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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday 26 August 2015

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

The Speaker read the Prayer and acknowledgement of country.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Notices of Motions

General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) given.

Pursuant to sessional order Government business proceeded with.

IMPOUNDING AMENDMENT (UNATTENDED BOAT TRAILERS) BILL 2015

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 12 August 2015.

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) [10.11 a.m.]: I speak in debate on the Impounding Amendment (Unattended Boat Trailers) Bill 2015. I do not own a boat—I wish I did—but I know many people who do. For example, during the summer I spend a lot of time with a good family friend who owns a boat. On the whole, boat owners are normal people. They do not all own big boats. Mostly they have small boats that are their pride and joy and that give them an opportunity to enjoy the beautiful waterways of this State. Boat owners are responsible people who work hard. They love their fishing and often talk about it. They like to take their kids out for a day of water skiing or tubing—my favourite—or just enjoying the beautiful outdoors. It is part of Australian life.

The overwhelming majority of boat owners are not wealthy people with staff who live on board or the money to moor their boats at expensive marinas. Boating is their leisure activity and in most cases their boats are relatively small. Considering that there are approximately 204,000 registered trailers in New South Wales, this is a boating State—we can see that by the number of boats out on the waterways on a Sunday afternoon. I agree that we need to find a place for boat trailers, but let us also consider some things not referred to in this amendment bill, including regular trailers, advertising trailers, caravans and camper trailers. Driving to work this morning, for instance, I saw a heap of advertising trailers at Frederick Street, Ashfield, that have been there for a long time. If we are talking about ways to increase parking for cars the list of trailers that cause a problem goes on and on.

In high density areas parking is at a premium. I understand the need to find a solution to the so-called parking block. The challenge I put forward is to think outside the box rather than react in the knee-jerk fashion that is evident in this bill. Questions that I would expect my constituents—or anyone for that matter—to ask are along these lines: Would not simply moving my boat across the road after three months meet the requirement and avoid impoundment? What about other forms of trailers such as advertising trailers that sit somewhere for extended periods? Will there be any form of subsidy to assist with mooring or storage, given I cannot afford the relatively high rates? They might also ask: How far will the \$5 million on offer spread across the State? Who will enforce the measures? What is the ultimate objective? If we are looking to remove trailers and boats because it is such an urgent problem, why are we waiting three months to issue a warning? Sadly, it seems that this bill is an example of smoke and

mirrors. It was probably designed to enable the Minister to say, "We are cracking down." However, there are so many holes in the bill it could effectively double up as a colander.

Mr Mark Coure: I thought it was funny.

Mr JIHAD DIB: Thank you. It was a dad joke gone wrong. There are obviously storage facilities available to impound boats. Why do we not, in the spirit of doing something for the people, open those facilities for low-cost storage instead of using them as a place for punishment? I pose the question: Why has the Sydney Harbour Boat Storage Strategy special report been ignored? We have departments to specifically develop effective policy but it seems in this case the Minister has taken an "I know best" approach and ignored departmental advice so he can say, "I'm cracking down and addressing the problem", or, to quote one of his Federal contemporaries, "I'm a fixer." What he really needs to say is, "I know there's a problem but I can't be bothered putting too much effort or money into the solution. Yes, there is departmental advice but what would they know?"

I am referring to the 17-page Sydney Harbour Boat Storage Strategy. It is a good read that contains a detailed report and an example of what can happen when the experts are given an opportunity to contribute. The strategy was released in August 2013 but looks forward to 2021. It acknowledges that the State and especially Sydney Harbour has a "boat storage challenge". As a former teacher, I know that is a euphemism for being desperately up the creek. The document also acknowledges that with 17,400 smaller recreational vessels and only 9,850 storage spaces it is apparent that the largest method of boat storage must be on trailers. But the paragraph about trailer storage does not talk about fining people or impounding their treasured possessions; it recommends options to help fix the issues.

Solutions are what we need. The point of having a strategy plan is to guide action over the long term. In that way we will not be distracted by knee-jerk reactions such as the one being pushed through in this bill because it sounds good in a five-second audio grab. We have a responsibility always to look at the big picture and enable solutions to all things great and small. In respective circumstances what may seem insignificant to some is the most valued treasure to others. The Government's Sydney Harbour Boat Storage Strategy raises the obvious need for other types of dry storage and provides examples. It reads.

... other types of dry-storage are available in regional areas of NSW, other states and overseas including dedicated trailer boat parks and hardstand facilities. An example of a dedicated hardstand area is found at Oyster Cove (Port Stephens) where storage for up to 70 vessels is provided on industrial zoned ... More recently, in the United States for example, remote dry storage (15-30 minutes from the waterways) facilities have emerged.

...

It is important for Government and industry to work together to ensure efficient outcomes for the boating community and to minimise the impact of any negative externalities on the general public—for example, from the increased incidence of boat trailer parking on residential streets.

