does not start doing something to protect the people of this State against alcohol-fuelled violence he will find himself out on his backside—if his colleagues do not put a gun to his head first.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The level of interjection from Opposition members is unacceptable. Members will come to order or they will be ejected from the Chamber. I call the member for Keira to order for the first time.

### INNER WEST LIGHT RAIL EXTENSION

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS:** My question is addressed to the Premier. What is the Government doing to ease congestion and address the cost of living? Are there any alternative policies?

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** I thank the member for his question and welcome the students in the public gallery from the Camden electorate. They represent many fine high schools, but I have a particular soft spot for St Gregory's College because of what it does for my football team. Indeed, I can reveal that the Minister for Education is a former student of St Greg's. This morning I was delighted to join the member for Strathfield and the Minister for Transport to open the \$176 million Inner West Light Rail Extension and the nine new stations to Dulwich Hill. The Inner West Light Rail Extension was started by a former Liberal Government and the great transport Minister Bruce Baird. The first part of the project was the vision of Bruce Baird.

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

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** Today the second part of the project was opened by the person who turns dreams into reality, the Minister for Transport and member for Willoughby. For the first time this service will offer a turn-up-and-go public transport option for commuters heading to the central business district. Services will run every 10 minutes in peak times and every 15 minutes in off-peak times. Customers can hop on and hop off the light rail at nine new accessible stations: Leichhardt North, Hawthorne, Marion, Taverners Hill,



Lewisham West, Waratah Mills, Arlington, Dulwich Grove and Dulwich Hill. The light rail extension will give people an added incentive to leave their cars at home and use the great public transport options that are now available.

When members opposite were in government they specialised in brochures but we specialise in building. I congratulate the Minister for Transport on turning Labor's press release into a funded project. As I said, the dreams of many people in the inner west for a decent light rail service have come true. This morning as we travelled on the light rail service we spoke with some of the passengers. They commented on how much better it was to have a light rail or heavy rail option on a wet day like today when roads are usually congested. I know that a number of members were affected by congestion and the actions of truck drivers on our roads this morning. People travelling on rail are more assured to get to their destinations on time.

Speaking of traffic, the other day as I was walking along the street a truck passed me and, unbelievably, something fell off the back of it. It was a document entitled "New South Wales Labor Policy Forum". I assumed it would be blank. Incredibly, it was not blank—although I suspect the Leader of the Opposition now wishes it was. It is no wonder the Leader of the Opposition has been a policy-free zone over the past three years: this secret document contains policies that will frighten households across New South Wales. I hold in my hands Labor's secret blueprint for this State.

In relation to congestion and traffic, the document includes a policy to introduce "a Sydney congestion charge" on motorists—another great big new Labor tax on motorists in this city. Who would be hit hardest by a congestion tax? Hardest hit would be those who live in the west or south-west and have the longest commute, of course. The policy of members opposite, who claim to represent the workers and the western suburbs, would hit those people the hardest. What about the poor workers who drive each day from Campbelltown, Mulgoa, Granville, Londonderry or Liverpool? The Leader of the Opposition wants to impose a great big new Labor tax on them.

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

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** The advice I have is that proposed in this document—

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The Premier is not answering the question he was asked. He is also quoting from a fabricated document and we would be happy for him to table it.

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

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** Labor's great big congestion tax would increase the M5 toll from \$4.40 to \$17.10. It would increase the M7 toll from \$7.46 to \$28.90 and increase the M2 toll from \$6.11 to \$23.70.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order: The Premier indicated that he was happy to table the document. We are still waiting for him to table it.

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

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** It would increase the Cross City Tunnel toll— [*Extension of time granted.*]

The congestion tax would increase the Cross City Tunnel toll from \$5 to \$19.40. Someone travelling from Rouse Hill to the airport would see their tolls increased to \$62 for that trip. Members opposite have form on tolls. They introduced time-of-day tolling on the Sydney Harbour Bridge, and they would do it all again. It also proposes a progressive, broad-based land tax on homeowners. We know what that means: a new Labor tax on every single householder across this State. It is a great big, new Labor tax bill for every year for the young family who has managed to save and get its first home. Across Sydney, on average, that could cost \$1,700 a year.

**Dr Andrew McDonald:** Point of order: I refer to Standing Order 129, relevance. The question was about transport. Yet again I ask the Premier to table this fictitious document.

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

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** Before they can pay their public transport bills, they have to be able to pay this tax. In Parramatta it would cost \$2,284 a year and in Strathfield \$4,982.

**Ms Linda Burney:** Point of order: Premiers are not supposed to lie.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! That is unparliamentary language. I call the member for Canterbury to order for the second time.

**Mr Brad Hazzard:** Point of order: The language used by the member for Canterbury is completely inappropriate for this House. Madam Speaker, I ask you to direct the member to withdraw that comment and to indicate to her that that language is not acceptable from either side of the House.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I ruled that the language is unparliamentary, but the member for Canterbury made a general comment. She did not say the current Premier lied. She may withdraw the remark if she wishes to do so.

**Ms Linda Burney:** To the point of order: It was a general comment and I think people would agree with it.

### **BLACKTOWN HOSPITAL EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT**

**Dr ANDREW McDONALD:** My question is directed to the Minister for Health. Earlier this week Sonya Malone was left waiting for 30 hours for emergency surgery at Blacktown Hospital. Does the Minister admit this is unacceptable and that \$3 billion in cuts to the health system are hurting patients like Sonya Malone?

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** On television last night—I saw the broadcast—Mrs Malone in fact congratulated the doctors and nurses of Blacktown Hospital, who had provided her with first-class treatment. I am surprised that the shadow Minister for Health does not know that the hospital was incredibly busy at the time.

**Dr Andrew McDonald:** There was a predictable increase in demand.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Macquarie Fields to order for the first time.

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** There were six resuscitation patients in the 48 hours and 63 emergency patients.

**Dr Andrew McDonald:** Predictable and predictable.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Macquarie Fields to order for the second time.

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** The member for Macquarie Fields is a doctor and should know this. Resuscitation patients are generally unconscious, not breathing, life-threatening and so were the emergency patients. The reality is this patient was in a treatment part of the emergency department, in a recliner.

**Dr Andrew McDonald:** Appendicitis kills people.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Macquarie Fields to order for the third time.

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** She was undergoing treatment and was being monitored. Her treating doctor believed that she was fine. I would have preferred her to have been waiting in a ward, but we know that Blacktown Hospital is run down. How much money did the former Government spend on Blacktown Hospital? Nothing for 16 years, so there was no ward space. I am proud that Blacktown Hospital is our biggest hospital rebuild at \$324 million. If people want to look at the cranes on site and talk to the medical staff, who are happier than they were under the previous Government—watch this space—they will see money being spent on the hospital.

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

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** I am pleased that this patient had her treatment within the time her doctor thought appropriate.

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

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER:** She recovered well and she has now gone home.

**Ms Linda Burney:** Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 129, relevance. The question was: Is the care acceptable? Does the Minister think it was acceptable?

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

**Mr John Williams:** Talk to your local member, the member for Blacktown. Who calls that resuscitation?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Murray-Darling to order for the first time.

### STATE INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr JOHN FLOWERS:** My question is directed to the Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations. How is the Government getting on with the job of building infrastructure, reducing the cost of living? Are there any alternative policies?

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** I thank the member for Rockdale for his interest in this topic and his continued excellent service to his community. As the House knows, the O'Farrell-Stoner Government has a clear plan for building infrastructure across the State—record projects in Transport and Health. We have to be responsible to fund such projects; we cannot just announce projects without allocating the money. We have what is called the New South Wales model. The Federal Treasurer recently announced, at the G20 meeting, that this model could be pursued in other countries. We are happy to share the good news and we have had support from others, including from Labor's Paul Howes and Daniel Andrews, the Leader of the Opposition in Victoria. Also, the chair of the inquiry into financial systems, David Murray, gave the New South Wales model a ringing endorsement.

We have found a way to pay for infrastructure. We are building it and there is money to undertake projects. I thought: Are there other plans? How else could we fund infrastructure in this State? I was surprised when the Premier gave me a document that he got off the back of a truck. When one looks at that document some interesting things come to light. The good news is that the Economic Policy Commission is chaired by the middle manager, the member for Maroubra. The great news is they say they want to build infrastructure. How are they going to pay for it? It is quite simple: It says, "We pay for it with an increased tax-take and more debt." If there is ever an example of what is in Labor DNA, that is it—any opportunity to put up taxes and rip debt through the ceiling. That is exactly what Labor does.

During the week I invited members opposite to come out of their fiscal hidey-hole, but I did not expect them to charge out with their arms in the air and say to the people of New South Wales, "Here it is—we have a plan and it is a cracker. We are going to take debt and head it for the moon. And with taxes you ain't seen nothing till we get in." Here they come, tax after tax. That is in Labor's DNA. That is the important point for the people of New South Wales.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** Importantly, in our strategy we have reduced the debt inherited from Labor by \$10 billion on current forecasts.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** They want debt to continue to go up and up and up. That reminded me of what else went up under Labor. Electricity prices went up under Labor.

**Ms Linda Burney:** Point of order: I refer to Standing Order 129, relevance. This is not the Oscars; this is question time. Will the Minister table the document?

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** There is so much excitement—tax going up and debt going up has got us going, But I think the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, when we are talking about electricity prices, had a plan. Her plan was to take a hot water bottle to bed. The good news is that under our Government we have seen electricity prices start to come down. The Minister for Energy and Resources is doing a great job on reforms, and we are starting to see that. [*Extension of time granted.*]

We have brought electricity prices down. When the former Government was asked to do something about rising electricity prices it had no idea what to do. The *Daily Telegraph* went to each member of the former Government and asked them if they had a plan to bring down electricity prices and what they could suggest to households across the State. What did the former member for Maitland say? He said, "Work in the dark as much as possible." The energy Minister asked the member for Liverpool if he had a solution.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order: There was so much nonsense from the Treasurer I can hardly remember the question.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Can you remember your point of order?

**Mr Michael Daley:** Whatever the Treasurer is saying is not relevant to the question. What the member for Liverpool thought four years ago is not relevant to the question.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I am sure the Treasurer will return to the leave of the question. I call the member for Dubbo to order for the first time.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** The response of the member for Liverpool was—

**Mr Paul Lynch:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Murray-Darling to order for the second time.

**Mr Paul Lynch:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 59, tedious repetition.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** The member for Liverpool said that he turns the lights out when he leaves the room. That was the policy of the former energy Minister and that is exactly what he did. The good news in relation to taxes and the good news in relation to debt and electricity prices is that the O'Farrell-Stoner Government is here and it is doing the right thing by the State.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Maroubra to order for the second time. All members who are on calls to order are deemed to be on three calls to order. There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

### BLACKTOWN INTERNATIONAL SPORTS PARK

**Mr BARRY COLLIER:** My question is directed to the Minister for Sport and Recreation. Blacktown International Sports Park is the home ground and training facility used by the Sydney Blue Sox and Western Sydney Wanderers.

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

**Mr BARRY COLLIER:** Given the importance of this facility, will the Minister reverse her \$736,000 annual unding cut to the facility, or does the Minister simply not care about Western Sydney?

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON:** I thank the member for Miranda for his question and I congratulate him on his role in the shadow ministry—the rookie of the year. He thinks his question is a home run, but he struck out. The Liberal-Nationals Government inherited a financial fiasco from members opposite—just like union officials spending on their credit cards; just like Craig Thomson on a spending spree.

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

*[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Canterbury left the Chamber at 2.44 p.m.]*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Interjections will cease.

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON:** As the Minister for Sport and Recreation I am passionate about creating opportunities for our young people, our middle-aged people and our seniors from all walks of life, including those in Western Sydney suburbs, to participate in sport and recreation. But as a responsible Government we need to ensure that our taxpayers' funds are spent responsibly. I know "responsibly" is not in the lexicon of members opposite. Between 2004 and 2012, they gave \$800,000 per annum to Blacktown City Council without any formal funding agreement. As shocking as it may seem to members opposite—

**Mr Guy Zangari:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The Minister is not answering the question, which is: will she reverse the funding cuts to the Blacktown facility?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister is being relevant to the question asked.

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON:** As shocking as it might be, we have said to Blacktown City Council that any request for funding should be supported by a comprehensive business case. Rather than shouting, "Show me the money", Blacktown City Council should focus on submitting that business case so that we can see the detail and make a decision about whether there is a demonstrable case to fund the Blacktown International Sports Park. I will never apologise in this House for making our stakeholders account for what they want our taxpayer dollars to fund. I am very glad the member for Miranda has asked this question and brought up Blacktown City Council because the former Labor-run administration saddled the Blacktown City Council with a \$60 million shortfall—that same old Labor we know. At every level of government, whether State, Federal or local, Labor is about irresponsible government.

**Mr John Robertson:** Point of order: Standing Order 129, relevance. The question is not about the former council; it is about the Labor mayor of Blacktown council who is scathing about the Minister cutting his \$736,000.

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

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON:** I quote from Tim Harradine, who is Chief Executive Officer of Baseball New South Wales. He said:

We feel from a baseball perspective that we are well supported by the State Government.

Baseball feels well supported by the State Government because it is delivering for sport in New South Wales. Baseball New South Wales received more than \$160,000 under our Sports Development Program. Under the last round of the Community Building Partnership they received a whopping \$230,000. In the member for Lismore's local community, the Far North Coast Baseball Association received \$50,000 to upgrade lighting. In the member for Menai's local community, the mighty Illawong Baseball Club—whom I met and hosted at Bondi beach—

**Mr Guy Zangari:** Point of order: Standing Order 129, relevance. The question is about the Blacktown facility; it is not about any other electorate.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister is being relevant to the question asked. The member for Fairfield will resume his seat. I call the member for Miranda to order for the first time.

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON:** The club received \$25,000 for floodlights at the baseball diamond. But there is more.

**Mr Barry Collier:** Point of order: The Minister is referring to the member for Mulgoa incorrectly as the member for Menai.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The time for the Minister's answer has expired.

**REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS:** My question is directed to the best Deputy Premier this State has seen. How is the Government delivering the infrastructure that regional New South Wales deserves?

**Mr ANDREW STONER:** I thank the member for Clarence for his expertly delivered question. Three short years ago we made a commitment to improving—

**Mr Richard Amery:** It must have been a short year.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Mount Druitt to order for the first time.

**Mr ANDREW STONER:** They may have been long years for you but time has flown because we are working so hard to make New South Wales number one again. Three years ago we made a commitment to rebuild the social and economic infrastructure across this great State, particularly in regional New South Wales, which had been sadly neglected after 16 long years of Labor. I am happy to inform the House today that we are delivering on that commitment. We are overseeing a massive \$13 billion spend on infrastructure in regional New South Wales. We are delivering \$1.7 billion to rebuild hospitals across the length and breadth of regional New South Wales, from Wagga Wagga to Kempsey, Port Macquarie, Tamworth, Parks and Forbes. We are getting on with the job of improving the level of care in country communities.

We are delivering substantial upgrades to our regional roads with an additional \$1 billion in capital expenditure on those roads in each State budget since we came to office. Under Labor, 60 per cent of the fatalities in New South Wales occurred on those roads. We are delivering \$160 million in infrastructure to mining-affected communities through our Resources for Regions Program. We are delivering \$120 million for community groups to fix local infrastructure such as showgrounds, scout halls and surf clubs on Crown land. We are delivering \$100 million through our Local Infrastructure Renewal Scheme to help local councils unlock \$1 billion to upgrade local infrastructure. We are delivering \$40 million this financial year to help farmers and regional communities secure their water supplies to be better prepared for drought.

All of this—delivering \$13 billion in regional infrastructure—is making a significant difference in the lives of people in our regional communities. Families in places such as Lismore, Ballina and Grafton can now access 85 per cent of the health care they need within their local health district. We know that by improving accessibility to health services we improve not only the quality of the treatment but also the life expectancy of people living in country New South Wales. Families at Lake Cathie are happy that their kids will be able to attend a new school close to their homes at Lake Cathie and Bonny Hills for a world-class education, thanks to the Minister for Education. Communities in towns such as Singleton, Muswellbrook, Lithgow, Narrabri and Mudgee are seeing a return from the mining boom, which Labor plundered, to help them upgrade their roads, water schemes and, in the case of Singleton, renewal of the central business district, which is fantastic.

Farmers and communities in Cobar, Nyngan, Wilcannia and Nimmitabel are getting much-needed security of their water supplies for future droughts. Country people who drive on the Pacific Highway, the Princes Highway, the Great Western Highway and the Bells Line of Road will have a much safer and more timely journey as a result of our investment in improving those roads, and producers will be able to deliver their goods from the paddock to the port and to market much more cost effectively as a result. We are stimulating the economy. Then there are jobs. With a \$13 billion investment in infrastructure in regional communities across the State, as the member for Monaro said, it is jobs, jobs, jobs. That is what we are about. The Premier mentioned the ill-fated Rozelle metro, which cost taxpayers \$500 million.

**Mr Barry O'Farrell:** How many centimetres of track?

**Mr ANDREW STONER:** Zilch.

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

**Mr ANDREW STONER:** We took the politics out of infrastructure allocations. [*Extension of time granted.*]

Another election commitment was to establish Infrastructure NSW to take the politics out of infrastructure promises and wasted money, as we saw under Labor. We have an independent panel of experts to

oversee the process. Indeed, I note that this week's *Economist* magazine singled out New South Wales, along with jurisdictions including Chile and Canada, as doing particularly well in terms of innovative, politics-free infrastructure provision. Members opposite should read the *Economist* more often; then they would be praising us as well. I could make a contrast with the neglect, the failure to plan and the failure to deliver infrastructure by members opposite.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** I bet you can't.

**Mr ANDREW STONER:** Labor promised the hospitals I mentioned—Wagga Wagga, Bega, Dubbo, Parks, Forbes, Tamworth and Port Macquarie—but never delivered. They promised to finish the job on the Pacific Highway and they reneged on the funding. They promised to deliver upgrades on the Princes Highway. Which side is getting on with the job of delivering? The Liberal-Nationals Government in New South Wales is delivering. They played politics with the ill-fated Rozelle metro, wasting \$500 million of taxpayers' money. That is the record of members opposite. They neglected regional New South Wales. They failed to deliver on their promises. This Government is delivering and making regional New South Wales number one again.

### CHALLONER HOUSE

**Mrs BARBARA PERRY:** My question is addressed to the Minister for Family and Community Services.

**Mr Barry O'Farrell:** Why don't you ask me a question?

**Mrs BARBARA PERRY:** It is not the Premier's portfolio. The Minister for Family and Community Services promised former wards of the State, forgotten Australians, who resided at Challoner House, to keep this historic building available for public use by former residents as a place of memory and healing. Will the Minister keep her commitment and stop the sale of Challoner House by the Government, or does she have no heart at all?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** I remind members that the decision to demolish Challoner House was made by the Labor Government.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I remind members that several of them are on calls to order.

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** It was a recommendation by the Labor Government. The O'Farrell-Stoner Government has reviewed that decision and I am pleased that the Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage has declared the precinct—

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

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** —to be heritage listed. That means that, despite the best endeavours of members opposite, Challoner House will not be demolished.

**Ms Noreen Hay:** Are you selling it?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** As to its future use, I am conscious that an active group of residents and former residents led by Leeallison Downie have worked hard to argue the case for the preservation of the property and its use as a memorial. The Government is working to determine the best way of preserving the building for their use while at the same time protecting State revenues.

### EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS:** My question is addressed to the Minister for Education. How is the Government improving learning environments for our school children?

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI:** I acknowledge the students from my old school, St Gregory's College, Campbelltown, who are in the public gallery, as well as the other students who joined us earlier today. It has been a long time since I attended St Gregory's College but we sang the hymn *Sub Tuum Praesidium* many times. The Government has done a fantastic job of school infrastructure investment. Only a week ago I was in the Port Macquarie electorate with the member for Port Macquarie and a couple of future students, turning the first sod

for the new Lake Cathie Public School, which will be opened on day one of next year. Earlier this year I had the pleasure, with the Premier, the member for Strathfield and the wonderful Governor of New South Wales, to officially open the Marie Bashir Public School, a purchase by the New South Wales Government of about \$26 million. That is a great investment in the inner west.

The new \$15.5 million Oran Park Public School was built to accommodate growing student enrolments in south-western Sydney. The school, which has the capacity to accommodate 720 students, has top-notch, modern facilities. The third new school, and a great investment, that opened in 2014 is the George Bass School for Specific Purposes in Bass Hill. Over time more investment will be needed in the growth areas, on the North Coast at Lake Cathie, in the inner city and the inner west about which we have made announcements, and across the State as we continue to deal with growing demands for public schools.

The Government has announced a \$70 million investment on the North Shore including upgrades to Mowbray Public School. Together with the member for Dubbo I visited the Yeoval Central School, which has received a \$1.5 million investment. We have invested in Rutherford High School and in the relocation of Parry School for Specific Purposes. Chatswood, Artarmon, and Lane Cove West public schools are getting an investment as part of this Government's investment in capital works. The total capital expenditure for education this financial year is estimated to be \$530 million, of which investment in school education services infrastructure is estimated to be approximately \$420 million.

The Government also has introduced an industry-standard method of delivery for the department's capital works program, creating savings estimated at \$8 million to \$10 million every year to be invested in public schools in New South Wales. I have just been handed a note that the member for Keira is distressed about two books he has lost or possibly have been stolen. One he says is not important but the other is distressing because he has not finished colouring it in.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I agree with the member for Keira, that is outrageous.

**Mr Ryan Park:** Has he got the book or not?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Keira need not worry, we will find it. I will help him look for it later. The Minister has the call.

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI:** It is appropriate that I pass on a message about the member for Keira. As members know, when the member for Keira was a teacher he wrote a letter to a former Director-General, Dr Ken Boston. One of the best things that ever happened in education was the election to Parliament of the member for Keira. The member said in that letter:

I'm frustrated that we have a union who behaves more like a militant out-of-date and out-of-touch group of people rather than representing the true concerns of the profession.

He condemns the union and he complains about having to perform at a certain level.

**Dr Andrew McDonald:** No, verbatim, mate; every word.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Macquarie Fields will remove himself from the Chamber until the end of question time.

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

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI:** The member for Keira said:

I am annoyed that I am sitting in the same room as individuals who are not performing to the level that is expected of professionals yet being paid a higher salary than myself.

*[Extension of time granted.]*

That also may be a reflection of his current circumstances. I will read some parts of this fascinating letter, given it is written by a former teacher. He made some dot points: "Clear, career paths and opportunities for teachers". The comma is in the wrong spot. He continued, "For teachers too diverse into other areas of education". I presume he meant opportunities for "teachers to diversify into other areas". He has made substantial spelling errors. I have taken the opportunity to correct the letter. Although he is a former schoolteacher, the letter is riddled with red corrections. He not only has a problem with literacy but also with numeracy.



**Mr John Barilaro:** Did he write it with a crayon?

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

**Mr John Robertson:** Point of order: I am happy for the Minister to read the whole letter onto the *Hansard* or alternatively to table the letter. Are you going to table it?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order. The Minister will continue his answer.

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI:** I will table the letter when I have finished. The member also has a numeracy problem because he wrote, "It baffles me how we have leaders of our school who barely even know what the word 'change agent' means". That is two words. There are other items that I am sure I will have the opportunity to deal with in the future. It is indeed a rich vein of insight into the performance of the member for Keira. When I finish dealing with it, I will lay it on the table. This Government has done a great job in education and it will continue to do so.

**Mrs Barbara Perry:** Point of order: As the Minister has referred to the document in a copious way he should table it. I ask that the Minister be directed to table the document.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister has cited the document; that is adequate. There is no point of order.

#### SUGARLOAF STATE CONSERVATION AREA MINE SUBSIDENCE

**Mr GREG PIPER:** My question is directed to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure. Given the Minister's comments in this House last week that the release of the interagency review of the Sugarloaf State Conservation Area subsidence incident was imminent, will the Minister assure the public that the upcoming five-week parliamentary break will not delay the release of this report?

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** I thank the member for Lake Macquarie for his continued interest on behalf of his community and for raising this matter with the Government. In this place members of both sides recognise that he is a very good community representative and member. Following the answer that I gave last week to a question from the member for Lake Macquarie, a lot of work has been done by NSW Planning and Infrastructure, Office of Environment and Heritage and Energy and Resources agencies. I particularly thank all the staff of those agencies for their consistent work on behalf of the community in regard to this issue.

I thank my ministerial colleagues the Minister for Resources and Energy and the Minister for the Environment for their work and commitment to make sure that this issue is dealt with promptly and properly in the interests of the people of New South Wales. Members will recollect that the issue arose out of a surface subsidence in October 2012, a major leak of grout in June 2013 and a minor leak of grout in September 2013 in the Sugarloaf State Conservation Area. Obviously those incidents were a source of great concern to the community, my ministerial colleagues and broadly across New South Wales. The Government has taken its responsibility very seriously and has again dealt with it openly and transparently.

It is fair to say that the community recognises that this Government's interest in making sure that all such issues are dealt with transparently is at the forefront of all of our considerations, particularly after the destruction of the credibility of the former Government by Labor Ministers Ian Macdonald and Eddie O'Beid in regard to mining issues. Members will no doubt recall that the grout issue, not the subsidence issue, was presented photographically to the House last week. It was clear that a considerable amount of grout had entered the waterway. Today I am able to fulfil the promise made by the Premier and Government last year that we would release the report and provide an update on the strong action that the Government is taking in response to the incidents. I will lay the report on the table.

I advise the member for Lake Macquarie that technical experts have told me that the subsidence impacts experienced in this case were very rare and extremely difficult to predict. There was a great deal of justifiable community concern around the subsidence incident but, as I said, it is a very rare type of occurrence. Since then a number of actions have been taken. Today I advise the House that the company that was responsible for the grouting arrangements, Orica Australia, is being prosecuted for the grout spill. The Environment Protection Authority and the Office of Environment and Heritage commenced proceedings in the Land and Environment Court last Friday. I am sure that is of particular interest to the member for Lake Macquarie as he and members of the community want to hear that strong actions are being taken. The actions

relate to two separate charges. One relates to the alleged damage to the Sugarloaf State Conservation Area and the second charge, as I understand it, relates to the alleged polluting of waters, each of which carries a very substantial penalty of \$1 million, or more in some circumstances.

As the House will recall, the companies have begun remediation work on the impacted area. I advise the House that 140 metres at the lowest end of the affected area has now been cleared of the grout. In fact, I have had the pleasure of seeing some photographs of the work being done and the grout being helicoptered out. It has been taken out of the area for disposal. The Hon. Robyn Parker has made sure that this has all been done under the strictest eye of the Office of Environment and Heritage. The Office of Environment and Heritage has very clear directions to make sure this is all done under the strictest of controls.

Government agencies are currently negotiating an offset in the form of in-kind work or money for the damage arising from excessive subsidence. The Government also has ordered a full review of Oceanic Coal's subsidence remediation grouting procedure, and has the power to order changes to the procedure if deficiencies are found. Oceanic Coal has been ordered to include a detailed geotechnical risk assessment that addresses the risks of any further substantial subsidence incidents in future extraction plans. If the member for Lake Macquarie needs more information, I am happy to provide it. [*Extension of time granted.*]

I add this very important issue: Oceanic Coal has accepted that no further longwall mining should occur in the immediate vicinity of the area affected by the subsidence incident. When one looks at the maps, it is now looking to do work a considerable distance away from the area where the subsidence occurred. It has in fact submitted a revised extraction plan to NSW Planning and Infrastructure and that revised infrastructure plan substantially reduces the approved mining area in that Sugarloaf Range. The prosecution, which was initiated in the Land and Environment Court last Friday, sends a very clear message and one that the community would expect to be sent to any company that causes these problems.

The message is that the New South Wales Government will prosecute on behalf of the community where it believes that any mining company or any company associated with a mining company has broken the law, whether or not it does so intentionally. While coalmining is vital to our State's economy—and I am sure the member for Lake Macquarie agrees—the New South Wales Government sets the rules for the good of the community and the environment and those rules must be followed. The Government has sent a clear message to mining companies across New South Wales that while they are respected and the State wants their business and the opportunities that mining provides—not only jobs but also revenue to build hospitals, roads and schools—high standards are expected. If those high standards are not met, those companies can expect the full force of the law to be thrown at them. That is certainly what the member for Lake Macquarie would expect and it is what the Government is delivering. I lay the report on the table.

## TRANSPORT SERVICES

**Mr CHRIS PATTERSON:** My question is addressed to the Premier. How is the Government easing cost-of-living pressures and does it have any alternative policies?

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** As I was saying when I was so rudely interrupted by the Palme d'Or winner, the member for Canterbury, Labor's secret blueprint, which I will table at the conclusion of my answer, not only contains proposals for a congestion tax—which would add tens of dollars to motorists using tollways across Sydney, harming most of the tradies and others who live in western and south-western Sydney—it also proposes a progressive broad-based land tax on homeowners.

We all know what that means: a great big new Labor tax on every single household across the State. It means a great big new Labor tax bill every single year for the young family, who just managed to save and get their first home. It means a great big new Labor tax bill every single year for pensioners and seniors who have scrimped and saved all their lives to own their own homes. It means a great big new Labor tax bill every year on the homes of farmers, people with disability, nurses, teachers and police officers.

Again, this secret tax proposes an echo of an earlier Labor failure. We all remember the disastrous impact that Bob Carr's home tax had on the State's housing market. The Leader of the Opposition does not want to just bring back Bob Carr's home tax, he wants to go even further. He wants to tax every single homeowner every single year. I am advised that, on average, Labor's home tax would cost every Sydney homeowner more than \$1,700 a year. Homeowners in The Hills would be slugged \$2,506 annually by Labor. In Parramatta Labor's tax would add \$2,284 a year to household bills. Strathfield homeowners would suffer a \$4,982 annual tax bill from Labor. In Camden the annual tax slug from Labor under this proposal would be \$1,414 and in the Blue Mountains homeowners would be slugged \$1,358 annually by Labor under this proposal.

While we are taking practical steps to reduce cost-of-living pressures on families and introducing better public transport options and reforms to electricity, which have seen power bill increases plummet, Labor seems determined to go in the opposite direction. But what is this forum and who is a part of it? Is it a lunatic splinter group of Balmain branchies who have been let loose on the Bordeaux? I will leave Adam Searle out of this. Let me look at the office bearers. The co-chair of the New South Wales Labor Policy Forum is none other than the member for Blacktown, the Leader of the Opposition. The chair of the jobs and economy policy arm of the forum is the member for Maroubra, the invisible shadow Treasurer. The committee also includes the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the other place and the shadow Minister for Transport.

**Mr Adrian Piccoli:** Who's that?

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** Exactly, who is that? The member for Maroubra tried to disown this document. He does not know what is going on. He has misled the Parliament or someone else is doing their policy work. Whoever has put this document together, I thank them very much. I thank the truck driver very much for ensuring it fell off the back of the truck. It is full of gems; but I will not waste them all today. From what I have revealed of Labor's secret policy blueprint, a couple of things are clear: Labor's policy would hurt families, devastate the economy, cost jobs and send the cost of living skyrocketing. It reveals what Labor wants and it is another reason why we will fight tooth and nail to stop Labor ever getting re-elected.

Before I finish, I pay tribute to Jaymes Boland-Rudder, who has been poached by Dave Smith of the National Rugby League, something I will not forgive him for unless the Tigers win the premiership this year. James has been working around this House for many years and I thank him for all his efforts. I wish him well with the National Rugby League. The one thing that unites both sides of politics in this place and keeps the member for Wollongong and me civil is our love and passion for rugby league. If James's going to the National Rugby League can improve the game even further, that is a great outcome.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Don't forget to table the document, Barry.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** I am happy to table the document. In fact, can staff put it in an email and send it to media outlets across the State? The public deserves to know that under Labor a congestion tax is on its way and that if Labor is ever elected it will impose an annual home tax. I lay the document on the table.

**Mr Ryan Park:** Point of order: Earlier in question time the Minister for Education sought to impugn my reputation by way of a document. I ask that he table the document.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! That is a matter for the Minister for Education.

**Mr Ryan Park:** Just table it. That is all we want.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister said that he would table it.

**Mr John Robertson:** The Minister did say he would table it. I ask that he table it now.

**Mr Ryan Park:** I am happy for him to keep using it; I will give a copy back to the Minister.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Keira will come to order and resume his seat.

**Question time concluded at 3.19 p.m.**

## **PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE**

### **Report**

**Mr Jonathan O'Dea,** as Chair, tabled report No. 14/55, entitled "Polygeneration in New South Wales", dated March 2014.

**Ordered to be printed on motion by Mr Jonathan O'Dea.**

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL MATTERS****Report**

**Mr Gareth Ward**, as Chair, tabled report No. 4/55, entitled "Inquiry into the 2012 Local Government Elections", dated March 2014.

**Ordered to be printed on motion by Mr Gareth Ward.**

**PETITIONS**

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

**Pet Shops**

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

**Same-sex Marriage**

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

**Container Deposit Levy**

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

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

The Hon. Barry O'Farrell—Falun Gong—lodged 25 February 2014 (Mrs Barbara Perry)

The Hon. Gladys Berejiklian—Casino to Murwillumbah Rail Corridor—lodged 27 February (Mr Donald Page)

**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) [3.21 p.m.]: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended at this sitting to permit the taking of community recognition statements for a period of up to 20 minutes following the conclusion of private members' statements, and prior to the adjournment of the House.

The trial continues with regard to community recognition statements this afternoon, for a period of up to 20 minutes.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE****Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Crimes Amendment (Intoxication) Bill 2014**

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD** (Wakehurst—Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW) [3.22 p.m.]: I move:

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

- (1) Permit the Consideration in Detail forthwith of the following motion in relation to the Crimes Amendment (Intoxication) Bill 2014: "That the Legislative Assembly insists on its disagreement a second time to the Legislative Council amendments".

- (2) Provide for the following speaking time limits to apply:
  - (a) Premier or Minister deputed—10 minutes;
  - (b) Leader of the Opposition or member deputed—10 minutes; and
  - (c) Premier or Minister deputed in reply—5 minutes.
- (3) That consideration of the motion take precedence of all other business until concluded.

Earlier this day the Crimes Amendment (Intoxication) Bill 2014 was returned to this place from the Legislative Council. The contents of that bill, as has been well explained by the Premier and Attorney General in public and in this place, are critical to the welfare of the people of New South Wales and the ongoing efforts that this Government is making to ensure the citizens of New South Wales live in as safe an environment as possible. We were greatly disappointed when we heard the Legislative Council had returned the bill to this place.

*[Interruption]*

It is disgraceful. There has not been any serious consideration of any of the changes required. The bill must be returned to how it was when it left this place. I propose that the bill be considered and returned to the Legislative Council.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY** (Maroubra) [3.24 p.m.]: The Opposition welcomes this motion and will support it. The Leader of the Opposition and the relevant shadow Ministers are not afraid to debate in public and in this place the issue of intoxication and alcohol-fuelled violence. If the Premier had paid heed to Labor's policies that were released in November instead of going on holidays and cobbling this package together in haste, he would not find himself in this position. The Opposition is happy to debate the Crimes Amendment (Intoxication) Bill 2014 again in this or any other place.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

## **CRIMES AMENDMENT (INTOXICATION) BILL 2014**

### **Consideration in Detail**

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL** (Ku-ring-gai—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) [3.25 p.m.]:  
I move:

That the Legislative Assembly insists on its disagreement a second time to the Legislative Council amendments.

This is serious legislation that the community demanded of government. It demanded this Parliament put this legislation in place to deal with the terrible issue of alcohol- and drug-fuelled violence. The attacks and assaults that are occurring as a result of that drug- and alcohol-fuelled intoxication and the damage and deaths that those assaults are causing across the community must stop. What the member for Maroubra stated in this House a short while ago is vastly different from what his leader said in January when this Parliament met and united as one to support the one-punch laws. The one-punch laws ensured if someone went out, got intoxicated through drugs or alcohol, picked a fight and threw a punch that resulted in the death of someone else a minimum mandatory sentence would be imposed.

At that time the Government said there would be a second part to the legislation. We said at that time the Government would work through the detail so the second part of the legislation addressed the most serious violent offences on the statute books. The Government introduced to this House carefully thought through and considered legislation that sought to impose minimum mandatory sentences on those most serious assaults where drug- and alcohol-fuelled intoxication was a factor. What happened a month after Labor was in this place saying it would stand shoulder to shoulder with the Government to deal with the scourge of drug and alcohol violence across the community? What happened one month after Labor said it would not play politics with this issue? It did play politics and opposed these provisions.

The Opposition is not just opposing them but seeking to put in its place something that sounds tough but clearly is not going to work. How do we know that? The proposals put forward by the Legislative Council on a second occasion are based on legislation that is in operation in Victoria. It is something that those opposite

praise and laud as a good thing. I say again today that those Victorian laws have not yet been applied successfully to a single person. No-one has gone to jail in Victoria as a result of those laws—and it is not as if drug- and alcohol-fuelled violence does not exist in Melbourne or in other parts of Victoria.

The proposals put forward by those opposite are flawed. They are flawed because they are based on a Victorian model that is yet to deliver. The Victorian model will not deliver to the community the justice and outcome that it so wanted over the Christmas period when too many senseless acts of violence occurred in this city and elsewhere. To make matters worse, the Opposition introduced legislation that gives those aged 18 to 21 a get-out-of-jail-free card. It says to those aged 18 to 21, "If you are not mature enough you do not have to face the penalty." That is the result of the Opposition's watered-down legislation.

I again make the point that an 18-year-old can get a licence, drink legally and join the defence forces to go to Afghanistan and other theatres of conflict to defend this country. But, under Labor, someone who is 18, 19 or 21 years old who goes to Kings Cross or some other part of the State and engages in serious violence while under the influence of drugs or alcohol gets a ticket of leave. That is simply unacceptable. It is completely and utterly out of step with what the community demanded of this Parliament in January in response to the terrible assaults that occurred over the Christmas period. The Government's proposal concerning the most serious acts of violence covered assaults as well as wounding. Under Labor's proposal, reckless wounding would not be covered. At the risk of upsetting some members of the public in the gallery I will again run through an example of what would not be covered by the legislation that Labor, The Greens and, for some reason, the Shooters and Fishers Party are insisting be put in place. I can understand the stupidity of Labor members and the attitude of The Greens, but I cannot understand why Shooters and Fishers Party members want to be The Greens' spouses on this legislation.

I will give a real-life example of the kind of reckless wounding that would not be covered by this legislation if the amendments are agreed to. An offender and a victim are at a party. The offender picks a fight with the victim. The offender smashes a beer bottle and puts it against the throat of the victim and threatens to kill the person. The victim hits the offender on the head with a bottle of beer. The offender goes crazy and starts to punch and kick the victim. The victim sustains the following injuries: a laceration to the vertex of the scalp; a long, deep laceration to the back of the vertex of the scalp; partial amputation of the rim of the left ear; a laceration to the lower left ear; a laceration over the left carotid artery; bleeding from behind the left ear; and a deep laceration down to the muscle on the right forearm, requiring deep sutures and skin sutures. The offender has a significant record of violent offences and a history of alcohol abuse.

**Mr Paul Lynch:** Whoever you are relying upon for your legal advice is telling you fibs.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** Under the legislation proposed by the shadow Attorney General and member for Liverpool, that offender would be allowed to escape without a minimum mandatory punishment.

**Mr Paul Lynch:** That is a lie; read the amendments.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL:** Therein lies the problem. Not only has the member for Cessnock said in his local media that he opposes minimum mandatory sentences; it has always been the position of the shadow Attorney General, the Laird of Liverpool. Between the time we passed the one-punch laws and this second tranche of legislation the member for Liverpool and the Leader of the Opposition in the upper House have obtained the numbers to ensure that the Leader of the Opposition cannot deliver on the commitment he made during the debate in January that Opposition members would not play politics and would stand shoulder to shoulder with us to send the strongest possible message.

I again make the point that the package we announced in January and that we are seeking to implement is comprehensive. It addresses issues around supply and regulation of alcohol. It seeks to introduce lockouts and cease alcohol sales in the central business district, and those measures can be imposed on any district across New South Wales where similar problems arise. It involves enforced regulation, including a review of responsible service of alcohol guidelines and that a plan of management of the type that exists in Kings Cross be rolled out across the State. It involves the introduction of risk-based licensing fees for licensed premises and it involves a publicity campaign along the lines of the road safety campaigns that have done so much to change driving culture. The current Danny Green "One Punch Can Kill" campaign is an example of the public awareness campaign. All those measures were well thought through and designed to respond to the demands of the community but that has been ignored by Labor, The Greens and the Shooters and Fishers Party members in the upper House.

I have been pretty relaxed about this State's upper House. I have recognised that we did not get a majority in the upper House when others, including the media, have not. However, I never thought the upper House would be so deaf to community concerns that it would play politics with this legislation. I never thought upper House members would be so blind to the alcohol- and drug-fuelled violence in our communities that they would seek to play politics with measures to send the strongest possible message to people who think it is fine to get drunk or take drugs, pick a fight and swing a punch that leaves someone severely wounded in a hospital bed. That behaviour is not fine. Earlier this year the community made it clear that it is not fine. This legislation will go back to the upper House because it deserves to be passed in the form in which it was introduced. We will insist upon that. If we cannot get the Labor Party through the factional battles the Leader of the Opposition is experiencing I will again urge The Greens and the Shooters and Fishers Party members to rethink their positions. In particular, I urge the Shooters and Fishers Party members to rethink their position. There are only so many days you can stay in bed with The Greens without getting impregnated.

**Mr JOHN ROBERTSON** (Blacktown—Leader of the Opposition) [3.35 p.m.]: It is yet again a sad day for truth in New South Wales. For the benefit of those in the public gallery, I will repeat what I said the last time this matter was before the House: The New South Wales Premier values the truth; he values it so much he keeps it hidden away in a cupboard and does not let it out. If the truth came out the people of New South Wales would know that they have a Premier who prefers to play politics rather than address this issue. This is a serious issue and it deserves to be dealt with without the politics we have seen played. But the situation is even worse than that. The approach that the Premier has adopted to this matter has been disgusting, despicable and downright dishonest. Every step of the way the Premier has misrepresented the effect of the amendments moved by the Labor Party in the other place. That is despicable and disgusting because it has created unnecessary angst for families who have suffered the worst kind of tragedies from alcohol-fuelled violence.

The Premier's approach is disgusting and despicable because he has attempted to play politics again today and misrepresent the impact and effect of the Opposition amendments. He has misrepresented how the measures have been applied in Victoria and he has again created angst for grieving families, which is unforgivable. Since this matter was first debated I have spoken to some of those families. I do not know whether the Premier has spoken to them. He has left the Chamber because he cannot stand to look me in the eye when I show him for what he is. When he swans back in here perhaps he will say whether he has spoken to those people. Perhaps he will explain why he thinks it is all right to play politics on this issue and create angst for people who have already suffered enough.

The Government's response to drug- and alcohol-fuelled violence should have been developed in a well thought-out and considered manner. The Premier said that is how its policy was created, but saying something does not make it so. Saying that this policy was well thought through and well considered does not make it a reality, despite the fact that Liberal Party members here and in Canberra think they can invent their own facts. Created facts and invented truths are not the facts or the truth. The Premier is seeking to play politics on this issue because he wants to look tough. The Premier came into this Chamber and once again completely misrepresented the impact and the effects of these amendments. But let us go back a step and contrast the way in which the Opposition amendments were developed with the way in which the Government developed the bill it expects us to pass through this House.

The Victorian Government wanted to introduce sentences to address these issues so it called together the Sentencing Advisory Council to give it responsibility to develop the laws. The council engaged with victims, and talked to police and specialist academics to come up with a model—a well-considered and thought-through model, which passed Parliament in a bipartisan fashion, with the full support of Labor and the Victorian Liberal Government. What do we have in New South Wales? On the Friday before the press release was issued the Premier stood up and said, "We will not have a one-size-fits-all approach." Lo and behold, over the weekend, on the back of a napkin, they scratched out a press release and put it out on Monday for all to see. The press release gave a whole list of offences to be covered by mandatory sentences.

We returned to this Parliament on 28 February to discuss the one-punch law, and the Labor Party supported eight new mandatory sentences for one punch causing death—it passed with our support. When Parliament resumed some other mandatory sentences referred to in the press release emerged and are matters of current debate. But some of them have disappeared. They are no longer being debated yet we are asked to believe the Premier when he says the legislation was well considered and thought through. If it was, why were the laws that are now the subject of this debate not in the press release? The answer is very simple: It is because on Saturday and Sunday those opposite thought about how to get out of the political fix they were in. In New South Wales we have a Premier who worries about his political problems and does not solve policy problems and problems that impact the people of New South Wales.

I turn now to the misrepresentation, because that is disgusting, despicable and downright dishonest. The Premier talked about 18- to 21-year-olds having a blanket exemption under these laws. Wrong, wrong, wrong. That is the first misrepresentation. There is no blanket exemption for 18- to 21-year-olds, and to portray it as such is dishonest and despicable, and causes the angst for victims that I talked about. The fact is that we have proposed a set of laws that is well considered and thought through. More importantly, this set of laws will not capture people whom no-one wants captured by such laws: people with a brain function less than their age and people with a brain injury. Under the Premier's proposal, those people will be captured by these laws. But those people should never be captured by these laws. To suggest that somebody charged with gross violence will say in court, "I am 19 years old and immature" and the judge will let them off is offensive in the extreme and a demonstration of the Premier trying to hide the truth.

Such people will need to produce evidence from psychologists of psychological and social immaturity. They would not say in court, "I am 19 years old, immature and stupid." The Premier's saying this shows how little he knows and how little he has considered what is before the House. If he had thought about it he would know that only too well. We have said all along that we will work with the Government on this legislation. At no point has the Premier picked up the phone. At no point has the Attorney General picked up the phone. At no point has anyone on the Government side said, "We want to work our way through that issue."

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! The Leader of the House will come to order.