It is not me saying that; it comes straight from the Government's department. It is sensible, highlights the problem and offers a solution. Sadly, it seems the advice has been ignored and the Minister has created a new "solution" by effectively saying, "Yes, let's impound. Let's be lazy and focus just on boats and ignore other trailers that create the same problem. Let's also leave enough holes in the legislation so it can be manipulated quite easily." The Sydney Harbour Boat Storage Strategy offers good ideas and I commend it to fellow members of this place, especially the Minister. I urge the Minister to follow its advice and find a solution. We acknowledge that there is a problem, but we also see the bill as it currently stands as vague, limited in creativity and very much in a tick-a-box category. I constantly hear members opposite say that this Government looks to improve people's lives. We do not improve people's lives through lazy and sloppy legislation. We must do it by listening to people and delivering services that are fair, well thought out and accessible to all.

Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH (Coogee) [10.18 a.m.]: I am pleased to support the Impounding Amendment (Unattended Boat Trailers) Bill 2015, which will improve the management of boat trailer parking on roads in this State. The bill is one of a number of initiatives that the Government intends to implement to assist in the management of boat trailer parking. Boat ownership in New South Wales is steadily increasing and is predicted to continue to increase over the next 10 years. Boat trailers are the most common method of boat storage. That highlights the need for a range of suitable boat storage options, particularly off-street options. Under the roads Minister, Duncan Gay, the Government has announced the new boating infrastructure program called NSW Boating Now, which replaces the successful Better Boating Program. Some \$70 million is being made available over the next five years to work with local councils and other partners in developing priority boating infrastructure projects across the State.

About \$35 million has already been allocated towards the delivery of 192 regional boating priority projects, to be delivered by the end of 2017. I mentioned working with local councils and other partners. This morning I was accompanied by the most venerable and honourable Minister for Local Government to the wonderful undulating hills by the sea in the Coogee electorate. Prior to inspecting the coastal walkway, together with the mayors of Randwick and Waverley we enjoyed a breakfast of toast, which was made from wheat harvested from the organic farmlands west of the divide and eggs laid by self-actualised chickens roaming free. This is the image we have in Coogee.

Mr Michael Johnsen: Hold on, we need the background music.

Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH: These are important things. But the scar we saw as we drove through the wonderfully tended streets of my electorate was boat trailer after boat trailer, which never move.

Mr Jihad Dib: What have you got against boats?

Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH: I note that the member for Lakemba does not see this as an issue. Lakemba is probably not famous for its beaches, but if the member visited coastal areas he would see how much of an issue it is for residents, who with great frustration must put up with trailers that sit there year upon year and never get moved. Boating is an expensive undertaking. A number of years ago I had a boat that we moored in the Hawkesbury, which was quite affordable.

Mr Mark Coure: How long ago was that?

Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH: That was 15 years ago. So I understand the expense of boating and that people want to find the cheapest way both to have access to their boat for the weekends and to store it. One issue I experienced when I was a councillor on Randwick council—and it continues to frustrate me as the local member—is that when we wanted to re-sheet the streets in the electorate we had to work around the boats. So that part of the road did not get upgraded like the rest of the pavement. That is a great shame because it leaves that part of the pavement vulnerable. That should not happen; we should ensure that these boats are being moved around.

Issues raised about this bill in the other place should be considered, and I welcome hearing the take of members opposite on this. But for them to believe that a problem does not exist, particularly in places such as the Coogee electorate, they are dreaming. As I said, the Government wants to hear about ideas and opportunities for establishing new boat trailer storage facilities using the funding assistance I outlined earlier. Further information will be available shortly through Transport for NSW. Transport for NSW also released 11 regional boating plans covering each of the State's major waterways. The regional boating plans have been developed following extensive public consultation and include strategies and actions to increase the capacity of on-water and off-water boat storage in key centres. This will help to provide private boat owners with more storage options, instead of simply storing their boats on trailers in

the street.

The Sydney Harbour Boat Storage Strategy has been developed and released following public consultation. The strategy notes that trailers are the dominant form of storage for boats using Sydney Harbour, and that while the majority of trailers are stored on private property, many are stored on suburban streets—hundreds in the eastern suburbs of Sydney. It notes that on-street storage is expected to increase. So the problem will only get worse. We must do something about it, and that is what this bill is all about. To reduce the incidence of on-street storage, the strategy aims to promote the establishment of dry-stack storage facilities in the Sydney Harbour basin as a means of providing an affordable form of secure boat storage for owners of smaller boats who do not have sufficient space on their own properties. That is particularly relevant to my electorate of Coogee because we have small allotment-size properties and there is limited capacity for people to own a boat and store it on site. That is why they end up in the streets.

We need many facilities made available to people so that they can still enjoy the wonderful pastime of boating while respecting their neighbourhoods and streetscapes by not leaving these vessels unattended for months on end. Storage strategies for Pittwater and Lake Macquarie are also being developed. These seek to increase storage capacity and reduce mooring congestion and clutter. A comprehensive review of the administration of moorings is also underway to identify ways to reduce waiting lists and to promote more efficient on-water storage options. The bill, together with the Government's non-legislative initiatives which I have outlined, is designed to strike a balance between protecting the amenity of those residing in metropolitan waterside areas, such as the electorate of Coogee, and facilitating the use and enjoyment of our harbours and wonderful waterways by boat owners. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) [10.27 a.m.]: I speak in debate on the Impounding Amendment (Unattended Boat Trailers) Bill 2015. As indicated, the Opposition will not oppose the bill. More than 200,000 boat trailers are currently registered in New South Wales, and no doubt many thousands that are not registered. Of those registered, Roads and Maritime Services estimates that more than 168,000 are stored as trailers, often on residential streets. This bill deals with an issue that has been growing steadily over time—that of boat trailers being parked indefinitely in mostly residential areas. In congested areas in Sydney and surrounds this can cause availability of on-street parking issues, especially when there is clear evidence that a trailer has been abandoned.