**Mr JOHN ROBERTSON:** If those opposite were serious that is how they would deal with this legislation. Instead, politics is being played with an issue that should be above politics. I will be very happy to talk to the Government about finding a way through this situation, but I will not allow politics to override a good policy outcome. Coming into the Chamber and saying it is so does not make it so. We had deafening silence over Christmas because the Premier was on leave—and I have no criticism of that; everyone who works hard, and even those who do not, is entitled to leave. But the Deputy Premier, the man acting in the absence of the Premier—the North Coast Neanderthal—had absolutely nothing to say on the issue. He was meant to represent the Premier and ensure the State did not come to a stop while the Premier was on leave. Even when the Premier came back we heard the same story: "We are not going to have a one-size-fits-all approach. We are not going to deal with lockouts and other issues." Instead, we had a cobbled-together approach and an announcement of laws, some of which have not come before Parliament.

That is in stark contrast to the approach taken on this side. We had a policy in November. Our detailed policy talked about lockouts and much more. It talked about public transport options, collecting data and making sure we have proper and decent ways to protect people. One thing we all agree on is that people should be safe when they go out on Friday and Saturday nights. But to be safe you do not introduce lockouts; you put more police on the streets and treat Friday and Saturday nights like major events. You put in place proper public transport options. But the Attorney General, when this matter was last before the House, could not speak for 10 minutes on the issue. The Attorney General is the bloke who is supposed to be the State's most senior law officer, but he could not speak for his allotted time. This is a stunt, and it should be seen for what it is. If the Premier is serious, he will negotiate an outcome.

**Mr BARRY O'FARRELL** (Ku-ring-gai—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) [3.45 p.m.], in reply: What is clear from the Leader of the Opposition's speech is that Labor is completely and utterly deaf to the concerns of the community on this important issue. What is clear from the Leader of the Opposition's speech is his shifting position on this issue. We have heard about the allegedly great policy those opposite produced last year. Did that policy contain a single proposal for toughening the laws in the way the community wants? The answer, of course, is no. Did the policy include our commitment to a one-punch law with minimum mandatory sentences for those under the influence of drugs and alcohol who pick a fight, throw a punch and cause the death of a person? It did not. Did the Opposition have any proposal to toughen up legislation regarding violent assaults committed by those who are drug and alcohol affected, and introduce minimum mandatory sentences for those who cause serious harm and damage, who—in the words of our wonderful medical professionals—too often fill emergency departments on Friday and Saturday nights? Did those opposite address that? No.

The proposals we put forward in January sought to deal comprehensively with this issue. We laid out a time frame. We introduced the lockouts. We have a plan of management that will come into effect next month. We have risk-based licensing that will come into effect by 30 June. We are rolling it out and, while it is early



days, even Gordian Fulde has made the point on a couple of occasions that St Vincent's emergency department on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights is much quieter than it was before our changes. The second half of the legislation we promised will also send the strongest possible message to those who think it is acceptable to get intoxicated, whether by drugs or alcohol, and engage in violence that causes harm to others. That is what is missing from the package, and nothing proposed by the Labor Party, the Shooters and Fishers Party and The Greens substitutes for the comprehensive package that we put in place to apply to the most serious offences on our statute books.

Minimum mandatory sentences will mean that never again need the community be concerned about the failure of judges or magistrates to impose sentences for acts of gross violence by those who are drug and alcohol affected because those sentences meet the community's expectations. In the next five weeks, if another horrific assault takes place while New South Wales waits for Labor to support the Government's strong and sensible laws, the Leader of the Opposition and New South Wales Labor will be in the dock charged, tried and convicted for a failure to protect the New South Wales public.

**Question—That the House insist upon its disagreement to the Legislative Council amendments—put.**

**The House divided.**

**Ayes, 56**

Mr Anderson	Mr Gee	Mr Perrottet
Mr Aplin	Ms Gibbons	Mr Piccoli
Mr Ayres	Ms Goward	Mr Provest
Mr Barilaro	Mr Grant	Mr Roberts
Mr Bassett	Mr Gulaptis	Mrs Sage
Mr Baumann	Mr Hartcher	Mr Sidoti
Ms Berejiklian	Mr Hazzard	Mrs Skinner
Mr Bromhead	Mr Holstein	Mr Smith
Mr Brookes	Mr Issa	Mr Souris
Mr Conolly	Mr Kean	Mr Speakman
Mr Constance	Dr Lee	Mr Spence
Mrs Davies	Mr Maguire	Mr Stokes
Mr Dominello	Mr Marshall	Ms Upton
Mr Doyle	Mr Notley-Smith	Mr Webber
Mr Edwards	Mr O'Dea	Mr R. C. Williams
Mr Elliott	Mr O'Farrell	Mrs Williams
Mr Evans	Mr Owen	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Flowers	Mr Page	Mr Patterson
Mr Fraser	Ms Parker	Mr Rowell

**Noes, 22**

Mr Barr	Mr Hoenig	Mr Robertson
Ms Burney	Mr Lynch	Ms Tebbutt
Ms Burton	Dr McDonald	Ms Watson
Mr Collier	Ms Mihailuk	Mr Zangari
Mr Daley	Mr Park	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Furolo	Mrs Perry	Mr Amery
Mr Greenwich	Mr Piper	Mr Lalich
Ms Hay	Mr Rees	

**Question resolved in the affirmative.**

**Motion agreed to.**

**Disagreement to the Legislative Council amendments insisted upon.**

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

**PAYROLL TAX REBATE SCHEME (JOBS ACTION PLAN) AMENDMENT (FRESH START SUPPORT) BILL 2014**

**Second Reading**

**Debate resumed from 26 March 2014.**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL** (Northern Tablelands) [4.01 p.m.]: I am pleased to support the Payroll Tax Rebate Scheme (Jobs Action Plan) Amendment (Fresh Start Support) Bill 2013. The bill is elegant in its simplicity, and that simplicity belies the widespread benefits that it will bring to employers and employees across New South Wales, particularly those in country areas and the Northern Tablelands electorate. The Fresh Start Support Scheme, which is proposed to be established under this bill, will provide a \$6,000 payroll tax rebate for businesses that employ workers who have recently lost their jobs through large-scale restructures.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Speaker's Gallery. The member for Northern Tablelands has the call and will be heard in silence.

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL:** The bill demonstrates that the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government remains committed to making New South Wales the first place in this country to do business, that we are determined to support workers by giving them opportunities for new employment when redundancies occur, and that we support businesses by providing an incentive through payroll tax rebates to grow and to create long-term sustainable jobs. For the benefit of members, the Fresh Start Support Scheme is an extension of the existing and successful Jobs Action Plan. The Jobs Action Plan, which was a 2011 commitment that the Government took to the election, started on 1 July 2011. That now provides payroll tax rebates of \$5,000 to businesses that employ a new worker in new eligible employment. For every employee hired, a business receives \$2,000 on the first anniversary of employment and \$3,000 on the second anniversary of employment. So it is spread over two years.

The Government has increased the payroll tax rebate from \$4,000 to \$5,000, which is a 25 per cent increase, for every new job and extended it for a further two years, until 30 June 2015. For the benefit of members, recent NSW Office of State Revenue figures show there have been more than 46,418 registrations per the Jobs Action Plan between 1 July 2011 and 28 February 2014, and 325 of those have been for businesses in the Northern Tablelands electorate. The Fresh Start Support Scheme provides a \$6,000 payroll tax rebate to businesses that hire an employee from a designated employer. The rebate is made up of the existing \$5,000 rebate, which is already made available under the Jobs Action Plan, and an additional \$1,000 to businesses that hire a former employee from a designated employer, on the first anniversary.

The initial guidelines for the Fresh Start Support Scheme state that a designated employer is "a metropolitan employer who has made 100 or more employees redundant in a 12-month period" or "a rural or regional employer who has made 50 or more employees redundant in a 12-month period". The criteria above will be determined by the Government Expenditure Review Committee of Cabinet and may be flexible when a large-scale retrenchment has had an inordinate impact on a particular region, occupation field or industry. From the perspective of a regional member, I think that flexibility is critical because in different areas, depending on the make-up of the local economy, one business retrenching a number of employees which might not meet the first two criteria can have a devastating and significant impact on not only the local community and economy but also—and we have seen this all too often—the social fabric of communities when industries close down or restructure.

The timing of the Fresh Start Support Scheme means that an employer must hire a worker made redundant from a designated employer between 1 January this year and 30 June 2015. The Fresh Start Support Scheme is currently scheduled to close to new applicants from 30 June 2015, which is consistent with the current Jobs Action Plan. The New South Wales Government will consider extending the Jobs Action Plan and the Fresh Start Support Scheme at an appropriate time, as it has done in the past. As I said, this is a wonderful Government initiative, and I commend the Treasurer for bringing forward this elegant and simple bill, which will have untold benefits for rural areas. It is an extension of the Jobs Action Plan, which has been successful particularly in rural areas.

For the information of members, I will highlight the benefits that the Jobs Action Plan has already brought to the Northern Tablelands electorate. Businesses in my electorate that have already benefited from the Jobs Action Plan and the payroll tax rebate include Bracken Resources, which operates the Hillgrove Mine at

Armidale, and Roger Jackson and his team. Bindaree Beef is the second largest employer in the Northern Tablelands electorate; J. R. McDonald and Kerry Newton manage the operations. They employ well over 700 people in the Inverell community, and they have been significant beneficiaries of the scheme. Other businesses include the Eastmon Group at Glen Innes, which operates PhotoCreate; Savco vegetation services in Armidale; and Aero Health Care in Armidale. Carlo Cavalaro and his chain of IGA stores throughout New South Wales, and particularly the store in Armidale, have been beneficiaries of this valuable program. I am sure they will welcome the extension of the program in the Fresh Start Support Scheme.

The Australia Asia Flight Training Academy at Glen Innes has already been the beneficiary of \$1.6 million from the Government to support its development to create an extra 138 full-time equivalent jobs in that community. The Glen Innes Severn Council and the wider Glen Innes community cannot wait for that training school to get off the ground. Other beneficiaries include the Sapphire Wind Farm at Glen Innes and Armidale and Trethewey Industries at Deepwater. Mark and Deanne Trethewey, who are great business people, have built that business from the ground up and are continuing to train and employ more local people. RoTech Products at Armidale has benefited, as has Costa's Tomato Exchange at Guyra. The Tomato Exchange is another great business employing close to 300 local people in Guyra, and is looking to undertake another huge multimillion-dollar expansion to double the size of that industry. For the benefit of the member for Miranda, Costa's Tomato Exchange is the largest tomato farm under glass in the Southern Hemisphere. It is in the wonderful community of Guyra in the heart of the Northern Tablelands. I would welcome a visit by the member for Miranda. Costa has the best tomatoes, and people in the Miranda electorate should be eating more of them.

Uralla Metal and the Phoenix Foundry at Uralla and CME Enterprises at Inverell are some of the many businesses in the Northern Tablelands that have already benefited from the Jobs Action Plan, and I am sure they will join with me and other members in this place in welcoming this legislation. They welcome the opportunity to see the action plan expanded to the Fresh Start Support Scheme, providing support for businesses. Approximately 325 positions in my electorate have already been supported through the Jobs Action Plan. I look forward to this legislation passing through this House so that we can continue to see local businesses benefiting from payroll tax rebates and those businesses in regional areas being able to take on employees who have been unfortunate to be involved in companies that have restructured in metropolitan areas. It is another opportunity for rural businesses to drag people out of the cities from electorates such as Miranda into electorates such as Northern Tablelands, into the good country where there are good businesses and good people. This scheme is another string to our economic bow in the Northern Tablelands in our efforts to bring people to our area. I commend this bill to the House.

**Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH** (Coogee) [4.10 p.m.]: I support the Payroll Tax Rebate Scheme (Jobs Action Plan) Amendment (Fresh Start Support) Bill 2014. The bill amends the Payroll Tax Rebate Scheme (Jobs Action Plan) Bill 2011 to allow the NSW Government and businesses in this State to continue the work of growing our economy and creating opportunities for employment, particularly in light of recent announcements by several major companies that they will move some of their operations offshore or discontinue operations. The unfortunate decisions by those companies have warranted the introduction of this legislation. They have created a whole host of problems including redundancies of workers in New South Wales, many of whom face uncertain futures. I sympathise with the plight of these workers who are now unemployed or facing the prospect of unemployment. I can assure them that the Government will do everything in its power to ensure a smooth transition for them to alternate employment.

This legislation shows that this Government is committed to creating the best circumstances for employers to hire workers. We are making sure that businesses have confidence in our economy, because when they are confident, they will hire. Based on employment figures for New South Wales, businesses are generally pretty confident about our economy. New South Wales has the second strongest level of business confidence amongst all States, well above the decade average. New South Wales has the strongest retail trade of all States and the strongest annual growth in final demand of all States. This is all in stark contrast to the way our economy was performing under the previous Labor Government.

I note the excellent news recently that New South Wales now has the lowest unemployment rate of all the States. In less than three years, this Government has been able to turn around this State's unemployment rate from being the second highest to now the lowest—an incredible achievement, made possible in part by the Jobs Action Plan, which commenced in July 2011. This demonstrates that this Government is serious about creating jobs. The Jobs Action Plan is designed to encourage businesses to create 100,000 jobs, which we promised to do within our first term in government, 40,000 of which were prioritised for non-metropolitan areas of New South Wales, and 60,000 for the remaining metropolitan areas.

Businesses which created new jobs and hired new employees would receive a \$5,000 payroll tax rebate for each additional employee in a new job. We have exceeded our commitment with 109,000 jobs so far created as a result of this plan, demonstrating it is clearly working. In order to sustain impressive levels of employment in New South Wales, we need to act to assist workers recently made redundant in large numbers by employers such as Qantas and Alcoa. Therefore, this legislation makes provisions for an additional payroll tax rebate for companies that employ workers who have recently been made redundant from a company, along with at least 100 other people. If it is a regional company, the new employee must be hired from a company which made 50 employees redundant. The rebate is an increase of \$1,000 on the original \$5,000 rebate, to \$6,000.

In the legislation, a recently redundant worker who is re-employed is referred to as a Fresh Start employee. It will assist companies and employees looking for a fresh start in the second half of this financial year and the next. A company that has made its employees redundant in the past 12 months is known as a designated employer. The rebate is available to companies hiring employees who on or after 1 January 2014 and before 1 July 2015, had their employment with a designated employer terminated because of a prescribed redundancy, and whose employment in eligible employment commenced after the day on which the former employee became a designated employee.

The legislation gives the Minister power, as per the regulations outlined in the bill, to designate an employer under the legislation. I note that that legislation is retrospective to the beginning of 2014. This ensures that workers already made redundant will be covered, and that Fresh Start employees who have already been made redundant are covered, and businesses will be able to seek the additional rebate. This legislation supports businesses and workers. Recent redundancies and indications of coming redundancies are disappointing and not ultimately within the control of government. Large-scale restructures are often necessary for businesses in order to remain profitable and be active contributors to the economic prosperity of our society.

It is definitely better than the alternative scenario where businesses continue to carry a workforce that they cannot sustain, and ultimately have to close their doors. This is especially undesirable for companies such as Qantas, which is truly an iconic Australian brand. It would be great if such legislation was not necessary in this State. Redundancies are very sad and reflect the challenges that businesses face at both State and Federal levels. We have seen the results so far and I know that this Government will continue to support workers in New South Wales and help businesses to take on those workers for many years to come.

Figures show that up to 28 February 2014, 46,418 registrations have been received for the Jobs Action Plan since 2011. I notice that in my electorate, 412 positions have been created in the Randwick local government area whilst 460 positions have been created in the Waverley local government area since the Jobs Action Plan was introduced in 2011. We can see it is working and that it is contributing to the economic prosperity of the State and to security for employers and employees. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr TIM OWEN** (Newcastle) [4.18 p.m.]: I support the Payroll Tax Rebate Scheme (Jobs Action Plan) Amendment (Fresh Start Support) Bill 2014 introduced by the Treasurer. I congratulate the Treasurer on introducing an important piece of legislation which will assist in reducing the burden on businesses. The Fresh Start Support Scheme will provide businesses with a payroll tax rebate of \$6,000 where large company restructures have taken place which have resulted in workers losing their jobs. Fresh Start Support is an extension of the current Jobs Action Plan. The Jobs Action Plan was implemented on 1 July 2011 as an election commitment. It provides a payroll tax rebate of \$5,000 to businesses that employ a new worker in new eligible employment. Since the inception of the Jobs Action Plan, recent New South Wales Office of State Revenue figures show that more than 41,100 registrations were received from July 2011 to January 2014. This clearly shows that the plan has been a successful and necessary support for businesses and employees alike.

Fresh Start Support will see an additional \$1,000 paid to businesses that hire a former worker of a designated employer. A designated employer in a metropolitan area is an employer who has made 100 or more employees redundant in a 12-month period—or in the case of a regional area an employer who has made 50 or more employees redundant in the same period. The selection process will be determined by the Expenditure Review Committee of Cabinet and will offer flexibility in certain cases, such as where a large-scale retrenchment has had an extreme impact on a particular region, industry or occupational field. To be eligible for Fresh Start Support, the employer must employ a worker who has been made redundant from a designated employer from 1 January 2014 through to June 2015.

Since the Jobs Action Plan was implemented on 1 July 2011, New South Wales has seen 109,000 new jobs created. This has turned the State around. It now has the lowest unemployment rate of all the States. This is

incredible when we look back at the track record of the Labor Government—under which New South Wales had the slowest jobs growth of any State. It stayed like that for over a decade. Furthermore, under the Labor Government, among small to medium businesses confidence was the lowest for any State. Now business confidence is positive, and has been for the past seven consecutive months. This progression and the improvement of the unemployment rate in New South Wales are a direct indication of the success of the existing Jobs Action Plan. Results such as this are evidence that this Government understands the incredible impact job losses have on individuals, families and communities. It also reinforces the fact that the Government is committed to supporting people who have recently become unemployed.

Continuing national and global economic uncertainty is influencing the nation's job market and is putting added pressure on businesses. This is one of the reasons the New South Wales Government is incorporating into policy an extra incentive for employers to assist in the creation of new jobs. It will also encourage businesses to grow and to create new employment opportunities. In my electorate of Newcastle, 161 businesses have benefited from Jobs Action Plan registrations. This is the fourth-highest figure for the State and has made a positive difference to Newcastle in many ways. The implementation of the Jobs Action Plan program has created 1,093 jobs in Newcastle alone—741 of these jobs were full-time positions and 352 were part-time positions. The positive flow-on effect this has had for the community is huge.

The latest economic data from the Hunter Valley Research Foundation shows that the local labour market remains strong, but this is likely to change. For the last quarter of 2013 the region's unemployment rate was 4.2 per cent, compared with the State average of 5.6 per cent. However, investment in the resources sector has slowed considerably, and the latest foundation report indicates this will impact negatively on the manufacturing industry in coming months. Newcastle was founded on coalmining and many families still have at least one person either directly or indirectly employed in that industry. The majority of manufacturers in the Newcastle region are suppliers to the mining industry. Therefore, the effects of its decline are becoming more apparent.

Now more than ever New South Wales businesses and workers need assistance. It is important that we support employment wherever possible, and this Government has been making a real difference since the Jobs Action Plan started in 2011. The results speak for themselves. Recent New South Wales Office of State Revenue figures show that out of the 41,100 Jobs Action Plan registrations 28,380 were for full-time employment. This is an incredible result, and one that has seen New South Wales evolve from the high unemployment levels it suffered under the Labor Government. Securing a further \$1,000 toward the existing rebate will provide the confidence that employers desperately need—and making the decision to employ permanent staff will be easier for businesses. The State will continue to prosper and communities will benefit greatly. As I said earlier, the evidence is there. This scheme has not only worked; it has also made a real difference to the people who have gained employment because of it and to the companies that have needed this extra support. I give my full support to the Payroll Tax Rebate Scheme (Jobs Action Plan) Amendment (Fresh Start) Bill 2014, and commend it to the House.

**Mr BARRY COLLIER** (Miranda) [4.24 p.m.]: The object of the Payroll Tax Rebate Scheme (Jobs Action Plan) Amendment (Fresh Start Support) Bill 2014 is to amend the Payroll Tax Rebate Scheme (Jobs Action Plan) Act 2011 to implement the Government's proposed support scheme to provide for an additional payroll tax rebate in respect of the employment of persons whose employment with particular employers has been terminated because of redundancy. The additional rebate of \$1,000 is to apply to the first year of eligible employment under the Act of a person who has been made redundant. It is very important to support people in the community who have been made redundant, and of course the business owners who support them. Opposition members did not disappoint me in their speeches as they again trotted out the same old lines. They had a go at business conditions under Labor governments, and said how much they have improved under the Liberal-Nationals Government. I was waiting for that.

Interestingly, in the Sutherland shire, or in my electorate at least, we have a very active Miranda and Districts Chamber of Commerce. We have a very large and active small business community. Recently they held a small business breakfast and the guest of honour was the Minister for Small Business, the Hon. Katrina Hodgkinson. I am sure all members would join me in congratulating the Hon. Katrina Hodgkinson on being in Parliament for 15 years today—along with me and a few other people; it is our anniversary. We first came into this place on a very hot day, unlike today. The small business breakfast was very well attended and there was a report on it in the local newspaper. I attended and was well received by the people in my business community. I met with them the very next day to consider some of the issues they raised.

I know the member for Pittwater is very keen to make observations; these days he seems to do so every time he gets to his feet. I hope the member is listening to this debate because I would like to make an observation too. The Hon. Katrina Hodgkinson arrived on time to address the small business breakfast, and there was only one other member of Parliament present—that was me. There are four members of Parliament serving the Sutherland shire—including the member for Menai, who has just come into the Chamber; the member for Cronulla; the member for Heathcote; and me. Only one of us turned up to this small business breakfast, held at Wanda Beach, at which the Minister was present. That says something about the attitude of government members to small business in this State. Members from the government side are always saying how great they are and how they support small business, but it is all huff and puff.

The new scheme, called Fresh Start Support, proposed in the bill will provide an additional \$1,000 payroll tax rebate to employers when they hire a worker made redundant after 1 January 2014. The worker must be a former employee of a designated employer. What is interesting about this bill is that the Minister has not yet figured out the definition of a "designated employer". Under proposed section 8A he will publish the definition in the *Government Gazette*. He has, however, made the following comments:

Key issues the Government will consider in determining whether an employee should be listed as a designated employer are whether the scale of retrenchments from the employer will cause significant disruption to an industry or region, or whether the employer operates in a specialised field with employees who have limited opportunities for re-employment in that or another field. A numerical test of 100 or more employees made redundant from a business in a metropolitan area during a 12-month period or 50 or more employees made redundant from a business in a non-metropolitan area during a 12-month period will automatically be taken to have satisfied the designated employer criteria.

However, one of the issues with the scheme is that it does not address small business. It is essentially an extension of the handouts for big business. I say that because 90 per cent of businesses in New South Wales do not pay payroll tax. About 650,000 small businesses in New South Wales do not pay payroll tax and therefore will not be eligible for any rebate or any assistance under this scheme. If the Government is serious about assisting employees who have been made redundant it should think about extending the scheme, often regarded as a failed scheme, to the small business sector—those who occupy 90 per cent of small businesses in New South Wales.

[Interruption]

As to my qualifications with small business, as a barrister I ran a small business in the form of a small law firm.

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

## **PALLIATIVE CARE**

### **Discussion on Petition Signed by 10,000 or More Persons**

**Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER** (North Shore—Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research) [4.30 p.m.]: I refer to the petition on palliative care funding and services. The New South Wales Government is committed to providing world-class palliative care for the people of New South Wales. Previously this Parliament debated a petition on palliative care that led to a commitment to release and develop a palliative care plan. Currently the Government spends more than \$86 million each year on specialist palliative care delivered in our public and private hospitals, hospices, community clinics, residential aged care facilities and the home.

The plan released in 2012 committed an additional \$35 million over four years to improve access to care and support for people who are dying, their families and carers. The plan identifies four action areas: first, expanded community-based palliative care services especially in rural areas and for the special needs population; second, integration of primary care, aged care and specialist palliative care services across the State; third, expanded support for families and carers; and, fourth, expanded capacity of palliative care services in New South Wales. This work is being undertaken by carers, community members, general practitioners, nurses, allied health professionals, Medicare Locals, local health districts, specialist palliative care providers and the NSW Agency for Clinical Innovation.

I am pleased to report some of the achievements in this space. Key services being established on a statewide basis include experienced palliative care service providers who, under new contracts, will offer rapid access to care packages designed to ensure safe and comfortable end-of-life care at home. When surveyed, the

vast majority of people said they wanted to die at home—that is what this is predicated upon. These services will boost the overall capacity of local palliative care services as a valuable component of the local service network and with direct care provided under locally specified clinical governance arrangements.

I am pleased to report that as at the end of February, last days of life home support services are being provided in 10 New South Wales local health districts and by the end of June these services will be offered in every district in New South Wales. Another important service that will help to support people who wish to die at home is an after-hours telephone advice line, which will become operational later this year. The statewide network paediatric palliative care service for children and young people and their families will also be established, supplementing the existing New South Wales paediatric and palliative care services. The pop-up model of care offers the benefits of a supportive team of clinicians being mobilised around families where a child is dying.

This initiative will also support the use of iPads to support communications between the families and clinicians and, where possible, reduce the number of disruptive trips to appointments. I have seen evidence of this, where a family in a remote rural location was able to gather around a dying child—the siblings, grandparents and others linked into this specialist care when and where it was needed. Expanded support for palliative care volunteer services across New South Wales is another important component of palliative care service networks. Volunteers have long been active and important members of palliative care services. However, access to training and other support services varies from area to area. Procurement of the statewide palliative care volunteer support service is currently being finalised. It will expand and develop the profile of New South Wales volunteer services across the State. Central to the New South Wales Government's vision for palliative care is the development of strong service networks able to facilitate ongoing improvement in palliative care services and professional growth and development.

In keeping with this vision the Agency for Clinical Innovation's palliative care network is charged with driving continuous improvement in palliative and end-of-life care for all people approaching and reaching the end of life. The network was established in 2012 and now has 420 specialist palliative care and primary care providers, aged and community care providers, general practitioners, health researchers and consumers. The network has published a diagnostic reporting framework for a statewide model for palliative and end-of-life care service provision, which draws on reviews and consultations with over 1,200 patients, families, carers, specialists and primary care workers. I am pleased to report that the network has made significant progress towards the development of the New South Wales model for palliative and end-of-life care provision. The Government has invested significantly in palliative care over recent years and established a number of new services to improve access and choice for palliative care patients, with particular emphasis on supporting people to die at home, should they wish to do so.

**Dr ANDREW McDONALD** (Macquarie Fields) [4.35 p.m.]: I speak in support of the petition and petitioners because quality palliative care is everyone's right. I commence by quoting part of a poem by Bruce Dawe called *White-water rafting and palliative care*, which is in the palliative care plan. The first four lines of the poem state:

*If I had understood (when down the river  
you and I went swirling in that boat)  
that there were those who knew the ways of the water  
and how to use the oars to keep afloat*

The debate about palliative care is central to the health care of people in New South Wales. It is the one issue in health provision that should be above politics. However, in the resource-constrained environment of any modern healthcare system politics does intrude. That is why petitions such as this are so vital to advance public debate on palliative care and to ensure that future generations are able to access palliative care when they need it. I congratulate the petitioners on their formidable achievement in collecting the necessary signatures for the third time and presenting the petition to the Premier, who I was hoping would be present in the Chamber to speak on the petition.

Collecting 10,000 signatures is a lot of work but the fact that 10,000 signatures have been collected three times over shows how vital palliative care is to the wider community and how the people of New South Wales expect their politicians to allocate the necessary resources to ensure quality palliative care is available to everyone. This petition reminds all members of Parliament that the palliative care workforce is inadequate. For example, Royal North Shore Hospital has 1,000 referrals a year but only a 0.9 full-time equivalent palliative

care consultant. Rather than descending into blame as to who is responsible, all governments must work together to ensure that the specialist palliative care workforce is brought up to a level where people who need their expert assistance are able to get it 24 hours a day seven days a week. Palliative care is more than pain and symptom control; it is also the vital expectations in end-of-life care, of which many health professionals are unaware, and, most important of all, the psychosocial support that every family needs.

Palliative care is needed not only at home but also in acute hospitals and aged care facilities because 55 per cent of all New South Wales patients who die do so in a public hospital bed. In those hospitals palliative care needs to come out of the shadows into the centre of care. This can only happen with staffing levels that ensure everyone can get help when they need it. A referral system where help in providing palliative care is not available when it is needed, usually after hours, or that has very long waiting times is not satisfactory. Unfortunately, that is often the case in the New South Wales health system, and when there is an inadequate service palliative care becomes marginalised. Every hospital in New South Wales has an on-call roster. Having a palliative care physician on call on the roster would be one way of bringing palliative care out of the shadows.

Palliative care is required for more than just cancer patients. At the moment, most patients who receive palliative care do so because they have cancer, but if the service provision were ideal only 65 per cent of people receiving palliative care would have cancer. Palliative care is vital and underused for conditions such as respiratory failure, kidney disease and diseases of the central nervous system. To practise palliative care properly takes time and staff. Families, at the most important time of their lives—the death of a parent, child or other loved one—need to be able to discuss their concerns fully with a compassionate clinician who has both time and expertise. For this reason, in future palliative care training of doctors, nurses and allied health staff should be seen as the most important part of training in the New South Wales health system.

For the first time ever in New South Wales, we are graduating enough health professionals to fully staff palliative care services. The gap in palliative care funding is of the order of \$30 million to \$40 million a year. The 2012 briefing note from Dr Hammett said that an extra \$25 million "will not solve it all at once". That has now increased to \$35 million, and I acknowledge the Minister for that. The State is still short 21 staff specialist palliative care positions and needs at least another 200 registered nurses to provide appropriate care for everyone who needs it. Increases to resources at this level should not be the sole responsibility of the Minister for Health.

The provision of health care requires an all-of-government response, rather than it being left to the Minister to find it from her own budget. I acknowledge that 30 palliative care registered nurses have been employed in New South Wales. However, many have been employed as nurse educators. We need clinicians as well as educators. Health professionals consume 20 per cent fewer resources than the general population, largely because they know when treatment is appropriate and when it is not. Health professionals access palliative care earlier than the general population. Palliative care is cost-effective. It would save \$80 million in New South Wales alone if it were available for everyone. We need to make palliative care central to health care.

**Mr THOMAS GEORGE** (Lismore—The Deputy-Speaker) [4.40 p.m.]: I speak in the debate on the 10,000-signature petition on palliative care, which was tabled by the Premier, the Hon. Barry O'Farrell. As the Minister for Health has noted, New South Wales has good palliative care services in both the public and private sectors delivered by a variety of organisations. However, the Government is conscious that services are not available equally to all New South Wales communities, particularly in rural and regional areas. Funding has increased. There would not be one member in this place who has not experienced the support of a palliative care team, and this Government has supported the work of palliative care providers.

I acknowledge the contribution made by our Minister for Health, the Hon. Jillian Skinner. I also note that Dr Yvonne McMaster is in the gallery this afternoon. She spoke to me about this issue four years ago. I am pleased to see her here this afternoon. I know that she has made a number of representations on this issue to the Hon. Jillian Skinner and other members of Parliament. Her sole aim is to improve palliative care services in this State. The Minister has listened and, with the cooperation of the Government, has provided extra funding. More services will be available in the future.

As well as investing in community-based services, the Government is continuing to invest in hospital-based care. High-quality hospital care remains an important part of the palliative care service network. Across New South Wales, improvements are being made to hospitals. In my electorate of Lismore, six beds in the medical ward at Murwillumbah District Hospital have been refurbished to ensure their suitability for palliative care patients.



In stage 3A of the redevelopment of Lismore Base Hospital, primary and community health services, such as palliative care, are being relocated to the hospital grounds. This will help palliative care professionals to better serve their patients. St Vincent's Hospital Lismore also has a palliative care unit. I express appreciation not only to Yvonne and her team but to everyone involved in palliative care in the electorate of Lismore and throughout the State. The dedication, support and service that they provide to families are unmatched anywhere in this country. I acknowledge their contribution.

**Ms CARMEL Tebbutt** (Marrickville) [4.43 p.m.]: I thank the people responsible for bringing the important issue of palliative care to the House. It is not easy to get more than 10,000 signatures on a petition once let alone three times, so all credit to them for pursuing this issue. Palliative care services that are accessible, sensitive and flexible are essential for people facing the end of their lives. Palliative care provides treatment and care for people who are dying and supports their families and carers. It is the most personal of care, provided at a time of great emotional stress and vulnerability. The people of New South Wales have a right to expect that these services will be available when they are needed, regardless of geographic location.

Most people across Australia say they want to be cared for and die at home, yet across Australia only 16 per cent of people do so, 20 per cent of people die in hospices, 10 per cent die in nursing homes and more than half die in acute-care hospitals. While there are a number of reasons for this, we know that there is a need for more services and more funding and that this need will only increase. At the moment, only about 10 per cent of people who die of conditions other than cancer, where death is predictable, receive palliative care. The population of residential aged-care facilities is expected to increase by 70 per cent over the next three decades. About 10 per cent of all deaths in New South Wales take place in residential aged-care facilities. The need for services is going to grow.

The gaps in palliative care services are well known. They include improving access to general practitioner services that participate in shared care arrangements for patients, particularly in regional New South Wales. After-hours access to specialist palliative care needs to be improved, particularly outside metropolitan areas. Gaps in assessment skills and referral processes need to be addressed. These can mean that people wait too long for services. There are insufficient numbers of trained palliative care staff, including nursing, medical and allied health staff. Hospital and community-based services are not coordinated well enough.

We have some very good palliative care services in New South Wales and hardworking, dedicated staff. I am very proud of Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in my electorate, which has been a pioneer in palliative care services over many years. There are good developments, such as the establishment in 2013 of the new Palliative Care Network within the Agency for Clinical Innovation [ACI]. When someone is facing the end of their life, access to compassionate and appropriate palliative care services can make all the difference to them and their family. It can allow them a measure of dignity and relief at a difficult time. But there are not enough services. The efforts of those who sponsored this petition and all those who signed it are a reminder of this. They spur us to do better.

#### **Discussion concluded.**

**ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr John Barilaro):** Order! Discussion on the petition signed by 10,000 or more persons having concluded, the House will now deal with community recognition statements.

### **COMMUNITY RECOGNITION STATEMENTS**

#### **EL SALVADORIAN COMMUNITY CELEBRATION**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH** (Liverpool) [4.46 p.m.]: I recognise an event held last Saturday 22 March by the El Salvadorian community in Sydney to celebrate the electoral triumph of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front [FMLN] in the recent El Salvadorian elections, when Salvador Sanchez Ceren was elected President of El Salvador and Oscar Ortiz was elected Vice President. The Salvadorian electoral tribunal certified the final result of the second round of voting as 50.11 per cent for the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front.

The celebration had a sombre aspect, acknowledging all those who had suffered and died in the struggle for justice in El Salvador. They notably include Archbishop Oscar Romero, assassinated by right-wing gunmen while celebrating mass in a chapel in San Salvador in 1980. The celebration was

organised by the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front committee in Sydney and the Latin America Social Forum. I was particularly pleased to have received the invitation from Gerardo Diaz-Henriquez, a constituent of mine.

### **KYE CORNALL, WORLD BAREFOOT SKIING CHAMPION**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD** (Myall Lakes) [4.47 p.m.]: I inform the House that Taree barefoot skier Kye Cornall was a member of the Australian junior team that won a gold medal at the World Barefoot Championships held in Mulwala in Victoria. He was competing at that level for the first time. He also was third overall in the junior boys competition. His sister, Makayla, was fifth overall in the junior girls competition. She qualified to compete at the championships but was not a member of the Australian team.

The Cornalls will now contest the State titles at Liverpool on 5 and 6 April before heading to Perth for the five-day national championships, beginning on 28 April. The next world championship will be held in the United States of America in 2016. Kye will be looking to gain selection in the Australian open team, while Makayla will still be eligible for the juniors. I wish them both all the best in their sport.

### **BANKSTOWN CITY NETBALL ASSOCIATION**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK** (Bankstown) [4.48 p.m.]: I recognise the upcoming season launch of the Bankstown City Netball Association. Netball provides a fantastic opportunity for girls and women of all ages to participate in competitive sport and maintain a healthy lifestyle. I wish all 17 clubs that form part of the Bankstown City Netball Association the best of luck ahead of the commencement of the season this Saturday at Deverill Park, Condell Park. I pay tribute to association president Lee Hill and secretary Simone McDonald and recognise many volunteers and club members who volunteer their valuable time every weekend in club administration, canteen duty, coaching and the training of netballers.

### **GENERAL SIR PETER COSGROVE, AC**

### **UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN SYDNEY LIBERAL CLUB**

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT** (Baulkham Hills) [4.49 p.m.]: On behalf of the people of Baulkham Hills I congratulate General Peter Cosgrove, AC, former defence force commander, on his elevation to the position of Governor-General. I am privileged to be joining a number of our parliamentary colleagues in attending his swearing in tomorrow. I note and congratulate General Cosgrove on becoming the most recent new Australian Knight. It is more than appropriate that a man of his stature representing the Queen is honoured with a knighthood. I look forward to seeing General Sir Peter Cosgrove bring the values that made him such an effective commander to the role of Governor-General.

On the point of leadership, the University of Western Sydney Liberal Club held its annual general meeting last week. As a former Young Liberal, regrettably not young any more, I completed my undergraduate year as a Western Sydney boy. It is vital for Western Sydney to have a university. I congratulate Nicole Anderson on her re-election and her achievements. On a personal note, I was honoured to be made the State parliamentary patron of the University of Western Sydney Liberal Club. I congratulate Ross Grove, the former Mayor of Holroyd, and Senator Marise Payne on their appointment as local government and Federal Government patrons respectively.

### **LIFE CYCLING CAMPAIGN**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH** (Sydney) [4.50 p.m.]: I commend the efforts of my constituent and Paddington resident Paul Seshold, who with friends intends to ride up the Col Du Tourmalet, a famously steep mountain in the Pyrenees, to celebrate his survival of leukaemia and lymphoma, and to raise funds and support others who face the same diseases. Paul found that his fitness from riding bicycles was a big factor supporting his health and he wants to get that message out to others. His Life Cycling campaign will raise funds for the Leukaemia Foundation and the Arrow Bone Marrow Transplant Foundation, both of which work to identify causes and help those with these conditions. I attended Paul's recent fundraising dinner at Vamps in Five Ways, Paddington and was inspired by the life-affirming group that wants to celebrate with him and provide support and comfort to others dealing with these serious conditions. Congratulations to those helping Paul's venture and to those contributing funds to support this project.

### **AVALON BILGOLA AMATEUR SWIMMING CLUB**

**Mr ROB STOKES** (Pittwater—Parliamentary Secretary) [4.51 p.m.]: I recognise the Avalon Bilgola Amateur Swimming Club, a not-for-profit association affiliated with Warringah Amateur Swimming Association which for more than 50 years has provided competition tuition and community for all ages and all standards of swimmers at the iconic Bilgola beach ocean baths. I thank club president Richard Van Der Reyden for his leadership, and his wonderful committee. I note that tomorrow evening there will be a night for sponsors and I thank each of the sponsors of this wonderful association: Andrew Blake Real Estate, DMC Swim, Johnson Brothers, G Brothers, Scratch and Ding King, Newport Arms Hotel, Silicon Beach Computers, Yellow Brick Road at Mona Vale, Chill Bar at Avalon and Unique Kids. I thank them for their support for this wonderful community organisation.

### **FESTIVAL OF THE MOST HOLY CRUCIFIX**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI** (Fairfield) [4.52 p.m.]: Sunday 23 February 2014 was the festival of the Most Holy Crucifix hosted by the Calabrian community of Terranova at Mounties Oval, Mount Pritchard. This was the twenty-sixth annual festival of the Most Holy Crucifix of Terranova. The program included a mass, street procession, musical concert and a fireworks display, which nicely rounded up the festival. Congratulations to Association President Domenic Luci and the organising committee for their outstanding effort on the evening and for ensuring each of their annual celebrations is a great success.

### **ARMIDALE DISTRICT BUSINESS CHAMBER**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL** (Northern Tablelands) [4.53 p.m.]: Armidale District Business Chamber has a new look leadership team following its annual general meeting last Friday. I congratulate the new leadership group. Long-term member Susan Cull stepped up to take the role of president, replacing Andrew Murray as the head of the chamber. Mrs Cull will be supported by vice-president Carol Mackerras, secretary Keiran Breckenridge and treasurer Alice Chen. Others on the management committee include Leo Bayerlein, Peter Rickard, Robert Moylan, Peter Georkas, Kate Richards, Don Tydd and Peter Sniekers. The new group brings together a wealth of business experience from Armidale and beyond. I look forward to working closely with the business chamber and its new management committee to help make Armidale a thriving city.

### **GRACEADES COMMUNITY COTTAGE**

**Mr RICHARD AMERY** (Mount Druitt) [4.53 p.m.]: Earlier this month I attended the Coral McLean Awards breakfast where a number of community women were recognised for community service. At this event donations were not taken to cover the cost of the event, but were collected to support the Graceades Cottage at Bidwill. Graceades Community Cottage has operated at its present location in Bidwill for over 30 years. It is a community hub, greatly supported by the local community and I am pleased to advise the House that it is now working to establish a community hub in nearby Willmot. Again I am pleased to acknowledge the excellent service Graceades Cottage provides to the Bidwill community and to the broader Mount Druitt area.

### **MUNOZ CHILDREN BENEFIT NIGHT**

**Mr BART BASSETT** (Londonderry) [4.54 p.m.]: I am proud of the wonderful community spirit that abounds in my electorate, where friends and strangers gather to support those in need. In this case on the evening of Friday 21 March supporters generously gave at a benefit night at the Richmond Club in the Hawkesbury to support the seven children of a local mother, who lost her life in a stabbing incident at Hobartville. Former Bulldogs player Steve Mortimer was special guest and former Eels player Gary Freeman was the master of ceremonies and auctioneer at the entertainment-filled comedy show and dinner, run by the Richmond Club and supported by White Ribbon and Richmond Rotary. More than 450 people attended the night, which also raised awareness of domestic violence. One hundred and forty businesses donated items for raffles, auctions and lucky door prizes and more than \$20,000 was raised. The Richmond Club's slogan is "community heart". I congratulate club chairman Geoff Luscombe for ensuring it is indeed the heart of the Hawkesbury community.

### **TRIBUTE TO JANDA TANNER**

**Mr MATT KEAN** (Hornsby) [4.55 p.m.]: I acknowledge the amazing efforts of Janda Tanner. Janda is such an energetic and vibrant lady who looks for every opportunity she can to give back to our community.

Recently Janda organised a fundraising benefit for the Christie family following the death of one-punch victim Daniel Christie. Janda worked tirelessly collecting auction items and organising the event, which enabled the community to give generously to a family in great need. Amongst many other committees and projects, Janda was instrumental in rallying the community together to successfully divert plans for a compound being built in the residential suburb of Westleigh. This was an important feat for the residents who were concerned with the future impact the development would have had on their local community. I thank Janda for her ongoing support for the families in our community. Janda does an outstanding job in our community and is a great Australian.

### **GADEN SENIORS CENTRE**

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON** (Vaucluse—Minister for Sport and Recreation) [4.56 p.m.]: On Friday 21 March 2014 I hosted a morning tea for local seniors at Gaden, a new seniors centre run by Holdsworth Centre. It was a great opportunity to hear local residents' ideas and share with them some insights into my work as their local member. I commend 2014 Senior Citizen Award recipients Ethel Davis, Marie Curtis and Bronwyn Clulow. They should be proud of their achievements in my community. It was my first visit to the newly refurbished Gaden, which I had assisted to receive the benefit of Community Building Partnership funding. Finally, I commend Michael Ryan, Chief Executive Officer, Holdsworth Centre, and his team for hosting us and for the important community work they do in my electorate of Vaucluse and beyond.

### **ROCKDALE ARTS FESTIVAL**

**Mr JOHN FLOWERS** (Rockdale) [4.56 p.m.]: I inform the House that artistic expression has always held a special place in my electorate of Rockdale where we are fortunate in being home to so many painters, sculptors, woodcarvers and potters, to name but a few, as members of my electorate's talented community. The Rockdale Art Festival will be open until 13 April and features a series of events, workshops and exhibitions across Rockdale. The third annual event will start the festivities at Arncliffe Park from 11.30 a.m. Arncliffe-based Salmagundi Studios, the Sans Souci knitting group and St George potters will also display their creations. I wish them well for this year's event.

### **KINROSS WOLAROI SCHOOL WORLD'S GREATEST SHAVE**

**Mr ANDREW GEE** (Orange) [4.57 p.m.]: I draw the attention of the House to a number of year 11 and year 12 Kinross Wolaroi School students and a staff member who recently got behind the Leukaemia Foundation's World's Greatest Shave for a Cure. Eight students, including Nicola Kermode, Mia Hull, Harry Lovell, Emily Wright, Charlie Cooper, Ben Watt, Alasdair Denholm and Maddie Adams and teacher Emma Jackson-LeCouteur, took up the challenge and chopped their locks for this great cause. In what has become a yearly tradition at the school, the shavers have managed to raise an incredible \$18,500, eclipsing the original target of \$8,000. I congratulate these students along with Principal Brian Kennelly and Head of the Senior School Bev West on supporting this very worthy cause.

### **STEEL MAGNOLIA AWARD RECIPIENT MICHELLE DAVIS**

### **MAITLAND SPORTSPERSON OF THE YEAR AWARD RECIPIENT MADDISON ELLIOTT**

**Ms ROBYN PARKER** (Maitland—Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage) [4.58 p.m.]: I congratulate Michelle Davis of East Maitland on being named the 2014 recipient of the Steel Magnolia Award. The award is presented annually by Lifeline Newcastle and Hunter to a woman who has faced great adversity and made a significant contribution to the community. Michelle Davis was recognised with the Steel Magnolia Award for raising road awareness among teenagers following the death of her two sons in a road accident in 2005. Michelle was recently named the Maitland 2014 Local Woman of the Year in the NSW Women of the Year Awards. Congratulations go also to Maddison Elliott of Gillieston Heights on her back-to-back success in the recent Maitland Sportsperson of the Year Award and on winning the 2014 People's Choice Award. Maddi received her latest award for winning two gold medals and a silver medal in freestyle events at the IPC World Swimming Championships in Canada. The success at Montreal also saw Maddi win the NSW Sports Federation Young Athlete with a Disability Award for 2013.