The bill will amend the Impounding Act 1993 to give local councils, the NSW Police Force and Roads and Maritime Services the authority to impound a boat trailer that has not been moved for more than three months. Once a boat trailer becomes subject to impounding, 15 days notice must be given to its owner before being impounded. Once impounded, owners can get their trailer back by paying all fees and charges owing. If the trailer is not claimed, it can then be sold or disposed of under the Impounding Act. Members of my community have raised this issue with me, particularly while I am doorknocking or holding street stalls. They have also raised issues with me about trailers and caravans parked on the street, also taking up a parking space.

In fact, I have a trailer in my street that is incredibly annoying. However, this bill does not address that issue, so it seems to be me that this is an odd bill that deals with an isolated issue. Actually, I am probably being polite; it is a poorly drafted bill that has been developed without consultation. I noticed recently that the Australian Institute of Local Government Rangers voted at their annual conference to support a seven-day period before being able to impound a boat trailer. They would also like to see these measures applied to other trailers and caravans, but I guess if there was consultation on the proposal the Government would have found that out.

Unattended boat trailers are not only unsightly to many residents; they also can be a safety hazard. It is essential that unattended trailers do not remain on our streets indefinitely. At the same time, there are thousands of boat owners across New South Wales, especially owners of small boats, who

need on-street and residential parking. Not all boat owners are members of exclusive clubs. Many are mums and dads who simply like to use their boats on the weekend. An issue of concern with this bill is that it does not provide a mechanism to distinguish between boats that are parked on streets around New South Wales and unattended for months on end and boats that are used every week but then re-parked on the same site, as if they have not been moved at all.

This begs the obvious question: How will this bill work practically? I look forward to the Minister's response to that question because my understanding is that the Minister has no idea. I also ask why the Minister has limited this legislation to boat trailers. Why does it not apply to ordinary trailers and caravans? Surely these items also take up space on our streets—and I know, anecdotally, that councils have similar problems moving them on. This bill may be the first step to alleviating the problem of boat trailers, but it is a confusing and ill-considered solution. There has been no consultation on the bill. It is essential that Roads and Maritime Services works with local councils, boats owners and rangers to monitor this issue. I think that there will be significant issues in the application of this bill.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse—Attorney General) [10.30 a.m.]: I welcome this opportunity to support the Impounding Amendment (Unattended Boat Trailers) Bill 2015. This is not a confusing bill. It addresses a practical issue and it strikes a balance. The bill addresses a longstanding problem in both harbourside and coastal electorates. It is a good solution and balances the interests of all parties. The Government has recognised that the increase in boat and boat trailer ownership across New South Wales has impacted on parking amenity for residents, particularly in an electorate like Vaucluse. Vaucluse is one of the few electorates in Sydney that has a coastal and a harbour side. Of course, the harbour tends to attract many people from around Sydney because of the unique aspects it offers for their enjoyment. The use of our streets as a long-term boat storage facility is unacceptable. I have seen the consequences in my own electorate. Parking is scarce in metropolitan Sydney, particularly around the harbour. Council rangers should have the ability to manage parking of not only motor vehicles, as they currently do, but also boats and boat trailers alike. That is what is proposed in this bill.

Local residents have raised this issue with me since the beginning of my time in Parliament in 2011. I have continually written to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight asking that we address the problem by striking a balance between the needs of non-residents who visit an area to use the beaches and the harbour and those of local residents, who also enjoy the local amenity. Both sides of the House are in agreement about the impacts of these boats and boat trailers on our community. People are denied access to their driveways and homes and residents are unable to park in their local areas. The large vehicles can cause safety and visibility issues. I know that our local area commands have the power to move on vehicles that are over a certain size and create safety concerns. But they have no ability to move on any boat or boat trailer of a smaller size. Local councils should be able to manage boats and boat trailers that are parked on local streets, particularly when those parked trailers impact on, first, safety and, secondly, amenity—although both issues are important to local residents.

As has long been the case for motor vehicles, council officers can impound a boat trailer or boat when they believe on reasonable grounds that the boat or trailer has been abandoned or unattended for some time. That is the current situation, but that enforcement power has proved ineffectual. It does not go far enough. I have made representations on behalf of my local community, only to see councils become stuck in lengthy investigations attempting to prove that a trailer has been abandoned. During the period of investigation, the trailer continues to impact on the amenity and safety of local residents.