### **WOLLONDILLY TALENT FACTOR**

**Mr JAI ROWELL** (Wollondilly) [4.59 p.m.]: I inform the House that the Wollondilly Talent Factor will be held on 29 March at Picton High School. The event is being held to raise \$10,000 for a 25-year-old

Wollondilly resident and mother of three children, Mrs Michelle Coles, who in December last year was diagnosed with stomach cancer. The Wollondilly Talent Factor, which has been organised by Kyle Chamberlain and Picton Rotary, will consist of four categories: open, for 18-year-olds and over; intermediate, for 13- to 17-year-olds; junior, for 12-year-olds and younger; and groups, for two- to 15-year-olds. I congratulate Kyle, the team, and the Wollondilly community for supporting such a worthy cause.

#### **ADHIKA INC. GALA DINNER AND AUSTRALIAN NURSES AWARDS**

**Mr BART BASSETT** (Londonderry) [4.59 p.m.]: I was delighted to represent the Minister for Health, Jillian Skinner, at an event to raise money for Philippines flood relief at the Rooty Hill RSL on Sunday 23 March. The event was held during the biannual Adhika Inc. gala dinner and inaugural Australian Nurses Awards. Adhika Inc. is a non-profit media group that collaborates with nursing associations to recognise the longstanding contribution of Filipino-Australian nurses in society.

Adhika means "aspirations". The group evolved from monthly informal get-togethers of swapping stories, updates and plans to meetings conducted by Filpress Sydney, which is a loosely formed group of Sydney-based editors, and other people in media groups. Events and groups such as this are a great example of multiculturalism thriving in Western Sydney and of people contributing to the larger Australian community around them, while retaining their ethnic roots and connections. I congratulate Adhika Inc. I also congratulate the Filipino nurses, who assist the New South Wales health system to provide such great service to the community.

#### **LIVERPOOL ELECTORATE NEWROZ CELEBRATIONS**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH** (Liverpool) [5.00 p.m.]: I recognise the Newroz celebrations, New Year celebrations that are held in various communities. In particular I was able to attend the Uyghur community's Newroz celebrations organised by the Australian Uyghur Association on 23 March. The association's event was held at McGirr Park off Mawson Drive, Cartwright, in my electorate. I was delighted to receive the invitation from association president Jurad Abdulkirim. This was not the only Newroz celebration last weekend. An event also was organised by the Azerbaijani-Australian-Turkish Friendship Unity organisation on Saturday 22 March. It was described as the traditional festival of the vernal equinox and the symbolic renewal of nature. I was invited to that event by President Imametdin Kassoumov. Likewise, a Newroz celebration will be held this weekend, to which I will be invited by the Australian Kurdish Association. All those celebratory events are very good examples of the cultural nature of contemporary Australia. I am delighted to be invited to participate in the events.

**Community recognition statements concluded.**

#### **PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

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##### **LIVERPOOL JOBS**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH** (Liverpool) [5.01 p.m.]: Tonight I address the Parliament on the question of jobs in my electorate of Liverpool. There has been a degree of media speculation about jobs in Western Sydney, including Liverpool and, frankly, much overblown rhetoric about it. Accordingly, it is important to understand the real situation about employment in the electorate that I represent and within the Liverpool central business district. The place to start in this context is an organisation called Businesslink, which is a State Government-owned entity located in Moore Street, Liverpool. It is one of the State Government shared services arms. It deals with back-of-office functions such as human resources, finances and information technology [IT], among other things, for various government departments and agencies. As at 2011 the departments it did that work for included what was then Housing NSW, Community Services and Ageing, Disability and Home Care. At one stage it also included Aboriginal Affairs. Those various departments and agencies are now different entities but obviously still perform the relevant functions.

Businesslink equated to approximately 800 jobs in the Liverpool central business district, which of course is incredibly significant for the electorate that I represent as well as for the central business district of Liverpool. It was the equivalent of having the old-fashioned head offices of several government departments located in the Liverpool central business district. Precisely because of shared services organisations such as Businesslink, contemporary offices now are much smaller. The multiplier effect of those jobs was highly significant for the economic health and development of the Liverpool central business district because the jobs are not limited to the

800 jobs at Businesslink but include spin-off jobs associated with services provided to those 800 people. Regrettably, since March 2011 it has all been downhill. On 20 December 2011 the then relevant Minister, in response to questions I asked, told me that 140 jobs had gone at Businesslink since March that year, with 40 more redundancies planned at that stage. Things got worse from that point. In mid-2013 the Minister advised me in response to questions I had placed on notice that from March 2011, 200-plus contractors had been dispensed with, and additionally that 144 voluntary redundancies would be offered. By mid-2013 approximately 350 jobs out of 800 had gone from the Liverpool central business district. The Businesslink workforce had been almost halved, with quite serious implications for the economic health of my electorate and its central business district.

As if that is not bad enough, the Government now seems intent on selling off altogether what is left at Businesslink, which will mean the loss of 800 jobs from the Liverpool central business district. Since the middle of last year, further job cuts have occurred. Just before Christmas last year I was contacted by an analyst programmer who had been employed at Businesslink. He had just been told that he would be made redundant. He understood approximately another 100 jobs were to go. By the end of last year, 450 jobs out of 800 at Businesslink had gone. In a letter dated 13 March 2013 Minister Goward set out for her then director general, Jim Moore, that she wanted a transition plan prepared, and she outlined steps for Businesslink's dissolution. Minister Goward recorded the agreement of Minister Constance and Treasurer Baird: They wanted Businesslink to be dissolved. That will be the end of Businesslink in Liverpool, so the 800 jobs will go.

The approach of this Government is to be seen in other aspects in the Liverpool central business district. Upon coming to power, the Government inherited the Labor commitment to refurbish and redevelop the Liverpool police station. That was well and truly overdue, but it has not happened. The significance of that in the context of these comments is that a whole series of construction jobs associated with redevelopment of the police station also have been lost to the Liverpool central business district. Similarly, when the Government came to power, the redevelopment of the Liverpool courthouse commenced by Labor was continued, and that was welcome. Prior to the development there were four courtrooms with four magistrates, but after the court was refurbished there were five courtrooms but only three magistrates. That almost rivals *Monty Python*. Leaving aside the bizarre aspect of that, the significant point is that 25 per cent of the workload of the Liverpool courthouse has gone elsewhere—to Campbelltown—which means that a whole lot of flow-on jobs do not come to Liverpool from people who get their sandwiches, coffees and all manner of things associated with waiting for court matters to be called on. Those jobs have disappeared from Liverpool as well.

In addition to that, there are numerous vacant blocks where Housing NSW premises have been knocked down but have not been developed. That also represents a failure of opportunities to create employment. Moreover, some reductions in courses at TAFE mean that there are fewer students and fewer teachers. My electorate has the Liverpool TAFE, which is located in the middle of the central business district, and Miller TAFE, which is just down the road from the Miller shops. Those centres do not receive the flow-on work that they formerly received. Frankly, the comments about the Government moving jobs to Liverpool are rank hypocrisy. The announcements made by the Government so far do not go anywhere near the number of jobs that this Government has caused to be lost to Liverpool and in particular to its central business district.

### HUNTER EXPRESSWAY

**Ms ROBYN PARKER** (Maitland—Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage) [5.06 p.m.]: I am pleased to provide the House with an update on roads in the Maitland electorate and, more particularly, the changes being experienced as a result of last weekend's opening of the Hunter Expressway. As the member for Maitland, I was very fortunate to be part of two significant events in the past week to mark the completion of the project. Last Friday, the Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon. Warren Truss, and the Minister for Roads and Ports, the Hon. Duncan Gay, hosted an official dedication of the new road at the Buchanan rest area. Then on Saturday it was my honour to be joined by members of the Link or Sink Group to cut the ribbon at the Community Access and Opening Day. The Link or Sink Group, as it was known, comprises representatives from Maitland, Kurri Kurri and Cessnock. That strong community advocacy group lobbied both sides of politics, State and Commonwealth, to argue the case for the project to be prioritised and for the road to be built. I again take this opportunity to thank Link or Sink for its efforts over a number of years. I am sure there will be generations who will be thankful that it pushed for construction of the expressway.

The Hunter Expressway is the single largest road infrastructure project built in the Hunter region and it had 10,000 people working on it, most of whom were locals. The Hunter Expressway, or HEX as it is known, is 40 kilometres of four-lane divided freeway between the M1 Pacific Motorway at Seahampton, near Newcastle and the New England Highway west of Branxton. The \$1.7 billion cost resulted in the Australian Government

providing \$1.5 billion and the New South Wales Government contributed up to \$200 million in funding. Motorists can expect to cut their travel times by up to 28 minutes between Newcastle and the Hunter Valley. For many people that is an hour off their travelling time and an extra hour in which they will be able to spend more time with their children and families. It will provide a more direct and efficient route for the movement of freight between Central Queensland, northern and western New South Wales and the port of Newcastle. It also provides a transport arterial connection between Newcastle and urban growth centres in the Lower Hunter.

Maitland is one of the growth centres and, in addition to improving journey times, the opening of Hunter Expressway will provide some much-needed relief from traffic congestion for residents of Thornton, Maitland and Rutherford. Roads and Maritime Services forecasts that traffic on the New England Highway through Maitland will decrease. We are yet to see the percentages, but already we have seen a huge reduction, and a reduction from 45,000 vehicles a day to 30,000 vehicles a day by 2031 is predicted. Up until last Saturday afternoon, for 85 years the New England Highway through Maitland had been part of the main road connection via the Hunter Valley to northern and western parts of the State and Queensland. By that evening the long distance semi-trailers and national highway traffic was gone and a new reality had begun to settle in for residents of Maitland: Less traffic on the city's main road and some breathing space for one of Australia's fastest-growing regional cities. I think it is the best regional city, but I am a little biased.

As the final touches were being made to the Hunter Expressway the Government was busy delivering the improved road infrastructure Maitland needs to accommodate its predicted residential and commercial growth. An amount of \$45 million from the Hunter Investment Fund has already delivered slip lanes at the Maitland Hospital roundabout and new traffic lights at Johnson Street. At the railway station roundabout a slip lane has been constructed at Walker Street and a U-turn bay has been established on Cessnock Road. More improvements, including another slip lane from Cessnock Road onto the highway and the eastbound overpass, are to come. Further west on the highway work commenced this week to improve safety and traffic flow between Regiment and Racecourse roads at Rutherford. The New South Wales Government has provided \$3.5 million for the upgrade, which involves widening a 450-metre section of the road that is currently one way in each direction to provide two lanes in each direction.

The Government is spending a further \$4.5 million on the eastern side of Maitland. On Raymond Terrace Road between Thornton and Maitland a \$3.1 million upgrade is expected to be completed by October while a \$1.4 million reconstruction and resurfacing of Lindesay Street, East Maitland, between High and Cumberland streets, is expected to take three weeks to complete. The Liberal-Nationals State Government has an enviable track record on roads in the Maitland electorate since 2011. The new Thornton rail bridge has been constructed, the historic Dunmore Bridge at Woodville has been restored and millions of dollars have been spent on maintenance and road upgrade projects. We are catching up on the backlog of infrastructure that Labor failed to deliver in its 16 years in government. I am very proud to be a member of a government which has delivered, and which will continue to deliver, much-needed road infrastructure to the people of Maitland. There is certainly more to come.

### **ORANGE ELECTROLUX PLANT**

**Mr ANDREW GEE** (Orange) [5.11 p.m.]: I will update the House on the how the community of Orange is dealing with the impending closure of Electrolux. As members are aware, the Electrolux factory is closing and the wind-down will commence in the second half of 2015. Currently, about 550 workers are employed by Electrolux in the factory. A number of contractors also work there. For example, TT Logistics has a crew of 35 in the factory at any given time, which is made up of 26 permanent employees and 29 on-call casuals. This takes the number of workers affected by the closure of the plant to more than 600—indeed, some estimates take it closer to 700. Dealing with the Electrolux closure is a grim challenge facing Orange, but I have every confidence we will be able to meet it. Last week a Jobs Expo was held in Orange. It was jointly funded and organised by Electrolux, the New South Wales Government, the Federal Government and Orange City Council. Thirty-eight businesses and training organisations participated in the expo and more than 550 people attended. They were Electrolux workers and members of the general public who were interested in securing a job.

We were delighted by the response and the overwhelming show of community support for the workers at Electrolux. The Electrolux workers and contractors are part of our community, and we want as many of them as possible to continue living and working in Orange and its surrounding districts. Now that the Jobs Expo has concluded, over the next few weeks TAFE Western will go into the factory to tailor a retraining program to every worker who wants one. It will take many weeks but this important work is beginning. In fact, it is being launched tomorrow. I am today also making a request of TT Logistics Australasia. I ask that the company

ensure that any of its workers who will be unemployed when the plant closes be included in this process. I also ask the company to commit to funding the retraining of its contracted workers. TT Logistics is part of the Toyota group of companies and I do not think that is too much to ask of a company with its connections.

The community is vitally interested in the closure of the Electrolux plant, and we must all play our part. I am happy with the response to date from the various New South Wales government departments, which have pulled together, for example, to provide labour market information sessions, the Jobs Expo and now the retraining program. The organisations include NSW State Training Services, NSW Trade and Investment and TAFE Western. The response to date has been professional, well coordinated and a credit to all involved. The community can be proud of what has occurred. I assure the electorate that I am still fighting hard to get a further response from the New South Wales Government to help deal with what will be a very difficult chapter in Orange's history. The retraining program will be vital, but we also need to think about how and where we will secure jobs for workers when they come onto the labour market. Many of the pieces are falling into place, but we need a complete plan. This has been very much the focus of my energies in recent parliamentary sitting weeks. Time is on our side, but it is passing quickly and the sooner this issue can be resolved the better. I will not rest until it is resolved. We are driving forward and I am determined to maintain the momentum.

I acknowledge the employees of Electrolux who are working hard on the company's Transition Consultative Committee. They include: Timothy Elkington, Ian Alpen, John Davis, Janet McLean, Terri Pollack, Geoff Drummond, David Anderson, Phil Alexander, Robert Weston, Terina Welch, Michael Karger, Anthony Cardwell, Raymond Jolley, Donna Strahan, and David Robertson. I also thank the Electrolux workers who are serving on the Transitional Planning Committee, including Geoff Drummond, Terina Welch, Simone Birks and David Robertson. I thank plant General Manager Mark O'Kane, who is going above and beyond the call of duty to ensure his workers are looked after. I believe Electrolux workers can take heart in the fact that the community is with them. The transition is a community issue and we are facing it together. Though it may be difficult, I have no doubt we will get through it. I thank the exhibitors who supported the Jobs Expo and in so doing supported the future of Orange. I also acknowledge Megan Forgas from Electrolux in Mascot. I congratulate everyone involved in helping to get Orange through this challenging time.

**Mr ROB STOKES** (Pittwater—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.16 p.m.]: I commend the member for Orange for standing up for the people affected by the proposed closure of the Electrolux plant. Members of this House share his sympathy for those affected workers. The member for Orange has been, and will continue to be, a great advocate for his region. It has a great future. I commend him for his unwavering commitment to the workers he represents. I note that the Government's Payroll Tax Rebate Scheme (Jobs Action Plan) Amendment (Fresh Start Support) Bill 2014 provides a device through which payroll tax relief can be provided to employers who engage people affected by redundancies due to closures of plants or premises. That is just one of the mechanisms the New South Wales Government will put in place. I commend the member for Orange for his support and commitment to a great region.

#### **CAMDEN SCHOOL LEADERS PARLIAMENT HOUSE VISIT**

**Mr CHRIS PATTERSON** (Camden) [5.17 p.m.]: Last Friday some brilliant year 6 school leaders visited Parliament House. Ninety-one students representing 13 schools from the Camden area enjoyed learning about leadership and how Parliament operates. They also had the enriching experience of meeting the Premier and observing firsthand how Parliament works. These students are our leaders of the future. It is important that we empower them to experience great leadership in practice and know the importance of being responsible and making decisions. It is with great delight that I mention the outstanding year 6 school leaders who represented 13 excellent schools from the Camden area. From Mount Annan Public School, I mention Caitlin O'Flynn, Piper Sutton, Alyssa Short and Noah Smith. From Elderslie Public School, I mention Teaghan Warren, Alyssa Raco, Brontie Harvey-Marks, Justin Eggert, Elijah Armstrong and Kobie Nemes. From Camden South Public School, I mention Amy Burge and Ben Ogden. From Mary Immaculate Parish Primary School, I mention Jaden Legaspi, Jackson Skinner, Caroline Adina and Emily Muscat.

From Oran Park Anglican College, I mention Mae Alden, Cerise Bootsma, Emily Buterin, Justin Franovic, Angus Geoghegan, Christina Kumar, Jonathon Marcusson, Casey McCarthy, Jack Rodgers, Gabby Russo and Joshua Turner. From Cobbitty Public School, I mention Gaby Sarkis, Nathan Vassallo, Charlotte Lasica, Christopher Pernia, Alex Hatton, Emily Borg, Cordelia Bell, Jaylen Berroa, Samuel Mills, Kyoko Ichida-Griffin, Sophia Rixon, Sharleyne Gay, Cody Booth, Jarrod Galea, Clarissa Fauvette, Tim Hayter and Alexis Costlow. From Currans Hill Public School, I mention Montana Freeman, Lex Martin, Rebekah Lord, Jackson Rye, Tia Tuerlings, Lydia Oreshkin, Joe Smillie and Zamar Cartharn.



From Narellan Vale Public School, I mention Thomas Campbell, Lani Baker, Trent Martin, Kristen Mulley, Kynan English, Ryleigh Browne, Thomas Liardo, Ateya Fabian, Tristan Stanko and Emily Oats. From Claymore Public School, I mention Rachael Taito, Gary Butler, Nita Sofa and Salani Aigamaua. From Macarthur Anglican School, I mention Madison Baker, Holly Creber, Grace Jansen, Paris Kellner, Renae Thorman, Elijah Gray, Jared Harvey, Caleb Morgan, Dylan Offord and Harry Williams. From Mawarra Public School, I mention Lachlan Taylor, Sarah Howlett, Oliver McDonald and Monique Munro. From Broughton Anglican College, I mention Tori Duckett, Alexander Giannetta, Charlotte Price and Aidan Joerdens. From Leppington Public School, I mention Natasha Milenkovic, Tiendo Nguyen, Dylan Prothero, Roman Jeretic, Jimmy Kandakji, Grace Jeretic, Zachary Huang, Bonnie Windsor, Jehan Kandakji, Cheyenne Galway-Quin and Caitlyn Cusbert.

These school leaders are a testament to their respective schools and a product of the first-class education provided by the schools in the Camden area. I commend these students, who should be very proud of their excellent conduct and the way they have represented their schools and fellow students. These students are great ambassadors for their schools and have made me, their teachers, principals, schools and parents very proud. Furthermore, I acknowledge the teachers, principals and parents for their continued support and all the great work they do in educating our children and future leaders. I look forward to seeing the great contribution that these students make to our community. I encourage them to continue to build and develop their leadership skills and to use those skills to make a difference in their community for the duration of their schooling and beyond.

Clearly these 91 outstanding students have been chosen by their peers and teachers because they saw their leadership qualities. I encourage the students to work with their teachers and peers during this school year to ensure that they make their respective schools a better place and continue the work that many of these young adults do within our wider community that helps make Camden the outstanding place it is to live in. I commend the principals and teachers of these schools for their wonderful efforts in developing these young leaders. I thank the students who came to Parliament last week for taking the time to visit, and I thank them for all the work they do.

### NATIONAL YOUTH WEEK

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK** (Bankstown) [5.22 p.m.]: I inform the House about National Youth Week in my capacity both as the member for Bankstown and as the shadow Minister for Youth. National Youth Week is an Australia-wide celebration that recognises young people aged between 12 and 25 years. From 4 April to 13 April 2014, communities across New South Wales will be buzzing with activities and events to celebrate Youth Week and the valuable contributions of young people to our State. Since Youth Week was officially launched in 2000, the number of young people and community groups coordinating events across New South Wales has increased significantly. Youth Week offers young people an opportunity to highlight their positive contributions to the broader community and to showcase their unique talents and innovative ideas. Youth Week provides a platform for young people to express what they believe is important for the future, to raise their issues and concerns and to formulate strategies for the future.

In my electorate of Bankstown young people have always played an active role. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the Bankstown local government area has approximately 32,934 residents aged between 12 and 24 years of age. This is the fifth highest number of young people in a local government area in New South Wales. Many youth-orientated community organisations in Bankstown have embraced the concept of Youth Week, and I will name a few. The Bankstown Multicultural Youth Service conducts weekly activities for local youth to facilitate harmony within the broader community. In addition to its usual activities, the Bankstown Multicultural Youth Service has organised a skate competition on 5 April. The Youth Week celebrations will culminate on 12 April with a festival that the Bankstown Multicultural Youth Service is coordinating at Paul Keating Park. The Bankstown Police Citizens Youth Club will be conducting its "Time for Kids" fundraiser on 12 April to raise funds for its program of activities. Once again, local celebrities and politicians will be asked to place themselves in a simulated jail cell and members of the community will be thoroughly encouraged to pay a generous bail-out fee as part of the fun.

The Bankstown Youth Development Service, which aims to give young artists from Bankstown and south-west Sydney opportunities in the arts, has helped to transform Bankstown into the home of Australia's largest poetry slam with the monthly Bankstown Poetry Slam. The initiative has been a phenomenal success, with hundreds of people from Western Sydney and beyond converging on Bankstown Arts Centre on the last Tuesday night of every month. Youth Week 2014 will coincide with the one-year

anniversary of the event. Audiences come from across Sydney, in particular south-western Sydney, and the poetry slam has inspired young people and youth organisations to take up this concept in areas such as Granville and Parramatta.

Engaging with young high school students in Sydney, the Lebanese Muslim Association is working with the Bankstown Youth Development Service to coordinate the "Stand Tall Speak Out!" project as part of Youth Week 2014. That project will bring together more than 70 students from schools in Western Sydney, the North Shore and Catholic schools to engage in the art of spoken word poetry. The project aims to empower, engage, motivate and inspire young students to be heard and to express their creativity. The Lebanese Muslim Association is also launching a Youth Think Tank to develop a forum for the youth of the local Muslim community. The program will empower young Muslims to identify and address the core issues and challenges facing their generation today.

On the weekend of 5 and 6 April, a Multicultural Youth Leadership conference will take place at Sydney Olympic Park to bring together young people from diverse religious and cultural background throughout New South Wales. Participants in the conference will be able to exchange ideas on how to cultivate the potential of the youth of today as leaders of tomorrow. These events showcase the power of Youth Week, in particular its power to unite young people from different backgrounds across New South Wales to plan for a better tomorrow. I take this opportunity to praise and recognise the many community groups throughout New South Wales which have embraced the Youth Week concept and which are helping young people and the broader community to celebrate and acknowledge the achievements and potential of our youth.

### ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATIONS

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA** (Davidson) [5.27 p.m.]: By the time that this Parliament sits again, another Anzac Day will have come and gone. I encourage all residents in my electorate of Davidson to show their support for our veterans and current serving Defence Force personnel this Anzac Day by attending one of the April 2014 events in and close to my electorate. I commend those organisations and people who are convening 2014 Anzac Day commemorations across the country, but particularly acknowledge those local to my electorate. The Roseville Returned Servicemen's Memorial Club on the Pacific Highway at Roseville will hold an Anzac service and wreath-laying ceremony at 3.00 p.m. on Sunday 13 April, and the Anzac Day Dawn Service will take place at 5.00 a.m. on Friday 25 April. The St Ives War Memorial at Mona Vale Road, St Ives, will be the location of an event on 22 April at 10.30 a.m., initiated by the Lions club. St Ives has not seen the commemoration for some years and I commend the local Lions club on its initiative.

For many years, the Glenaeon Retirement Village on Forest Way at Belrose has had a special Anzac ceremony of remembrance. I know that Ralph Schubert is convening it this year, on 23 April at 10.30 a.m. The executive of the Forestville RSL Club, which is located in Melwood Avenue, has dutifully served for many years. The club has a Dawn Service on Friday 25 April at 5.30 a.m. and on Sunday 27 April it has an Anzac march from the corner of Starkey Street and Warringah Road, followed by a service at the club at 3.00 p.m. Oxford Falls Peace Park, which is on Dreadnought Road, has a 6.00 a.m. service on Friday 25 April. St John's Anglican Church, which is on the Pacific Highway at Gordon, has an Anzac commemoration on Sunday 27 April at 11.30 a.m. I will be at most of these services, but some conflict and adjoining electorates have also extended invitations to attend their commemorations. I endeavour to support as many commemorations as possible, as I know other members do.

I am sure Australians will be out in force on Anzac Day, as they generally are. It is important that we remember why the nation stops, and why thousands of veterans and current defence force personnel march. ANZAC is an acronym for Australian and New Zealand Army Corps. These two closely allied armies fought together in Gallipoli. The Anzac troops landed at Anzac Cove on the Dardanelles Peninsula on 25 April 1915. Along with other Commonwealth forces, Anzac troops held the ground against a strong Turkish force, at almost impossible odds, for the next eight months before withdrawing. More than 8,000 Australians were killed in the Gallipoli campaign. Although the campaign failed in its military objectives, the Australian and New Zealand actions during the campaign left a powerful legacy. The creation of the Anzac legend has become an important part of the identity of both nations, shaping how we view our past and our future.

Next year we will commemorate 100 years since our soldiers landed on the shores of Gallipoli. Some residents of my electorate and elsewhere have been successful in the ballot to attend the service at Gallipoli next year, and many more will celebrate locally. Local preparations are well underway, and have been for some time, to mark next year's centenary of the Anzac landing. There will be various services on the North Shore for the

Federal electorates of Warringah and Mackellar. The commemorations will focus on a combined community event in Warriewood, in the electorate of the member for Pittwater. I am sure I will attend the function commemorating 100 years since the landing at Anzac Cove. I encourage everyone to attend a commemoration this year. I have circulated a brochure to people in my electorate in pursuing that objective.

**Mr ROB STOKES** (Pittwater—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.32 p.m.]: I commend my colleague and friend the member for Davidson, the neighbouring electorate, for raising the importance of the upcoming commemoration of Anzac Day. This is one of Australia's pre-eminent holy days. It is probably the closest we have to a national holy day, so it is appropriate that this year Anzac Day is close to Easter. It will be a dual commemoration of the sacrifice of others. Anzac Day is not the celebration of a victory, but the remembrance of incredible sacrifice and loss. As members of the House will participate in Anzac Day ceremonies, we thank the member for Davidson for bringing this matter to the attention of the House.

### SAVING OUR SPECIES

**Mr DONALD PAGE** (Ballina—Minister for Local Government, and Minister for the North Coast) [5.33 p.m.]: We all know the international call sign for someone in distress—SOS, which stands for save our souls. The New South Wales Government has launched its own SOS program, but this one is called Saving our Species and is focused on saving endangered plants and animals. The New South Wales Government has allocated \$4.8 million over four years to the Saving our Species program, which is designed to address the growing number of plants and animals that are critically endangered. Its aim is to secure a species in the wild for the next 100 years. This is a lifeline for the 967 plants and animals in New South Wales that are listed as being threatened with extinction.

One of these species is the Coastal Fontainea tree. In 2010 only 10 mature trees were known to exist in the world. They were discovered in coastal rainforest at Lennox Head, in my electorate of Ballina. Only two of these trees are female and able to reproduce. Until recently the recovery of the Coastal Fontainea, one of our country's most critically endangered plants, whilst obviously important, has been done on a very modest budget involving the then Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority, Ballina Shire Council and the Office of Environment and Heritage.

With few resources, the Coastal Fontainea recovery action plan has been successful in propagating the tree via cuttings to establish an additional 132 new plants that are clustered in three locations at Lennox Head. I am told that the trees normally take some 15 to 20 years to mature and grow to a size at which they can reproduce. However, by grafting the cuttings, this incredibly successful program means that the time to mature and breed is reduced to five to 10 years. Some trees are growing in the Australian Botanic Gardens and the Lismore Rainforest Botanic Gardens, as well as at Lennox Head.

I recently had the great pleasure of planting a Coastal Fontainea at Lennox Point, marking the launch of On the Edge—the Lennox coast littoral rainforest and grassy headland recovery project. This project has received \$99,250 from the Natural Heritage Trust as part of the Saving our Species program. All this money comes from the State Government's Environment Trust Fund. Over the next three years it will not only aim to secure the recovery of the critically endangered Coastal Fontainea tree but also restore and improve 23 hectares of littoral rainforest and themeda grassland, which are also classified as endangered ecological communities. Some members may know Lennox Headland, or Lennox Point as it is known to locals. It is one of the most iconic headlands in New South Wales and is well known to surfers worldwide. The drive from Lennox Point to Sharpes Beach, which is where the littoral rainforest and grassy headland recovery project will be undertaken, is one of the most spectacular in New South Wales.

I acknowledge the work of the Ballina Shire Council to preserve this area. I recall several years ago when the council was given a sketch of the southern side of Lennox headland, discovered by Malcolm Milner in the New South Wales State Library, that dated back to 1860. The sketch shows large tracts of littoral rainforest as well as areas of grasslands. Since the discovery of the sketch, which was done more than 150 years ago, Ballina Shire Council has used it as a guide for rehabilitation works. I wonder how many Coastal Fontainea trees were growing in the littoral rainforest when Edward Forde, who was a draughtsman for the New South Wales Government, sat and sketched Lennox Head in 1860.

In the last decade more than 10,000 trees have been planted over 10 hectares and another 8,000 trees are currently being planted, funded by a biodiversity grant from the Federal Government. I thank the Ballina Shire Council for successfully applying for funding for the On the Edge project, as part of our New South Wales

Government's Saving our Species initiative. The grant of \$99,250 was, I believe, the maximum amount available. It shows how important this project is to the local environment at Lennox Head and to New South Wales and Australia. The On the Edge project is a community effort to restore the vegetation on and near Lennox headland to what was there prior to European settlement. Hopefully, it will also save one of our country's most endangered trees.

For the next three years council staff, professional bush regenerators and Landcare volunteers will be involved in protecting, preserving, recovering and expanding the littoral rainforest, themeda grassland and the Coastal Fontainea tree. I will continue to take a keen interest in this project and look forward to seeing the results over the next several years. I hope the recovery of the Coastal Fontainea tree is an enormous success. I believe we have done something very special in rescuing this endangered tree from extinction.

### **PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE SPOT REZONING**

**Mr ROB STOKES** (Pittwater—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.38 p.m.]: Spot rezonings have long been the bane of planning processes. More than anything else, they erode public confidence in planning. Planning is all about providing communities with a predictable process and a foreseeable vision of how cities, towns and suburbs are likely to change in the future. The problem with spot rezonings is that they introduce an element of surprise into planning, and that unpredictability can have huge impacts on people's homes, neighbourhoods and lives. A recent example was in my community at Warriewood. Until recently, this sylvan place was a peri-urban environment of paddocks and glasshouses, yet over the past 15 years it has been developed into a vibrant medium-density suburb characterised by townhouses and detached homes on smaller blocks with a standard density of 25 lots per hectare. Following an unplanned, unwanted and unsupported part 3A development under the former Labor Government for a series of residential tenements, the Planning Assessment Commission called for a strategic review of the development potential of the remaining undeveloped land in Warriewood.

The new Liberal Government agreed and cofounded a strategic review with Pittwater Council based on independent reports and evidence that determined that the existing density limitations were overly restrictive, and determined that a general yield of 32 lots per hectare on the remaining undeveloped sites across Warriewood was environmentally, economically and socially feasible—in other words, it was sustainable. This review was adopted by council and the Department of Planning and Infrastructure, and was reflected in local zoning controls following extensive community engagement. It really was a textbook example of the sort of up-front community engagement being promoted in the new planning system. Yet, within days, an applicant had submitted a planning proposal under the pre-gateway process for a development that offended the brand new strategic planning vision not by 10 per cent or 20 per cent, but by a staggering and outrageous 300 per cent. Appropriately and unanimously, the council rejected the proposal for inconsistency with the strategic plan.

The Department of Planning and Infrastructure inexplicably determined that the proposal had strategic merit and allowed it to proceed to determination by the joint regional planning panel, which, predictably, threw it out as a joke. I am delighted that the director general now has dismissed the application on the basis of inconsistency with the strategic review. Of course, no-one will be surprised if, like a zombie, the proposal rises again, only to go through another process with all the cost, waste and conflict this generates, all to potentially facilitate a private profit at overall loss to ratepayers who have to fund the process, citizens who have to fund the inflated cost of retrofitting infrastructure to support unplanned development, and neighbours who every day have to put up with the adverse changes to their community brought by overdevelopment. It would add insult to injury if the developer were to surreptitiously attempt to reshape the development, modification by modification, into the application originally rejected. I call on the director general of NSW Planning and Infrastructure to remain strong, and to continue to reject any proposal inconsistent with the strategic review.

However, the clear lesson from the case study is that the current pre-gateway process needs reform. Fundamentally, any appeal against a refusal of a rezoning application should start with a consideration of the strategic merit of the proposal. This consideration should be based on certain and consistent criteria. The fact the proposal has been rejected already by the local community means that the general presumption must be to respect the community's wishes and to reject the proposal unless there are seriously compelling reasons for unexpected change. This occurs in the following limited circumstances: first, where local planning rules clearly are out of date and do not reflect changes in local needs, aspirations and demographics; secondly, where local planning rules are too prescriptive to facilitate a sensible proposal which is broadly consistent with the local planning strategy and the character of the area, but which might offend development standards in an insignificant manner; thirdly, where an entirely new land use is proposed that simply was not contemplated by planners or the community when the local planning strategy was developed and where there is a demonstrable public interest in having a novel or unique proposal assessed.

The appeal process should be about re-examining sensible proposals put in good faith where the existing planning rules are manifestly unreasonable, not in providing endless backdoor opportunities for disreputable developers to push their proposals. Put bluntly, where a spot rezoning is all about the developer's interest and the case for public interest is not crystal clear and compelling, it simply should not happen. Under the new planning system, we need to move away from one that allows for assessment by faceless men. Contentious decisions, such as appeals on rezonings, must be made openly and transparently by representatives of the people directly in a council chamber, in a court by a commissioner or by an appropriately qualified independent panel. While I am happy that the right decision has been made for the Warriewood planning proposal, neither I nor the community had any insight into how the decision was reached or how deliberations took place behind closed doors within the department. This needs to change.

The Government's proposed planning reforms have not been permitted to proceed because of unworkable amendments passed in the other place. This example of the flaws in the pre-gateway process demonstrates powerfully the need for reform to enable the Government to deliver on its commitment to return planning powers to local communities and to restore trust in government. The process of managing appeals against refusal of spot rezonings needs to be refined. The old planning culture whereby some developers just put in ambit claims and ignored established planning rules needs to change. The Warriewood decision is an encouraging start, but planning proposals that ignore or flagrantly breach up-to-date local planning rules must continue to be put in the dustbin where they belong.

### **WESTMEAD HOSPITAL UPGRADE**

**Dr GEOFF LEE** (Parramatta) [5.43 p.m.]: In June last year as part of the New South Wales Government's budget, Minister Skinner announced \$900,000 for the planning of a new car park for Westmead Hospital. In November last year Minister Skinner came out to Westmead again to announce \$1 million for the planning of a major upgrade at the hospital. On that day the Minister said:

The redevelopment of Westmead Hospital is the number one priority of the Western Sydney local Health District Asset Strategic Plan.

Built more than 35 years ago, the hospital and its neighbouring facilities, which include the Children's Hospital, Westmead Private Hospital, the Millennium Institute, the Children's Medical Research Institute and other medical suites, form a critical part of Australia's largest bio-medical precinct with an estimated 11,000 jobs, of which 5,000 jobs alone are at Westmead Hospital. The hospital has approximately 63,000 admissions annually, servicing not only Parramatta but also the whole of Western Sydney. Westmead Hospital is the one to go to for specialist services and it is where other hospitals send their most difficult cases.

Westmead Hospital is a critically important part of the treatment, training and research capability of NSW Health. This is due to a number of factors that include its sheer size; the tremendous breadth of work it delivers; its role in delivering regional, State and national health services; its participation in a long list of international research and development studies; its location in the west of Sydney where the population is growing and where Parramatta is experiencing a great surge in city planning and development; its popularity as a training location; and its very impressive network of partnerships. Over the past three years, there have been significant improvements in its operations, which has put it in an excellent position to plan for the future delivery of health services for the whole of Western Sydney—a region that will grow by one million people in the next 20 years.

There are several key reasons for these improvements. The hospital is under new management. A hospital clinical board, comprising mostly clinicians and chaired by a clinician, is providing excellent governance to the hospital. The clinical leadership of the hospital also occurs through the recently introduced divisional structure, which also is led by clinician directors. The hospital has a keen clinical and scientific commitment to the spectrum of clinical care from highly complex medicine and surgery, through to the effective management of chronic disease. Clinicians understand that all kinds of optimal treatment occur in partnerships between hospital and primary care clinicians. One fine example of this is the Crown Princess Mary Cancer Service. Senior clinicians are actively engaged in supporting and facilitating younger clinicians into positions of authority and responsibility because they recognise the rapidly changing nature of healthcare and the need to manage the process for guaranteeing the future success of the organisation by looking after future leaders.

The hospital has a very outward perspective on the relationships that add value to current and future performance. These include strong relationships with the Children's Hospital at Westmead and a range of tertiary education institutions. Over the past three years Westmead Hospital has had some great results and

achievements. Westmead emergency department alone treated more than 63,000 emergency patients in 2013—9 per cent more than in 2012—and is an impressive result. Most recently, I joined the Minister for Health and the member for Granville to inspect the \$5 million investment to upgrade the emergency department. Under the stewardship of Dr Matthew Vukasovic, significant improvements in patient outcomes have been achieved. The most notable outcome is that the number of patients leaving the emergency department within four hours was 73.7 per cent in December 2013, up from 34 per cent in March 2011. That represents an improvement of almost 40 per cent.

Westmead Hospital has hundreds if not thousands of good news stories. It is a critical part of a world-class biomedical precinct, which is an exemplar of the integration of research, teaching and clinical practice. This integration is essential to improve efficiencies and outcomes in healthcare for the people of Western Sydney. It has been 35 years since the hospital was built. It is a major healthcare asset for the whole of Western Sydney and provides a critical and strategic part of the Westmead biomedical precinct. For these reasons I ask the New South Wales Government to allocate funding for a major upgrade to Westmead Hospital.

### **ORANGEVILLE-WEROMBI RURAL FIRE BRIGADE SEVENTIETH ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr JAI ROWELL** (Wollondilly) [5.48 p.m.]: On Saturday 8 March I had the honour of representing the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, the Hon. Michael Gallacher, MLC, at the Orangeville-Werombi Rural Fire Brigade's seventieth anniversary in the great electorate of Wollondilly. I was joined by the acting manager of East Region, Superintendent Stuart Midgley, and the manager of the Southern Highlands team, Superintendent Martin Surrey. This event provided not only an opportunity to celebrate a milestone achievement for the Orangeville-Werombi Rural Fire Brigade, but also a chance for the past and present members of the brigade to come together and reflect on the vast and rich history of the Rural Fire Service in our local area.

The day was also an occasion for the community to reflect on and give thanks to the Rural Fire Service volunteers who very recently risked their lives to protect residents and property in Wollondilly. During the bushfires of October last year, whilst their immediate area was not threatened, the Orangeville-Werombi Fire Brigade rushed into action to assist their brother and sister brigades in fighting the immense fire front threatening townships in Wollondilly and Wingecarribee. The members of the Rural Fire Service are a particular breed. They are generous, selfless and, above all, brave. They are on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week to turn out at a moment's notice to assist any member of the local community who faces the challenge of a fire or other disaster, either natural or man-made.

The Orangeville-Werombi Rural Fire Brigade has gone from strength to strength: from humble beginnings in 1944 when the Werombi Branch Agricultural Bureau called a meeting to consider the formation of a local bush fire brigade equipped with axes, hoes, hand pumps and first aid kits, to the brigade of today equipped with a category 1 tanker with a capacity of 3,500 litres and much more equipment than the brigade would have had in its early days. The Orangeville-Werombi Brigade consists of 18 active members, one junior member, 10 probationary members, 50 non-active members who provide various support functions, and two life members, honoured for their long-term dedication and service to the brigade.

Whilst I have enduring respect for all members of the brigade, I make special mention of the executive: Brigade Captain, Leigh Daniels; Senior Deputy Captain, David Murphy; and Deputy Captains, Geoffrey Gardiner, Adam Pearce and Jeremy Duck. The brigade president, Jeremy Duck; secretary, Adam Pearce; treasurer, Kerry Murphy; vice presidents, Geoff Brown and June Hickey; equipment officer, Jordan Willis; Firefighter Health and Safety Committee representative, Grahame Langford; community safety officer, Russell Whitehead; and publicity officer, June Hickey, do a tremendous job and do their brigade proud within the district.

In any year the Orangeville-Werombi Rural Fire Brigade faces many incidents of varying sizes and ferocity and the brigade has become and remains an integral part of the Wollondilly, New South Wales and national firefighting team. After fighting the 2006 Thirlmere Lakes fire, the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires in Victoria, the 2013 Halls Road fire and fires in Bathurst, and after lending a hand in Victoria and travelling to South Australia, it is easy to see that this brigade rolls up its sleeves and gets on with the job of helping others. I also note that the brigade participates in open days, has representatives on the district community engagement committee and does whatever else it can to assist in our community that is not necessarily related to firefighting.

It was an honour to attend the Orangeville-Werombi Rural Fire Brigade's seventieth anniversary. It was great to see other group officers of the district, brigade captains and deputy captains and other great volunteers

across the brigades come and celebrate with this proud brigade, members of which have come from the same family over most of the brigade's 70 years. Generation after generation in that local area has supported the brigade. On behalf of a very thankful Wollondilly community I congratulate these true local heroes.

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS** (Hawkesbury—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.53 p.m.]: I take this opportunity to commend the member for Wollondilly for his tribute to the local volunteers of the Rural Fire Service in his electorate. On behalf of the New South Wales Government and the Parliament I once again acknowledge the wonderful volunteers of the Rural Fire Service, whose great work was seen recently in our bushfire-ravaged areas. Only two weeks ago I attended a special awards presentation for the Hawkesbury Rural Fire Service under the tutelage of Karen Hodges, the local commander, at which hundreds of people were acknowledged with various awards ranging from awards for 10 years of service up to an award for one person, Dick Patrikis—a constituent of mine and a wonderful person—for 60 years of service to the Rural Fire Service. That is an absolutely extraordinary effort. I pay tribute to Dick Patrikis and all the members and volunteers of the Rural Fire Service.

### **CRONULLA LINE OPAL CARD ELECTRONIC TICKETING SYSTEM**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN** (Cronulla—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.54 p.m.]: This week has been a significant one for Cronulla line commuters with the introduction of Opal card terminals at all stations along the Cronulla line. I am delighted that the Minister for Transport is in the Chamber to listen to my short contribution. The O'Farrell Government is getting on with the job of delivering a world-class public transport system, and the rollout of New South Wales's electronic ticketing system, Opal, is a very important milestone in improving service delivery. There is still work to be done though to ensure we fully capitalise on the potential of electronic ticketing—potential that can be measured by the success of smart card systems in major cities around the world, such as London's Oyster card.

I highlight for the benefit of the House some of the advantages of smart card technology that will help ensure service delivery is optimised for customers on the Cronulla line. Five fare distance bands are used to calculate train fares. Cronulla commuters travelling to Town Hall on the Opal card will pay a maximum weekly fare of \$50.40, compared with the current \$52.00 MyTrain fare for the equivalent journey. A single adult Opal fare for the same journey is \$6.30, compared with the current \$6.80 MyTrain adult fare. With Opal there is a further 30 per cent off-peak discount on full-price Opal train fares for customers who travel outside peak hours—that is, outside 7.00 a.m. to 9.00 a.m. and 4.00 p.m. to 6.30 p.m. on weekdays—on the Sydney Trains network. There is also a weekly travel reward: each journey after the eighth paid journey in a single week will be free. I encourage public transport customers on the Cronulla line to go to the [www.opal.com.au](http://www.opal.com.au) website to see how they will benefit from the new Opal fares.

Opal will be easy to use. It will enable seamless travel throughout the public transport network by integrating all ticket and fare types in a single smart card. One of the keys to encouraging public transport use is making multimodal travelling simpler. Providing simple, smart card technology is one way to help achieve this objective. The full rollout of Opal will ultimately mean no queuing for tickets or burdensome fare transactions; customers simply "tap on" when they begin their journey and "tap off" at the end, regardless of their mode of transport. Customers are also able to top-up funds on their Opal card via an automatic direct debit, by phone or at one of many Opal card retailers.

Typically, the lowest possible fare will be calculated and deducted if a smart card is being used for multiple journeys. This is particularly advantageous for tourists, for example, who are not familiar with the network and its plethora of fare structures. Moreover, the pay-as-you-go method means customers are only paying for what they use and they can easily monitor their balance online. A paper produced by the Tourism and Transport Forum stated:

With drivers and other public transport employees no longer required to collect money and issue tickets, smartcard ticketing systems deliver significant savings in boarding times. For example, in London, as a result of 98 per cent of bus commuters now using Oyster Cards, boarding rates have increased from 10 to 40 passengers per minute, substantially cutting trip times.

The same paper makes the important point that the one-off cost of issuing a durable plastic card is quickly offset by the economic and environmental costs of printing paper tickets. Very importantly, one of the significant advantages of the Opal card will be its ability to provide us with detailed and reliable data regarding customers' travel patterns. That will empower the Government to make informed decisions about its transport priorities, now and in the future, particularly the future configuration of train services on the whole Illawarra line. Ultimately, it will also mean that Transport for NSW will be better able to respond quickly to fluctuations in demand for services.