The member for Strathfield said there has been no consultation on the bill. She may not have been a member of the House at the time but for a number of years consultation has been conducted in the community with local councils, including with one of my councils and other councils that are directly impacted by this issue. The process has been a good one. A survey that was undertaken by the Boat Trailer Working Group led to this reform. In the area of Sydney that I represent, the survey showed that 186 boat trailers were kept on the streets in the Woollahra Municipal Council area, most of which were owned by local people. Those statistics are similar to those of other local government areas close to

Sydney Harbour. They show that a large proportion of boats and boat trailers on the streets in my local area are owned by residents.

This bill is an important and practical one because it strikes a balance between the needs of local residents who want to park their boats close to their homes, the foreshore and the beaches and the needs of visitors who leave their boats and boat trailers in the area so it is easier for them to access the harbour and the beaches. This bill is a practical, well-considered solution. It has been the subject of extensive consultation over a number of years and I am pleased to welcome it into this House. At present, in the absence of councils having the powers provided in this bill, residents in my area are losing valuable amenity due to the parking of boats and trailers by other residents and non-residents on streets in my local area. I think that is unfair. This bill provides local councils with the power to move on boats and boat trailers in local areas so that our scarce parking spaces can be shared by visitors and local residents.

Enforcement officers now will be able to move on those parked boats and boat trailers that have not been moved for some time. This will send a clear message to boat and boat trailer owners that local residents and ratepayers will not accept their streets being used as long-term storage facilities. It remains appropriate for boat owners to use local streets but the local community should not have to endure the loss of amenity and reduction in safety that comes from the long-term storage of boats and boat trailers on our streets.

I welcome the Minister's commitment of millions of dollars to build a dedicated storage facility central to the city where boats can be stored for longer than the period provided in this legislation. Like previous speakers in this debate, I also would welcome an extension of these powers to other trailers. The same issues arise with advertising trailers that are parked long term on our streets; they have similar amenity and safety impacts. I would welcome the extension of these powers so that councils can also deal with those trailers.

This bill is a responsible and balanced solution to a problem that has been ongoing for a long time. When balancing the interests of local residents who are boat owners, local residents who are not boat owners and visitors who are boat owners, no solution will satisfy everyone. It is not practical for government to give all those parties everything they want. This bill strikes a good balance. It gives local councils and their enforcement officers much stronger powers to manage boats and boat trailers on local streets. This bill demonstrates the strong commitment of the Government to improving the amenity and safety of New South Wales communities. I welcome the bill and I commend it to the House.

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) [10.39 a.m.]: The object of the Impounding Amendment (Unattended Boat Trailers) Bill 2015 is to amend the Impounding Act 1993 to provide special procedures for the impounding of boat trailers by impounding officers. An impounding officer may impound an article that has been abandoned or left unattended. I say upfront that I have an interest in this legislation as I am an owner of a boat and a boat trailer. Our boat and trailer are parked in the driveway and our cars are parked on the road. My wife would prefer the arrangement to be the other way around but, given the size of the trailer, it is appropriate to park it off the street. I am lucky to live in an area that is surrounded by waterways; there are many boat owners in the area.

I have the privilege of regularly taking my boat onto Lake Macquarie, using the boat ramp at Summerland Point, which is in the electorate of the member for Swansea. During the election campaign I noticed that almost every third house, particularly those in our new suburbs, had a boat and most of those boats were properly parked in driveways. I am a bit perplexed about the need for this legislation. The running joke on this side of the House is that this bill matches the Library Amendment Bill which was introduced in the last Parliament and apparently was addressed by many speakers.

Mr Greg Piper: A fabulous bill.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Yes, it has been described as having more speakers to it than there are

words in the bill. I understand the reason for this legislation but it seems misdirected. Currently, by law a registered vehicle can stay unmoved in a street so long as it is legally parked and in good order. The NSW Police Force is the only department that can enforce the removal of the vehicle. Vehicles in a residential street can be treated as abandoned once their registration expires and evidence indicates the owner of the vehicle does not live nearby. If it becomes apparent that a vehicle on the road is owned but unregistered, the police can be contacted and they will consider further action. Currently, councils do not have the ability to remove the vehicle or issue fines for an offence associated with an unregistered but owned vehicle that is parked legally on the road.

This legislation targets boat trailers and gives councils the power to impound boat trailers that have not been moved in three months. I wish to raise several issues of concern. The legislation does not make a distinction between non-residents and residents who park their boat trailers on the road. I have heard that in some areas—for example, inner-city suburbs and near boat ramps—people who do not live in the area park their boats on the road. That is inappropriate and the legislation would be improved by making a distinction between residents and non-residents. I do not understand why the legislation covers only boat trailers, not other trailers. It would be more palatable if all trailers were included. I am not alone in that regard. Jeff Richards, President of the Boat Owners' Association of NSW, welcomed the legislation in a letter to the Minister for Local Government but went on to say:

However,

1. Only boat trailers are included. We believe that advertising trailers (in particular), caravans, horse floats, and other trailers should also be covered by the same changes, as the reason for the changes applies equally to these other vehicles as it does to boat trailers. We believe the appropriate definition is "any registered vehicle not capable of moving under its own power".

That is a sensible suggestion. If the Government has consulted widely, as it claims, it is a wonder it has made such a simple omission. Mr Richards went on to say:

2. No requirement exists to force Councils to use the boat registration (in addition to the trailer registration) in the process of finding the owner. Councils are obliged to use reasonable efforts to find the owner. We think this obligation should be spelled out in more detail. The much narrower definition of unattended requires an increased obligation in respect of finding the owner.

Mr Richards said he would be grateful if the Minister considered these points during debate on the bill. I agree with Mr Richards. For example, in my electorate there is an issue with the parking of big trucks, including B-doubles, on local roads just off the freeway. At 4.00 a.m. drivers start up their trucks and, because they are diesel trucks, run their engines for a while—which ensures that no-one misses the fact that the trucks are leaving. This happens every morning. The legislation could also address this issue of disturbance. I do not see why the legislation does not include caravans, dog trailers, advertising trailers and the like. This bill deals only with a small part of the problem.

The bill also has some huge holes in it as to how it will be properly policed. Presumably, a council would be alerted by neighbours complaining that a boat trailer had been left in a location for longer than three months and the council would try to find the owner through the trailer registration. Once that had been established, the council would send the owner a notice giving the owner 15 days in which to move the trailer. Under this legislation, the owner could move the trailer only as far as is necessary and then leave the trailer there for another three months—unless the owner is on holiday or has left the country and did not receive the notice. Therefore, I am not sure how this legislation solves the problem. It may shift the problem in the short term but it will not solve it. Under the current laws, if a trailer is unregistered it can be moved or impounded as it is illegal for it to be on the road.

I am sympathetic to the problem raised by the member for Drummoyne. In his electorate, non-residents often park boat trailers on roads, thereby blocking access to parking by others. That issue could be addressed by giving individual councils the right to introduce local by-laws to differentiate between the rights of residents and non-residents to park boat trailers on the road. Individual councils could be given these rights, as the parking of boat trailers on roads is not a problem in all areas. The introduction of a blanket bill covering only boat trailers misses the point, particularly when boat owners can move the offending trailer a short distance and still comply with the rules.

I ask the Government to look at introducing amendments that will cover all trailers. If such amendments were introduced, I believe people would be supportive of this legislation. If the current legislation passes, we will be back in Parliament in a couple of months debating bills relating to horse trailers, then caravans, then other trailers. We will have to debate each category one by one. The Government seems to want to introduce legislation relating to trailers in a piecemeal fashion rather than grouping them all together. Whilst the members on this side of the House support the legislation, we question its effectiveness and how it will be policed. I am certain that the legislation, as it stands, will create more problems than it solves.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) [10.48 a.m.]: I speak today in support of the Impounding Amendment (Unattended Boat Trailers) Bill 2015, which will give councils more power to manage boats parked in residential streets. Sydney is a harbour city and we have incredible waterways criss-crossing throughout the State. I grew up along the Woronora River and have fond memories of spending time in and around the banks as a child. Today, as the member for Holsworthy, I have the magnificent Georges River flowing through my electorate; I have sailed down the river forgetting I was in the middle of Sydney. It is simply beautiful. We are an outdoorsy country and have these beautiful waterways at our disposal. It is no wonder that more and more people are taking advantage of our waterways and are buying boats to enjoy them.

More than 200,000 boat trailers are registered in New South Wales, and this number is set to increase by about 3 per cent each year. While the number of people owning boats is increasing, the storage of boats is becoming a major issue. Many people do not have a driveway or backyard where they can store a boat, let alone the family car; so it is not surprising that many boats are parked on the street when they are not in use. Currently, if a parked boat is not in the way of other cars or does not pose a risk to passing traffic, there is no restriction on housing a boat in this manner indefinitely. The only legal stipulation is that so long as the boat is registered it can remain parked on the street. That might be for a week, for a month or even for a year.

Boat trailers are often quite large and they can impact on the amenity and safety of a street when they are parked for extended periods. However, councils are powerless to do anything about them. When street parking is already at a premium and some streets are narrow or difficult to navigate, a boat and its trailer take up a lot of precious real estate. Most residents are happy to have a boat parked in their street occasionally, but it becomes more of an issue when it is a long-term storage solution. Council officers have raised concerns that they do not have the powers to effectively deal with this problem.

Under the changes introduced into Parliament this week, council officers will be able to impound a boat trailer that has been left in the same spot for a stipulated period. This will mean that the council will now be able to act on complaints by neighbouring residents if these boat trailers are housed on the street for long periods. In the event that a boat trailer is identified as being unattended, the owner will be given notice before it is moved. This will give the owner the chance to arrange for alternative storage and allow the situation to be resolved in a timely manner. This bill is about removing congestion on local suburban streets, which can pose a safety hazard. These new measures also will allow council officers to specifically target boat trailers parked for considerable periods and about which councils have received complaints. In the past, residents and councils were unable to do anything about nuisance boat trailers that were parked on the street for months at a time. People love using their boats on our waterways, as they should, but we need to consider the needs and amenity of other residents.

We need to strike a balance between the rights of owners to legally park their trailers on the street and the interests of the broader community to use and share an increasingly scarce resource: on-street parking. It is important to note that this approach is not intended to prevent boat trailer owners from being able to park for reasonable periods on streets in the vicinity of their homes or to prevent short-term parking by visiting boat trailer owners. They will still be permitted to do this without fear of infringement. However, it will no longer be a permanent solution for the housing of boat trailers. This bill achieves a better and more effective way to deal with trailers that are left unattended for indefinite periods.