Opal is set to provide considerable benefits to the people of New South Wales in general and particularly to commuters on the Cronulla line. Although a new system of this scale and nature is not immune from teething problems, as has been witnessed in other Australian jurisdictions, the Minister for Transport has done a terrific job leading a smooth and timely rollout. I look forward to seeing residents of the Cronulla electorate taking advantage of Opal and enjoying the benefits of seamless smart card ticketing.

### **MALTESE WELFARE ASSOCIATION QUIET ACHIEVERS AWARDS**

**Mr JOHN ROBERTSON** (Blacktown—Leader of the Opposition) [5.59 p.m.]: On Wednesday 19 March I had the great honour of attending the fourteenth annual Maltese Welfare Association Quiet Achievers Awards. It is an event that is held to recognise some of our community's most dedicated and humble achievers. On the night it was a pleasure to join the master of ceremonies, Ms Rita Kassas. I thank the Maltese Welfare Association and Mr Lawrence Dimech for the invitation and the opportunity to speak at the event. I was proud to address such a committed group of people; our community would be lost without them. Last year Lawrence was reappointed as a People of Australia ambassador. On the night awards were given to people to recognise the immense contribution they make to the community. Recipients were Joe and Connie Apap from Blacktown, Lillian Attard from Greystanes, Gerry Carabez from Riverwood, Tony Fenech from Blacktown, Dorothy Gatt from Greystanes, Sam Gatt from Seven Hills, Emanuel Grech from Blacktown, Joe and Elsie Magro from Warrawong, Giovanna Matkovic from Seven Hills, Victoria Mizzi from Dural, Father Carmelo Sciberras from Summerland Point and Joseph Zahra from Greystanes.

These people are distinguished members of our community who have selflessly promoted the principles of Australian multiculturalism. It is important that Parliament recognises the important work these ambassadors undertake. It is a testament to the Maltese spirit that so many volunteers were recognised on the night. Each year this organisation honours first and second generation Maltese people who give so much to their communities but ask for little in return. We know that the majority of Maltese families in New South Wales have chosen Western Sydney as their home. Every day we see the invaluable contribution that multiculturalism makes to Sydney and it was fantastic to see this contribution rewarded at the Quiet Achievers Awards ceremony.

Maltese people, particularly those who came to live in Australia after World War II, are never afraid of hard work. Alongside this resilient attitude to hard work the Maltese people have a proud history of volunteering. In 1798 unpaid civilians formed an army that was pivotal to escaping French colonialism in Malta. They were victorious but they have not been well remembered. Every culture in the world brings something different to Australia's multiculturalism for which we should be proud, but we should be proud particularly of all Maltese people in our communities. It has been said that volunteerism is the ultimate participation in democracy. With that in mind, each recipient of the Quiet Achievers Awards should be very proud.

The role of the Maltese Welfare Association will become increasingly important with an ageing population. I thank the association for the dedicated work it has done for the past 37 years, which has been invaluable for new migrants in a far away and foreign land. It is up to the grandchildren of those early generation migrants to volunteer to care for the elderly and to continue the great legacy of the association so they too can be known as quiet achievers.

### **RANDWICK LITERARY INSTITUTE**

**Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH** (Coogee) [6.03 p.m.]: I inform the House of developments related to the Randwick Literary Institute in my electorate of Coogee. The Randwick Literary Institute dates back to 1911 when public moneys were collected, the site on the corner of Market Street and Clovelly Road in Clovelly was bought, and in the following two years the Randwick Literary Institute was built. It has been used as a hub for the community for 101 years. Until 2002 it was administered under the now defunct Trustees of Schools of Art Enabling Act.

The last trustee found the job too onerous and following the retirement of Mr Norman Hoffman, the last administrator of the trust, the Randwick Literary Institute was sold back to the Crown for \$1 in exchange for perpetual protection under the Crown Lands Act. In recent weeks there has been some concern in the community that the Department of Lands, which has been the trust's administrator, was seeking to change the way in which the building was managed. It has caused a great deal of uncertainty and fears have arisen that the Randwick Literary Institute would be sold.

I was happy to get assurances from the Department of Lands and the Deputy Premier, the responsible Minister, that the building would not be sold. I do not believe it should ever be sold because it is an important



hub for the community. Each week approximately 2,000 users and 70 different groups make use of its facilities. Community facilities should be managed close to home, therefore, I suggested to the user groups and the Department of Lands that Randwick City Council, which has an enviable record for managing facilities such as this, might wish to take on administration of the trust. Although the building is safe it requires extensive renovations. Randwick City Council agreed it would take on the building if it was vested in the council. The Department of Lands and the Deputy Premier's office have agreed to this proposal.

I am happy to announce that as of next week Randwick City Council will be gazetted as the new trust administrator and further negotiations will be held for the Randwick Literary Institute to be dedicated to Randwick City Council. Marian McIntosh has been the onsite manager for the past several years and I am keen to ensure that she continues in the role as manager. Negotiations are continuing but I am hopeful that will come to pass. The success of the Randwick Literary Institute is by and large due to her efforts and she is much loved and widely respected in the community. The users of the Randwick Literary Institute can rest assured that while I am the member for Coogee the building will never be sold and it will continue to be a fantastic resource for many years in the future as it has been for the past 101 years.

### **HAWKESBURY ELECTORATE SCHOOLS**

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS** (Hawkesbury—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.08 p.m.]: I take this opportunity to advise the House of some of the remarkable schools in my electorate and the incredible achievements of some wonderfully talented young students who attend these schools. There are 36 schools in my electorate and I make every endeavour to attend as many school presentation days as possible at the end of each year. These are wonderful events and it is a great opportunity to see first-hand the excellent quality of education that is being provided by teachers at these schools.

I attended a total of 25 school presentations at the end of last year. I sincerely apologise to those which I could not attend. Each year I provide an Encouragement Award. I ask the teachers at each school to choose a student who, through the presentation of this award, may be inspired to work hard and achieve outcomes in an area in which he or she has a particular interest. Each of the schools in my electorate proudly presents the Encouragement Award. I strive to attend these events, which also gives me an opportunity to thank and commend our hardworking teachers, staff and parents of the various parents and citizens associations for the great work they do on behalf of our children and community.

On the evening of Monday 25 November, under the stewardship of the principal, Kim Chapman, Rouse Hill High School proudly boasted its very first year 12 graduates. It has been a great pleasure to watch this new high school grow from its formative years into what is now a bastion of educational excellence in my suburb. Hillside Public School was the next evening and Parents and Citizens Association president Andrew Dowd took great pleasure in congratulating the O'Farrell Government on its recent support of \$14,000 for new shade sails through the Community Building Partnership. Hawkesbury High School was the following night, where I was joined by my colleague Bart Bassett and relived again the memories of my past industrial arts teacher, Mr Ray Walton, who went on to become the very first principal at the school when it opened 31 years ago.

The presentations at Pitt Town Public School, under the guidance of principal Michael Miller, and Arndell College were held on the one night and the fact that they are within minutes travelling time of each other allowed me to attend both. My very dear friend Elva Miller, who taught my children some years ago at Annangrove Public School, has been a fixture and now a highly commended teacher at Arndell College for the past decade. Thursday 5 December commenced early at 9.30 a.m. at Ironbark Ridge Public School, under the very capable guidance of principal Anne Forbes. The audience was enthralled by the achievements of nine-year-old student Mikey Lee, who is the current national boys 50 metres swimming champion and who received the 2013 Sportsman of the Year award.

At both the school and zone swimming carnivals, Mikey broke all records in his age events. At the Sydney West Regional Swimming Championships, Mikey won the boys 10 years 50 metres freestyle in record time, and came first in the backstroke event and the individual medley. Mikey also placed in the butterfly and breaststroke events. At the State Swimming Championships, Mikey placed first in the boys 10 years 50 metres freestyle, making him the fastest 10-year-old swimmer in the State. Next was the national competition and Mikey's results at the Australian National Swimming Championships, held in Adelaide, were outstanding. He was first in the boys 10 years 50 metres freestyle in a time of 29.77 seconds—missing the Australian record by a mere 0.02 seconds, a record that has stood for 25 years. Mikey is now the fastest 10-year-old boy in Australia.

Sherwood Ridge Public School followed the next day at 11.30 a.m. and principal Tracey Anderson provided us with a lovely lunch prior to the presentations. I finished the evening at Glossodia Public School where proud principal Jo Dorahy and her dedicated staff continued to amaze us with the high level of dancing, artistic and musical ability of the students at the school. On Friday evening 6 December I finished the week attending a lovely event at Middle Dural Public School together with my colleague Matt Kean, the member for Hornsby, where long-time-dedicated teacher Anne Mills is now the very proud principal.

The new week commenced with Beaumont Hills Public School in the morning and Wisemans Ferry Public School in the evening. Both were very special events. It is one thing to attend the very new schools in my electorate with all the bells and whistles, but it is also lovely to attend Wisemans Ferry Public School where the presentation is held outside overlooking the majestic Hawkesbury River. On Tuesday 10 December I joined Jenni Walker, principal of Kellyville Public School, at 9.30 a.m. and then sped off to Rouse Hill Public School, which started at 11.45 a.m. Oakville Public School started at 5.30 p.m. that night and Garry Condon once again headed up a wonderful event at this lovely school. I then proceeded to Kellyville High School at 7.00 p.m.—a busy day with four school presentations but all very special occasions.

On Wednesday 11 December I took the early scenic trip to beautiful Comleroy Road Public School near Kurrajong. Our Lady of the Angels, Rouse Hill, was at 6.00 p.m., under the tutelage of principal Eva De Roca, followed by Our Lady of the Rosary, Kellyville, at 8.00 p.m. with principal John Spradbrow. Ebenezer Public School always starts at the crack of dawn and it was again a pleasure to attend this lovely rural school's morning presentation with principal Ros McKinnon and her dedicated team of teachers and staff. Ros retired this year and I wished her my very best after serving as principal at the school for a long time. Maraylya Public School was later that evening, with principal Stuart Gaffey presiding over the evening's events. Friday morning was Annangrove Public School, where my children used to attend. It is always lovely to return and to see that high-quality education is still a long-held tradition at that school under principal Paddy Rich.

The Glenorie Public School presentation was held later that evening led by its very dedicated principal Lynn Pearce, who is a former deputy principal of my old school, Rouse Hill Public School. Monday morning was another early scenic drive to Colo Heights. Colo Heights Public School held its presentation day in the midst of the blackened countryside that had experienced the worst bushfires in 20 years. The locals were nonetheless very upbeat, which is typical of this lovely rural area, especially under the guidance of principal Glenn Ellis, who is one of the most enthusiastic principals I have met and who dearly adores his tenure at the school. Marion College at Kenthurst is usually the last presentation for the year, and it was held later that evening—I have not missed that presentation for well over a decade and principal Lyn Bard would not have it any other way.

In conclusion, I adore every one of the 36 schools that I proudly represent in the electorate of Hawkesbury. They are all doing an incredible job for the students in my area. I proudly attend all the presentation days to take the opportunity to commend them for the educational excellence they provide the students of the Hawkesbury.

### **NORTHCONNEX MOTORWAY**

**Mr MATT KEAN** (Hornsby) [6.13 p.m.]: I am delighted to welcome the announcement that yet another missing link in Sydney's motorway network will be delivered by the O'Farrell Government. Last week I was delighted to take a call from the Premier, who informed me that the NorthConnex Motorway, that long talked about and long sought after connecting road, the missing link—the link between the M1, formerly the F3, and the M2—will finally be built. This will be a game changer in the lives of thousands of residents in my community who for so long have had to face the horrific congestion and unsafe conditions on Pennant Hills Road, including B-double trucks ripping up the road. Enough is enough.

This project has been talked about for years and, finally, a Liberal Government is delivering it for the people of my community—a community that for too long was forgotten by the Labor Government. Last week the New South Wales Government reached an agreement with Transurban and the Westlink M7 shareholders to deliver the NorthConnex Motorway, which will see twin nine-kilometre tunnels link the M1 and M2 under busy Pennant Hills Road. The deal was announced after months of hard work to clear design and finance hurdles, and after years of advocacy and lobbying by local residents who are sick of the unacceptable conditions on Pennant Hills Road. An expressway link from Sydney to Newcastle was first talked about in 1951 in the original county of Cumberland plan. Today, in 2014, that vision is finally becoming a reality.

When I stood for office I made a commitment to my community that I would do all within my power to fight for a solution to the problem of Pennant Hills Road. I am proud to have been an advocate for this great outcome and to have delivered on yet another commitment. I, along with my Federal colleagues Philip Ruddock, MP, the member for Berowra, and Paul Fletcher, MP, the member for Bradfield, formed the Missing Link Action Group. The aim of the group was to lobby the Government for a better deal for our community. This result will show the residents of Hornsby what a strong Liberal voice can achieve in a Liberal Government. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the remarkable leadership of the Premier and the Minister for Roads and Ports, the Hon. Duncan Gay, both of whom listened to representations about the needs of my community and acted. I am thrilled with this result and on behalf of my electorate I thank them for their efforts in making it possible.

NorthConnex is the third missing link in Sydney's motorway network to be delivered by the Liberal-Nationals Government. We are already fixing the M4 and M5 through WestConnex, and the M5 West Widening project is now half complete. NorthConnex will provide great relief to motorists and residents travelling through Sydney's north to the Central Coast or the Hunter region by taking 5,000 trucks a day off Pennant Hills Road. Up to 80,000 trucks use Pennant Hills Road every day of the week, so this proposal will provide great relief for those people who live in the immediate vicinity, particularly those motorists who travel along that road every day of the week.

Vehicles using the tunnel will bypass 21 sets of traffic lights and reduce their journey times by up to 15 minutes. We are building for the future by constructing the tunnel with the capability for three lanes of traffic each way and at a height of 5.3 metres to ensure that overheight trucks do not block the road network. As I said earlier, this project has been talked about for decades and it has now become a reality. A preferred scheme and a preferred tenderer have now been chosen. Following a competitive process, the preferred tender to design and construct the motorway is a joint venture between Lend Lease and Bouygues. The project will now go out for the next stage of community consultation and a formal environmental impact statement, which is expected to be on display for comment by the middle of the year. This is the final stage of the process before construction can be approved. Subject to planning approval, construction on the project could start within 12 months and see 2,000 new jobs created by completion in 2019.

In our first term of government the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals are getting on with the job of delivering the transport infrastructure that Sydney needs and deserves, having committed to the WestConnex and NorthConnex motorways, the North West Rail Link, the M5 West Widening project, and the CBD and South East Light Rail. As I said earlier, this announcement is a game changer for my community. It was first talked about in 1951 and now, in 2014, we are finally delivering on something that is critical to the amenity, character, safety and lifestyle of those living in northern Sydney, the Central Coast and the Hunter region. I again thank the Government for its efforts in making this possible and I am proud of my advocacy in achieving this outcome.

### **NATIONAL SERVICEMEN'S MEMORIAL**

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS** (Menai) [6.18 p.m.]: I commence my contribution by thanking the Minister for Citizenship and Communities and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, the Hon. Victor Dominello, for affording me the opportunity to represent him at the rededication of a plaque on the National Servicemen's Memorial at Holsworthy Barracks on Sunday 23 March. The National Servicemen's Association had been trying to organise this rededication ceremony for some years. Its attempts were made even more difficult by the current heightened security status within the barracks, but Mr Ron Brown, OAM, the State president of the association, persisted and his persistence was rewarded last Sunday. The ceremony took place on the grassed parade ground in front of the headquarters of the 5th Brigade.

The master of ceremonies was Lieutenant Colonel John Moore, retired, and the army chaplain for the occasion was Lieutenant Colonel Colin Aiken, OAM, RFD, who started the proceedings with the Prayer of Remembrance. Mr Darren Mitchell, Director of the Office of Veteran Affairs, read the prayer for the Australian Defence Forces and that was followed by the Prayer for Peace and the Nation, which was read by Major General Paul Irving, AM, RFD, retired. The remembrance address was delivered by Brigadier John Crozier, CSM, AM. Brigadier Crozier outlined the details and criteria used to select those who would become national servicemen or "nashos" as they were known.

National service commenced in support of the Korean War in 1951. All Australian males aged 18 had to register for 176 days training and two years in the Citizens Military Force. Later the obligation was 140 days

of training and three years of service in the Citizens Military Force. The regular military forces were kept as voluntary. In 1957 the system was changed to emphasise skill rather than numbers. The system was ended in 1959. In 1964 compulsory national service for 20-year-old males was introduced under the National Service Act 1964 to support the Army during the Vietnam War. The selection of conscripts was made by a lottery draw based on date of birth, and conscripts were obligated to give two years' continuous full-time service, followed by a further three years on the active reserve list. The full-time service requirement was reduced to 18 months in 1971. Conscripted ended in mid- to late December 1972. Approximately 63,735 national servicemen served in the military from 1964 to 1972, 19,450 of whom served in Vietnam, all with the Army.

At the conclusion of the remembrance address I had the privilege of addressing the parade and assembled crowd of approximately 200 people. This was followed by the rededication of the Holsworthy Memorial and the unveiling of the 1965-1972 National Servicemen's Plaque. I was ably assisted in the unveiling by Mr Ron Brown, OAM, State President of the National Servicemen's Association. I had the privilege and honour of laying the first wreath on the memorial followed by Mr Craig Kelly, MP, Federal member for Hughes. After wreaths were laid, Mr John Haines, AM, Metropolitan Vice President of the RSL then recited the Ode of Remembrance. At the conclusion of the ode, bugler Mr Pat Couch sounded the last post. The last post is always a moving part of military remembrance services for me. In the still of the morning in the centre of Holsworthy Barracks it was rather special and it is always a special place to be.

The minute's silence following the last post gave us time to reflect on the servicemen who had answered their country's call to serve. And serve they did, in Korea, Malaya, Borneo, New Guinea and Vietnam. To this day their camaraderie and mateship is apparent and it was on display for all to see on this rededication parade. The service was followed by a sausage sizzle hosted by the Australian Army Cadet Band that is stationed at Holsworthy Barracks. Light refreshments were also available. The sausage sizzle and refreshments were very well received by the assembled crowd. It was a fairly warm day. It allowed the group to mingle in the shade and to catch up with old friends. I am sure there were quite a few stories told and retold and, as with all good yarns, they tend to get more elaborate as time goes by. This group of nashos did seem to have its fair share of larrikins and characters. All in all, it was a brilliant day. I was honoured to have been invited and I was very pleased to represent the Minister on this important occasion. I hope that all of us acknowledge the importance of this new memorial at Holsworthy Barracks.

## PLANNING AND PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY** (Maroubra) [6.23 p.m.]: Today an article appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* penned by Chris Johnson entitled "Community deceived by tall storeys". The article relates to overdevelopment in Sydney, particularly in my electorate. Chris Johnson is the chief executive officer of the Urban Task Force. The slogan of the Urban Task Force shown on its website is "representing developers". I do not know Mr Johnson very well; incidentally, I have met him on only a couple of occasions at various functions, but I know that he is hugely respected as an architect. He worked for the New South Wales Government for many years and is a man of great repute, both nationally and internationally, and I respect him highly in that regard. However, I take exception to some of his comments in this article. He states:

A NEW sport has evolved in Sydney, with opposition politicians trying to create the most draconian images of planning proposals to house Sydney's growing population.

No, Mr Johnson, it is a very old sport. It is not a new sport, and he knows it. The member for Heffron was also criticised in this article. Our comments about proposed overdevelopment in our area are entirely justified. The people in our region are very reasonable. We have the busiest port in Australia and Australia's busiest airport is on our doorstep. We have a great many other things that would drive other residents mad, but it is such a great place to live that we bear with them and they do not bother us. We do not mind reasonable development. The residents have seen the development of Kingsford and Maroubra Junction to accommodate 36-metre and 24-metre buildings over the years. Prince Henry Hospital and the University of New South Wales land at Little Bay have also been developed.

I remind Mr Johnson that I was a councillor for 13 years on Randwick City Council and worked cooperatively with many planning Ministers who successfully sought to gain council's approval and acquiescence to increasing the density. I also remind Mr Johnson that the member for Heffron was the mayor of the City of Botany Bay for almost three decades and transformed it, uplifting that area from a residential backwater to one of the best places to live in Sydney. However, what we demand from governments, whether they are Labor or Liberal, is genuine consultation. Unfortunately, there has been no consultation about urban activation precincts.

In May 2012 I met with very senior officers of the Department of Planning and Infrastructure and the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure. I do not beat up on public servants in this place, so I will not name them. However, they would not or could not tell me how many buildings were planned for our area. They could not tell me the projected population either. I believed they knew that then and they know that now, but they still will not say. They said that the maximum building limit would be about six storeys but 20 storeys appeared. The area that had been designated as an urban activation precinct, which was not the subject of consultation with residents, grew on three separate occasions—again without consultation. When consultation did occur, it did not involve seeking the views of residents. It was simply a cover for the delivery of a fait accompli. The officials from the Department of Planning and Infrastructure walked into selected meetings and distributed maps that were not to be disseminated. Residents were shocked to find 20-storey buildings—not many of them, granted—in the electorates of Maroubra, Heffron and Coogee.

I have offered on three occasions to meet with the Minister and senior officials of the Department of Planning and Infrastructure and to show them the areas in my electorate that can accommodate growth. Some Housing NSW buildings there are 70 years old and need to be replaced. I have offered three times to cooperate with the Minister and his officials to achieve a good outcome, but I have not been invited to sit down with them. Mr Johnson and others need to be reminded that we do not mind some development, but we do not want the mickey taken out of us. Mr Johnson works for the Urban Task Force, which represents developers. I remind him, the Minister and everybody else that I represent the people of Maroubra, and I make no apology for that. All they want is genuine consultation and not to be treated like mugs.

### INNER WEST LIGHT RAIL EXTENSION

**Mr JAMIE PARKER** (Balmain) [6.28 p.m.]: I acknowledge and join in the celebration of the opening of the new light rail to Dulwich Hill. I was at Dulwich Hill station at 6.00 a.m. for the inaugural light rail trip from Dulwich Hill to Central. It was wonderful to join local residents, enthusiasts of light rail and students. It was the culmination of a very long campaign that has been waged in my community and throughout Sydney to see light rail extended, and it is a very successful start to that process.

As members would be aware, I am a strong advocate for light rail. Light rail has the potential to make a real difference to transport in Sydney. As members may know, I am a big supporter of the extension of the light rail along Parramatta Road and into Balmain. That is part of a wider program of investing in public transport that is needed, including another crossing of Sydney Harbour and rural and regional rail. The Parramatta light rail project, proposed by the local council and others, is a very worthy initiative. One of the great challenges facing light rail use, and I have raised it before in this place, is the need to enlarge the School Student Transport Scheme to provide more students with travel concessions.

Trinity Grammar School is one of the stops on the light rail route, and an announcement is made on board the light rail for that stop. There are many schools along that route. When speaking to some students today, they told me about living in Dulwich Hill and travelling to Leichhardt. Those students were from Sydney Secondary College Leichhardt Campus and later in their schooling they will attend the senior campus at Glebe. It would be fantastic if the School Student Transport Scheme could be extended to light rail. I note that the Minister for Transport is present in the Chamber. I know that the department is looking at this issue. I would encourage the Minister to look positively upon this because it will make a difference to the lives of so many of these young people.