This bill was developed through a boat trailer working group led by Transport for NSW and involved extensive public consultation. Through the public consultation process, over 100 submissions were received on this issue. The Government knows that there is some concern in the community, but it is committed to working through the issues to achieve the best outcome for all parties. This bill is just one of a number of initiatives that the Government intends to implement to assist in the management of boat trailer parking. The Government is aware that this is an issue in our suburbs and that councils should have options available to them when dealing with unattended boat trailers.

The Government is already delivering the five-year boating infrastructure program called NSW Boating Now. To date, \$37.5 million has been allocated to 192 priority regional projects across New South Wales to support boating access improvements. This includes new facilities such as boat ramps, jetties, pontoons, car parks and sewage pump-out facilities and upgrades. In the Holsworthy electorate, the Davy Robinson Reserve boat ramp along the Georges River has received almost \$500,000 in funding to help restore this access point for local residents to enjoy. Over the past few years the ramp has been repaired, a pontoon installed, the seawall rebuilt and the parking lot resurfaced for better amenity.

Liverpool City Council is pleased to help bring this boat ramp up to scratch and allow more people to enjoy the beautiful Georges River. I have met with the local mayor, Ned Mannoun, at that boat ramp many times as we have seen progress take place. It has been great to see it underway and used. Local councils and other delivery partners are due to complete these projects by the end of 2017. As part of the NSW Boating Now program, the Government has set aside \$5 million to assist local councils and other organisations to establish dedicated off-street boat trailer parking facilities.

Mr Gareth Ward: Hear, hear! About time.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS: It is about time; it is good news. This will help give boat owners more options to store their boats when they are not in use. Sometimes we have to think outside the box to find alternative solutions, and I understand a comprehensive review of the administration of moorings is underway to identify improvements to on-water storage of larger, mostly non-trailerable boats. I look forward to seeing the results of this review and the finalised package of reforms. I thank the Minister for Local Government for his assistance in preparing the bill and I know it will make a difference to the safety of our streets. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) [10.55 a.m.]: I contribute to the debate on the Impounding Amendment (Unattended Boat Trailers) Bill 2015 which aims to give councils the powers to act against people who use public streets for the long-term storage of boats and trailers. It is argued that this power is needed to address potential safety concerns and loss of amenity to neighbouring residents. But it also goes to the heart of a very vexed issue in our society: Who has the moral right to park outside someone's property, and how far or, more specifically, for how long does that right extend?

Superficially, it is the sort of issue one might expect would be discussed satirically in an urban etiquette newspaper column—but for the fact that it elicits strong responses from people who are affected. It is a barbecue stopper, that is for sure, especially in areas such as my electorate where boating is a popular activity. I waded into treacherous waters a few weeks ago by posting on my Facebook page an outline of this proposed legislation and asking for readers' opinions. The response was

spirited, to say the least, and the range of views diverse. Anyone who lives in an area, particularly an urban area, where boating is prevalent would likely have a view on this issue.

It is less of a problem in more sparsely populated areas where kerbside parking is not such a premium commodity. But in the city and suburban settings, the long-term parking of boats in the street can sorely test neighbourly relations. If a boat trailer is properly registered and maintained, is it unreasonable for it to be parked in an area that is, in fact, open to the public for such purposes? Is there any difference between a boat trailer occupying a parking space and a caravan, a box trailer or a promotional trailer, or even, for that matter, a car? Is a rate-paying boat owner who parks his boat on the street but his car on his property any less entitled to the use of a kerbside space in his own street than a neighbour who has no parking on his property and persistently uses the street to park one or more cars?

These are the arguments to which this legislation gives rise. I have received comments intimating that this is the sort of regulation that panders to nimbys and threatens to take us further down the path of the nanny State. On the other side, there are those who reasonably argue that long-term boat trailer parking, particularly in areas where it is endemic and space is restricted, can restrict traffic flow in narrow streets, impair a driver's line of sight and make it difficult for people without parking space on their properties to find a car parking space close to their homes. Any tolerance that is shown to people who park boat trailers on the street long term does not extend to those who use streets other than their own for the purpose of, for instance, parking trailers in streets near boat ramps.

The question is how to address these complaints without unfairly impinging on the rights of boat owners with lawfully registered trailers. As the Impounding Act 1993 stands, people who park boat trailers on the street, whether for a day or for a year, are not breaking any law so long as the trailer is not obstructing traffic or posing a danger to the public. The Minister acknowledged in his second reading speech that the boat trailers likely to be targeted by this legislation are in most cases registered and legally parked. While the Act allows enforcement officers to impound a vehicle or trailer they reasonably believe to have been abandoned, currently they cannot direct that legally parked boat trailers be moved by their owners, however long they have been parked. The proposed amendment will strengthen the power of officers to act in this situation by making parked boat trailers subject to impounding if they are parked on the street and not moved for three months or more. It provides for owners to be given at least 15 days notice before impounding occurs.

I have concerns with this bill. Even if we accept that a car has more right to parking space on a public street than another sort of vehicle, is it fair to target just boat trailers? Advertising and commercial trailers can be equally intrusive—in some cases, more intrusive—and obstructive, as can caravans and camper trailers. Council rangers apparently agree, as delegates to the Australian Institute of Local Government Rangers conference, held a few weeks ago, supported not only an expansion of the proposed legislation to include other kinds of trailers and caravans but also a reduction of the proposed enforcement period from three months to seven days. I am not sure it is reasonable to go that far, but clearly those at the front line of this issue see a problem with the long-term parking of vehicles of this nature in city streets.

The rangers also foreshadowed difficulties in enforcing the proposed regulations, given that owners could shift their boat trailers only a short distance and argue they were occupying a new parking spot, thereby resetting the three-month clock. This is a concern I share, and one expressed by a number of constituents and mentioned by a number of members in this debate. The Act says only that a boat trailer is taken to have been left unattended if the trailer has not been moved for a period of more than three months, or such other period as may be specified in the regulations. It does not define what constitutes being "moved", which I think is an omission that invites people to adopt a cynical interpretation.

I am not going to argue that there is not merit in addressing this issue, but it should be done holistically, incorporating, as I have said, all trailers and vehicles that could cause similar problems to

boats. This bill just seems too flawed to be valuable as good public policy, and it will create problems for councils across the State in having to manage a new expectation on them, and one that is likely to be misused in neighbour disputes. I appreciate that much of this bill has been developed with an eye on conflicts in higher-density metropolitan areas. It is a bill for Drummoyne that will have the same effect in Dubbo, Deniliquin and, in my case, Boolaroo. There is merit in improving urban parking conflicts; however, I believe this bill is too narrow to be the answer that we need.

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) [11.01 a.m.]: I speak in support of the Impounding Amendment (Unattended Boat Trailers) Bill 2015. I have spoken about the undoubted natural beauty of the Sutherland shire, and my electorate of Miranda, in this place before. Our shire is a coastal community defined by our stunning waterways and the spectacular beaches in Bate Bay. As a community, we gravitate towards the water, with modern marinas within the Miranda electorate, along with equipped boat ramp facilities at Scylla Bay, Bonnet Bay, Sylvania Waters and Oyster Bay, to name just a few. Boaters are frequently witnessed under the Captain Cook Bridge or the Tom Ugly's Bridge and our residents relish the opportunity to be on both our beautiful freshwater rivers and the ocean nearby.

However, representing an electorate with electoral boundaries in part defined by waterways comes with the consequence of residents' concern regarding the nature of boat storage on the streets of the Miranda electorate. There are more than 200,000 registered boat trailers in this State, with this number forecast to grow by approximately 3 per cent each year. In fact, there are approximately 28,700 registered recreational vessels in the Botany Bay, Georges River and Port Hacking regions. This represents approximately 12 per cent of all registered recreational vessels in New South Wales. The increased interest in boating is a true testament to the beauty of our natural waterways and our affinity for the outdoors as the people of New South Wales. As the representative of a water-loving community on the southern shore of the Georges River, I certainly understand its appeal.

With boat ownership on the rise across New South Wales, it is essential that we develop a clear plan to balance the rights of boat owners to legally store their vessels with the rights of local residents to park their cars, as primary vehicles, near to their homes. One of the strongest themes of my interaction with constituents in my electorate during the 2015 election campaign was the growing need for parking, whether in proximity to transport hubs or on-street residential parking. Residents have voiced their frustration at being unable to find a park when the same trailer has been sitting unattended for months, disrupting parking availability.

As outlined by the Minister in his second reading speech, there has been a swell of community concern regarding the dumping and long-term disuse of boats on local streets, but local government bodies have felt unable to respond to the call for action without proper legislative support. As such, the Government has developed a clear plan to relieve the pressure that is being placed on boat storage in high-density residential areas and to equip council officers with the tools they need to take action. This plan has been developed following a sustained period of public consultation, to which the Government received more than 100,000 responses.

It is clear that storing rarely operated boats in a fixed place on a residential street where they remain unused and unmoved for a matter of months is unacceptable to our community. If a boat is left dormant for a significant period it can become an eyesore, a traffic hazard or an impediment to parking turnover, especially in narrow residential streets. Dormant vessels can disrupt street-cleaning activities and disrupt sightlines for travelling vehicles and pedestrians. Currently there are no incentives for seldom-moved vehicles to be locked up in long-term storage, and no message is being sent against the notion that on-street parking is a long-term storage solution for seldom-used vessels. Furthermore, the legislation provides certainty by furnishing the Impounding Act 1993 with a definition of the term "unattended", given that council officers are authorised to take action in a case where they reasonably believe a vehicle to be unattended.

It is important to emphasise that this bill does not discourage boat ownership. Instead, it shifts the

focus from long-term on-street parking to appropriate off-street parking. In alliance with local councils, the Government will bolster the use of safe and secure facilities by boat owners. Sutherland Shire Council, whose local government area spans my electorate of Miranda, has already taken up the call to develop alternative, off-street parking for boat trailers, with the feasibility of parking areas for up to 50 boats being investigated at present. I applaud the efforts of local government within my electorate to provide boat owners with accessible low-cost storage options.