One of the young boys I was talking to said that it takes him over an hour to get to school. It would be so much quicker on the tram and a much better experience for not only that young person but also many others. It is also important to look at other proposals in the local community. I have raised in this place before the issue of the light rail extension to Balmain, to which there has been some opposition. The Mayor of Leichhardt Municipal Council, Darcy Byrne, a former staffer to Anthony Albanese, without engaging or consulting with the community in any way, recently put forward a motion to Leichhardt council—a motion that was not on the business paper but rather a general document about public transport and transport plans for the future—opposing the extension of light rail to Balmain. He is opposed to it for a whole range of utterly spurious reasons.

An anti-public transport and anti-community campaign is being run, with claims that the park will be lost and that light rail will be expensive. This is reminiscent of the bad old days of New South Wales Labor. Let us have a look at the evidence and do some study and investigation. Let us look at the costs and the benefits of this project before we attack it and just say no. It is easy to say no; it is harder to work with

members of the community, consult them and get projects up and running. In fact, a plan to extend light rail to White Bay, including a short tunnel to Gladstone Park, has been developed by the community—in particular EcoTransit Sydney, an apolitical group. I support this plan, and I suggest that the Government take a look at it.

I have a petition with over 10,000 signatures supporting the Parramatta and Balmain light rail extension. I believe it is important that we consider this proposal. It would be a game changer for local businesses and commuters, improve safety at schools and reduce traffic congestion in a landlocked peninsula. It could stop in front of the hospital, two schools and in the heart of Balmain. The reservoir underneath Gladstone Park in Balmain already has an excavation point that would allow for ingress and egress to that site. There is no doubt that the project would require vision—something often lacking in this place. We need to look at integrating light rail down Parramatta Road, connecting to Taverners Hill and creating an inner west loop. We can then look at the Parramatta option, drawing it closer to Parramatta Road and extending it throughout Sydney.

Investment is needed in heavy rail and other rail projects. We can take this opportunity—which is a breath of fresh air—and examine these proposals. I call on Leichhardt Municipal Council to at least support an investigation of these issues so that they can be thoroughly discussed. These projects would be of benefit not only to the local community but also to the environment. They would reduce traffic, improve connectivity and safety and support our local small businesses—many of whom would receive a real boost from having light rail on their doorstep in Balmain. It would be a big change for a community that is landlocked and currently full of buses. We need to get these innovative projects happening.

**Private members' statements concluded.**

**COMMUNITY RECOGNITION STATEMENTS**

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**AUSTRALIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT MARIANNE SALIBA**

**Ms ANNA WATSON** (Shellharbour) [6.33 p.m.]: This House recognises the wonderful work of the Mayor of Shellharbour City Council, Marianne Saliba, on being elected as Vice President of the Australian Local Government Women's Association. I congratulate Marianne Saliba on this wonderful achievement.

**NATIONAL YOUTH WEEK WOLLONDILLY**

**Mr JAI ROWELL** (Wollondilly) [6.34 p.m.]: I speak on the fantastic activities available to youth in Wollondilly during the running of National Youth Week from 4 to 13 April. Activities include: film classes in Picton Botanic Gardens, Easter craft parties at Picton Library, creative arts workshops at Mowbray Park Farm, skateboarding competitions and DJ workshops at Warragamba, Australian Football League clinics run by the Greater Western Sydney Giants at Bargo Sportsground, Indigenous mural art projects at Wollondilly Community Nursery and the youth trailer including inflatable bowling at Bargo Skate Park. These represent just a few of the activities available to young people across Wollondilly during National Youth Week. I thank the Minister for Citizenship and Communities and Wollondilly Shire Council for the fantastic work they are doing in this regard.

**PENRITH CITY FESTIVAL**

**Mr BART BASSETT** (Londonderry) [6.35 p.m.]: Penrith City Festival was a wonderful opportunity for me and some of my parliamentary colleagues to engage with the community in a casual and fun setting last Saturday 22 March. Congratulations to Penrith CBD Corporation for organising and operating another successful festival. The festival has grown during the past few years and is highly anticipated in the community. Allow me to share with the House a few statistics about Penrith City Festival. About 20,000 people attended and there were 115 stallholders and two stages of non-stop entertainment.

Six local schools took part, 11 dance and singing schools participated and 34 local businesses were involved in the street parade, including more than 100 nashos and seven vintage fire trucks from the Museum of Fire. I was pleased to share a street stall with fellow Liberals member for Penrith, Stuart Ayres, and Federal member for Lindsay, Fiona Scott. We rode on the back of a ute during the parade and were well received.

### EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHING SCHOLARSHIPS

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL** (Northern Tablelands) [6.36 p.m.]: I congratulate six recipients of the Early Childhood Teaching Scholarships from across the Northern Tablelands. They are: Jennifer Jones from Tenterfield; Debbie Williamson from Walcha; Georgina Krauss from Ashford; Carly Ann Fitzgerald from Tenterfield; Emma Wauch from Walcha; and Hiroko Scott from Armidale. The scholarships are supporting local diploma-qualified early childhood educators to become qualified early childhood teachers. The six recipients from across the Northern Tablelands will receive up to \$10,000 each to support their study costs. These students have demonstrated a dedication and aptitude for early childhood education and have chosen to obtain higher qualifications. I congratulate all six recipients and wish them all the very best in their future careers.

### SHELLHARBOUR SHARKS FOOTBALL CLUB

**Ms ANNA WATSON** (Shellharbour) [6.36 p.m.]: This House recognises the Shellharbour Sharks Football Club, their volunteers and committee for the tremendous work they do for the community of Shellharbour City and for promoting a healthy lifestyle and a great sense of camaraderie.

### BLAKE BELL, STATE BASEBALL PLAYER

**Mr JAI ROWELL** (Wollondilly) [6.37 p.m.]: I congratulate Wollondilly resident Blake Bell on his inclusion in the Australian under 17s softball team. Blake was named player of the series at the recent softball Junior National Championships. He led New South Wales to a resounding 5-3 win over Queensland. Off loaded bases in the final, Blake hit two home runs allowing the four and three players respectively to reach home base. As well as an outstanding batter, Blake is a starting pitcher, an amazing effort even for those at the professional level. I wish Blake and the entire Australian team all the best in the upcoming International Challenge Series.

### CRONULLA ESPLANADE AND SEAWALL

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN** (Cronulla—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.37 p.m.]: I congratulate Sutherland Shire Council on the successful completion of the \$4 million upgrade of Cronulla Esplanade and seawall. I recently officially opened this project with Sutherland Shire Council Mayor Steve Simpson. The council received a coastal management grant of \$500,000 and Metropolitan Greenspace Program funding of \$462,000 from the New South Wales Government. In addition, the council borrowed \$2.3 million for the project, assisted by the State Government's interest rate subsidy under the Local Infrastructure Renewal Scheme.

The upgrade included: construction of new bench seating incorporated into a concrete bleacher seawall; construction of stairs with handrails to enable safe access to the beach; construction of a ramp to allow safe access to the beach for surf craft and the mobility impaired; construction of a timber deck to reflect the footprint of the previous Ladies Dressing Pavilion; construction of timber seating along the shorefront; demolition and upgrade of the existing pavement; and installation of lighting, showers, seating, bike racks, bins, bollards and interpretive signage.

### ST MARYS LEAGUES CLUB

**Mr BART BASSETT** (Londonderry) [6.38 p.m.]: I was pleased to attend the season launch dinner at St Marys Leagues Club with my colleague the member for Mulgoa, Tanya Davies, and Federal member for Lindsay, Fiona Scott, on Saturday 22 March. The club has a long history of producing players for first grade and is classed as one of the top 20 in New South Wales. Club President Warren Smith and Chief Executive Officer Rod Desborough can rightly be very proud of this community icon. One important reason for the season launch is to thank and acknowledge the club team and corporate sponsors for their support.

Season launch is also a chance for the club to thank the St Marys Junior Rugby League committee, trainers and officials from the club's 45 sides. The night was marked also by the appointment of new board member Robert Gorst, who replaced Gary Sullivan after he resigned in February when he and his family moved from the area. Gary has been associated with the club since 1969 and a board member since 1995. He was vice-president from 2003 to 2013 and was awarded life membership in 2000. During his time with the club, Gary was instrumental in many initiatives, including a campaign to attract patrons back to the club and producing a book *Never a Backward Step: The story of St Marys Leagues Club*. I wish Gary all the very best in his new community and best wishes for the coming St Marys Leagues Club season.

**DETECTIVE SERGEANT CHRISTIE HOULDIN**

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS** (Menai) [6.39 p.m.]: I congratulate Detective Sergeant Christie Houldin on receiving the NSW Police South West Metropolitan Region Award for her work on a Liverpool historical sexual assault that occurred in the 1970s. As part of her investigation, Detective Sergeant Houldin researched and tracked evidence and information to support the victim's statement and version of events. This case took almost 18 months to gather enough information and evidence to warrant an arrest and lay charges. Detective Sergeant Houldin said that the work was satisfying not only for her but also for the victim because, unfortunately, no matter how long ago a crime was committed a victim never stops being a victim.

In 2012 I was pleased to see Detective Sergeant Houldin—then detective senior constable—honoured at the Police Officer of the Year awards in Liverpool for her work on Strike Force Woodville, which was an investigation into claims of child prostitution. The award was given for showing compassion for the victims and a determination to catch those who were responsible. I again congratulate Detective Sergeant Houldin on her award and thank our police for all they do to protect our community.

**UNITED SERVICES UNION**

**Ms ANNA WATSON** (Shellharbour) [6.40 p.m.]: I congratulate the fantastic work of the United Services Union and particularly the General Secretary, Mr Graeme Kelly, on the hard work they do to advocate for workers across New South Wales in the local government sector. They secure fair wages and good conditions of employment for workers and their families.

**TINGHA TIGERS RUGBY LEAGUE CLUB**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL** (Northern Tablelands) [6.41 p.m.]: It has been 20 years since the Tingha Tigers Rugby League Club had a junior team in its ranks but thanks to the efforts of Sharon Gates and Robyn Dixon and a NSW Sport and Recreation grant more than 100 Tingha youngsters are now playing in the region's Saturday morning minor league competition. The club received a \$2,000 grant from the New South Wales Government Sport and Recreation's Participation and Facility Program to assist with the purchase of uniforms and training for coaches.

I had the pleasure of seeing Tingha juniors run around the paddock in Inverell last weekend and enjoyed the chance to check out their new uniforms and watch their game. What a great victory they had. I was pleased to be able to support the Tingha Tigers with their funding application. I am delighted to see funding go to such a worthy recipient and I wish the Tingha Tigers, their coaches, their parents and supporters all the very best this season. Go the Tigers.

**WOLLONDILLY ANGLICAN COLLEGE HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE ACHIEVEMENTS**

**Mr JAI ROWELL** (Wollondilly) [6.42 p.m.]: I congratulate the year 12 class of 2013 from Wollondilly Anglican College on its outstanding results in the Higher School Certificate. The college has once again been ranked as one of only five secondary schools from the Wollondilly shire and surrounding districts in the top 200 schools list in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory. Alyssa Girvan, with an Australian tertiary admission rank of 97.15, topped the State in year 10 geography and followed her academic results through to the Higher School Certificate with band sixes in five of her subjects—Ancient History, Biology, Advanced English, Extension History and Modern History—in a year where accolades were spread across a broad range of subject options. I mention also Eleanor Sullivan, who had an Australian tertiary admission rank of 94.20. Besides Alyssa Girvan and Eleanor Sullivan, I congratulate Joshua Hornery, Cameron Hunt and Cameron Wright. We have the best and brightest in the Wollondilly area.

**LACHLAN CAMPBELL, CHARITY FUNDRAISER**

**Mr ANDREW GEE** (Orange) [6.43 p.m.]: I draw the attention of the House to 16-year-old Lachlan Campbell from Manildra who was recently recognised for his exceptional work in raising prostate cancer awareness by the New South Wales Governor during a reception at Government House. For the past 10 years Lachlan's grandfather, Ian, has been living with prostate cancer and two years ago he also lost his other grandfather, Thomas, to the cancer.

Lachlan wanted to raise awareness and money to prevent other families suffering in a similar way. He set about raising \$1,000. With help from his family and the local community so far he has far raised \$8,000 for



the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia. Lachlan holds a black belt in karate and has aspirations to be an orthopaedic surgeon, with a focus on biomedical engineering. I congratulate Lachlan on this significant achievement.

### **PROJECT YOUTH KICK START PROGRAM**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN** (Cronulla—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.43 p.m.]: I congratulate Project Youth on its recent receipt of a \$10,000 grant under the New South Wales Government's Sport and Recreation Participation and Facility Program. The grant was for the Kick Start Program. The program works with at risk young people in the Sutherland shire. The program involves picking young people up between 6 a.m. and 7 a.m. each Wednesday of the school term. Fitness is held between 7.00 a.m. and 8.00 a.m., facilitated by a qualified fitness instructor, followed by a healthy breakfast between 8.00 a.m. and 8.30 a.m. Once breakfast is completed the students are driven to school. The program also utilises volunteers and the aim is to have one adult mentor for each young person who participates in the program.

### **DAMIAN KING, JOG OUT OF FOG**

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS** (Menai) [6.44 p.m.]: Today I speak about the efforts of Damian King who works at Moorebank in the Menai electorate. Mr King completed a 1,000-plus kilometre run from Brisbane to Sydney to raise money to help people in Cambodia in need of eye surgery. Mr King toughed the elements, painful blisters, a number of pairs of shoes and roads shared with semitrailers to successfully arrive in Sydney after 17 gruelling days. Mr King, through his vision for Jog Out of Fog, has raised over \$60,000 for Cambodia Vision, which is an incredible feat. What an inspiring man and an incredible journey.

Mr King was inspired by his friend, Will Robertson, with whom he has been great mates for almost 40 years. Mr Robertson travelled to Cambodia last year and worked with a group of Australian eye doctors. His story of both the elation and sadness he experienced whilst working with the underprivileged was impossible to ignore and left Mr King asking what he could do to help. Jog Out of Fog was conceived from the white milky fog patients see after surgery. The run was an even more remarkable feat when one realises that when Mr King was younger he had a problem with the alignment of his legs. I congratulate and thank him.

### **JAMIE NEWMAN, VOCATIONAL EXCELLENCE AWARD**

**Mr ANDREW GEE** (Orange) [6.45 p.m.]: I draw the attention of members to Orange Aboriginal Medical Service Chief Executive Officer, Jamie Newman, who received a Vocational Excellence Award at last Saturday's Rotary District Conference. Jamie joined just nine past recipients of the awards presented by Rotary District 9700 for the past four years. They recognise outstanding achievements in an individual's vocation that have made a difference at local, national or global level. Jamie was recognised for work in Aboriginal health in the local community that he has been undertaking since 1998. I congratulate Jamie Newman.

### **BARRACK POINT AND SHELLHARBOUR SURF LIFE SAVING CLUBS**

**Ms ANNA WATSON** (Shellharbour) [6.46 p.m.]: I congratulate the Barrack Point Surf Life Saving Club and the Shellharbour Surf Life Saving Club on the fantastic job they do in providing a valuable service to our communities in keeping our beaches safe. They are truly the backbone of communities and they deserve our appreciation. I am sure that tourists appreciate their work also. They risk their lives to protect ours and I cannot sing their praises enough. Again I congratulate all surf clubs in my electorate on the wonderful job they do.

### **IKEA MARSDEN PARK**

**Mr BART BASSETT** (Londonderry) [6.47 p.m.]: The new IKEA store being built in the Marsden Business Park on Richmond Road near the entrance to Stonecutters Ridge, Marsden Park, will be a huge boost to north-west Sydney. I was pleased to attend the first sod turning at the site with Premier Barry O'Farrell, Sydney Business Park's Owen Walsh and the member for Riverstone, Kevin Conolly, on Thursday 13 March. The home furnishing giant's new store will be its third in Sydney. It will be accompanied by a Bunnings warehouse and a Costco directly next door shortly.

The new store is a reflection of the New South Wales Government's release of new residential and industrial land near Schofields, Marsden Park and Box Hill. Western Sydney residents also will benefit from new infrastructure that such development attracts to the region because developers of the industrial park are

contributing funds to the upgrade of Richmond Road from the M7 to the new development to ease traffic congestion and boost infrastructure. Importantly, they are providing jobs during construction and post-construction jobs in retail.

#### **DYLAN JOBSON, STATE RUGBY LEAGUE AWARD**

**Mr MATT KEAN** (Hornsby) [6.48 p.m.]: I congratulate the incredible sporting achievements of 21-year-old Dylan Jobson of Westleigh. Dylan has cerebral palsy and loves playing rugby league. Dylan won the New South Wales physical disability player of the season in 2013. He has been playing rugby league for three years in a New South Wales physical disability competition. He has previously played taekwondo and soccer but just has so much fun playing rugby league. I congratulate Dylan and encourage him to continue being so passionate about the sports that he loves. He is doing us all proud and he represents what is best in our community.

#### **DECLAN DRAKE, YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBER**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL** (Northern Tablelands) [6.49 p.m.]: I congratulate Inverell High School year 10 student Declan Drake on being selected as a member of the 2014 New South Wales Youth Advisory Council, the State's chief youth advisory body. Declan is one of 12 young people from across the State chosen to serve on this council. He was selected because of his outstanding work ethic, community engagement and drive to make a difference. Declan is a very impressive young man who despite his youth already has an outstanding record of achievement and service to his name. I wish Declan all the best and congratulate him on this significant role.

#### **TRIBUTE TO DR JOHN LAMBERT**

**Mr ANDREW GEE** (Orange) [6.49 p.m.]: Tonight I pay tribute to Dr John Lambert, an intensivist with Orange Health Service. Dr Lambert has been instrumental in making our 24-hour road and helicopter retrieval service a reality. That service will be launched tomorrow and we simply could not have done it without Dr Lambert's expertise and help. We travelled to Rylestone to make a presentation to the Local Health District Board and he was helpful in getting our submissions together for the review. I pay tribute to Dr John Lambert, a man I am proud to call my friend.

#### **TRIBUTE TO JOHN SAUNDERSON**

**Mr JAI ROWELL** (Wollondilly) [6.50 p.m.]: Thirlmere Public School community is mourning the passing of John Saunderson, assistant principal at the school from 1991 to 2005. Mr Saunderson died on Sunday 9 March following a long battle with cancer. He is remembered as a fabulous educator who was instrumental in implementing performing arts and sport at the school. He was diagnosed with bowel cancer in 2005 and, more recently, tumours. Before his time at Thirlmere, Mr Saunderson held positions in schools including Busby West, Camden, Glenfield Park, Guise, Leppington and Leumeah. He will be sorely missed. Thirlmere will suffer for his passing.

#### **ASQUITH BOYS HIGH SCHOOL WORLD'S GREATEST SHAVE**

**Mr MATT KEAN** (Hornsby) [6.51 p.m.]: I acknowledge year 8 student, Aaron Parise, of Asquith Boys High School for rallying his year adviser and a group of teachers from Asquith Boys to shave their hair with him to raise funds for the Leukaemia Foundation. Aaron, and the daring teachers from Asquith Boys, Ms Kelly, Mr Josephs, Mr Broome and Mr Lappas, shaved their hair last Monday for the World's Greatest Shave. I will support their efforts financially as I am worried that if I shave off my hair it will not grow back. I congratulate Aaron and encourage him to continue rallying others together for good causes throughout his life, as individuals make a difference. One in three people in our community will be affected by this terrible disease. Every dollar we raise takes us a step closer to defeating this insidious disease. The efforts of people such as Aaron and his friends at Asquith Boys are what will make a difference in overcoming this disease.

#### **CRONULLA SUTHERLAND JUNIOR RUGBY LEAGUE ASSOCIATION**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN** (Cronulla—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.52 p.m.]: I congratulate Cronulla Sutherland Junior Rugby League Association on its receipt of \$10,000 through the Sport and Recreation

Participation and Facility Grant Program. The grant, which was for the association's grassroots rugby league training and education program, aims to provide an opportunity for interested local Indigenous youth to gain rugby league level one coaching, LeagueSafe or sports trainer education and accreditation.

#### **ARMIDALE PRIMARY SCHOOL STATE SPORTING REPRESENTATIVES**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL** (Northern Tablelands) [6.53 p.m.]: Two outstanding Armidale primary school athletes have had their talents and success acknowledged with New South Wales State Representative Certificates. Last year Mangarchot Maluach, school captain and year 6 student at Armidale City Public School was selected for the second time as a member of the National Boys Basketball Team. It was also the second year in a row he was in the team that won the State boys knockout championship. Last November Milly Mazie, an 11-year-old year 6 student at St Mary's Catholic Primary School competed at the Australian School Sport Championships in track and field in Brisbane, representing New South Wales in the 200 metre athletes with a disability. At the State championships, Milly competed in the 100 metre and 200 metre sprints and qualified to go through on her time to the 200-metre national championships. I congratulate both students on their achievements and on receiving their State representative certificates.

#### **WIDEVIEW PUBLIC SCHOOL WORLD'S GREATEST SHAVE**

**Mr MATT KEAN** (Hornsby) [6.54 p.m.]: I congratulate 10-year-old Prudence Silver, who bravely shaved off her long locks to support classmate Manning Askew, also 10, who was diagnosed with an extremely rare sarcoma located in his chest wall. Prudence and 12 other Wideview Public School students shaved or coloured their hair and raised more than \$5,000 for the Leukaemia Foundation. I congratulate Prudence and the children who joined her to raise these much-needed funds. I am sure Prudence will continue to be a thoughtful, community-minded person as she progresses through life. Every dollar we raise takes us a step closer to defeating cancer, which is an insidious disease. I thank the team at Wideview Public School for the efforts and their commitment to helping find a cure for this horrible disease. I pass on my best wishes to the Askew family and in particular Manning, who is confronting a difficult battle. We are all thinking of him and wish him all the best as he undergoes treatment.

#### **GEORGIA DORE, OPEN WATER SWIMMER**

**Mr JAI ROWELL** (Wollondilly) [6.55 p.m.]: After months of preparation 15-year-old Georgia Dore recently threw herself in at the deep end and took part in her first ocean swim. While the one-kilometre swim would be hard for most people, the task presented an even greater challenge for Georgia. At eight months old she was diagnosed with neuroblastoma, a type of adrenal cancer. The treatment had a number of side effects, including hearing impairment, and at 13 Georgia was diagnosed with epilepsy. As a member of the Buxton Rainbow Club, which is one of 14 clubs in New South Wales that provides lessons for children with disability, completing Murray Rose's Malabar Magic Ocean Swim was never going to be easy.

Georgia's mum was recently quoted in the paper as saying that it was an emotional moment as competitors and spectators cheered Georgia to the finish line. She went on to say, "The support she had behind her was unbelievable; it was like the swim was about her and not the other 1,000-odd swimmers there." Georgia won the Highest Individual Fund Raiser award for raising more than \$3,600, the Junior Disability category and the Murray Rose Perpetual Trophy.

**Community recognition statements concluded.**

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 6.56 p.m. until  
Tuesday 6 May 2014 at 12 noon.**

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