The bill observes appropriate principles of procedural fairness and certainty, whereby boat owners must be given a minimum of 15 days notice before impounding occurs. In practice, owners whose boats have been dormant for a period of greater than three months will be directed to relocate their boats and given a chance to do so before their vehicle is impounded. This will ensure that the focus of these new powers is encouraging owners to use and store their vessels appropriately, rather than punishment. It is clear that on-street parking is an increasingly scarce resource throughout the Sydney metropolitan region. My electorate is no exception, and I trust the residents of Miranda will appreciate that this bill is a step in the direction of relieving the pressure on our local streets and freeing up parking for local residents.

The Government recognises that moorings are also in growing demand in high-density areas, with a growing capacity problem. That is why the Government is coupling this amendment with a comprehensive review of moorings and an investment in storage of existing vessels. With \$5 million set aside by the Government for off-street boat parking schemes, we are encouraging the growth that we are seeing in the boating sector while ensuring that the increase in boat ownership does not translate to clogged local roads for the general public. The President of the Boat Owners Association of New South Wales, Jeff Richards, made welcome remarks this past week to the media in relation to these proposals. According to Mr Richards, a "low-service, low-cost facility" would be an attractive win-win solution for all involved.

Indeed, these amendments are a fantastic starting point for boat owners, residents and local councils alike, as we find a long-term solution that balances the rights of boat owners with the right of the broader community to amenity, safety and convenience. As the member for Miranda, I am pleased that this policy will secure a greater turnover of parking for local residents in my electorate while ensuring that the boat-owning community is taken into consideration in implementing council orders and in the renewed efforts of the Government to invest in long-term boat storage across the State. I commend this bill to the House.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) [11.08 a.m.]: The Impounding Amendment (Unattended Boat Trailers) Bill 2015 amends the Impounding Act 1993 to provide special procedures for the impounding of boat trailers by an impounding officer. An impounding officer may impound an article that has been abandoned or left unattended. A number of issues arise from what I have just said. For instance, why is this bill dealing with only boat trailers? A number of residents have spoken with me about this. They find it rather odd that this legislation targets only boaties. They ask why caravans or ordinary trailers are not also included in this legislation. If boats are such a nuisance on the streets we suggest that they also be included in this legislation.

The question of what "left unattended" means has also been raised with me. What is the definition? According to the Act, a boat trailer is taken to have been left unattended if the trailer has not been moved for a period of more than three months—it is then considered to have been left unattended and would therefore fall under this Act. Those who know some fishermen, as I am sure a few members do—I certainly do; in the lovely electorate of Swansea I think every second person fishes and owns a boat—will be aware that many leave at 1 o'clock, 3 o'clock or 5 o'clock in the morning and are usually back for breakfast. So in many instances neighbours would not know whether a trailer had left a spot and returned. So I find the notion of "left unattended" rather clumsy, particularly in electorates such as mine where there are many fisherman—who fish on a daily basis, I might add.

Also, who is going to police this provision? Who will be walking around our streets monitoring whether boat trailers have been moved? I suspect we will have to rely on neighbours to inform the enforcers. I assume that if a person is in dispute with his or her neighbour whose boat is parked out the front, not causing any problems or nuisance whatsoever, it may be the dispute we should resolve rather than the fact that there is a boat parked out the front that has been legally registered and has the absolute right to be on New South Wales roads. The Government must consider a number of issues in this legislation to ensure that it is fair for everybody in New South Wales. In my view this is not well thought-out legislation. It only considers high-density areas.

I understand the concerns raised by members of Parliament representing city electorates who have spoken in debate on this bill. For example, the member for Drummoyne described how there are boats parked in his electorate that are registered in other electorates. I understand that this is an issue and that in high-density areas where parking is at a premium we need to address the situation. However, I do not think this legislation applies to the State more broadly or to electorates such as Swansea. In Lake Macquarie and Tuggerah Lakes there are 19,000 registered recreational vessels. That is a large number of vessels, but the parking of boat trailers is not high on the complaints list. I investigated the matter to see whether it was of concern to people. I spoke to some local residents and to Marine Rescue, which advised me that it has not received complaints in relation to this issue. Marine Rescue is very familiar with the boating community in the electorate of Swansea.

It is of grave concern to me that we are introducing legislation that will penalise people who are simply parking their legal boat trailer out the front of their houses in electorates such as Swansea. I know that would also be a concern in other electorates outside our densely populated city areas. In my view it would be sensible to allow councils to be the authoritative power to determine whether streets within their local government areas are considered appropriate for parking boats. That seems to be a most sensible approach. I encourage the Government to think through this idea and to amend the legislation, if it sees fit, to take a more considered and sensible approach as I have just suggested. The Boat Owners' Association of NSW president, Jeff Richards, said that he supports the idea of moving unused boats, but only if councils carried out proper checks before impounding them. That is an important view from somebody who is very close to this issue. He said:

In general we [the Boat Owners' Association of NSW] support the idea if they really are unused for a long time as long as there is a process with warnings and stickers. People can't just park them on the street for [many] months at a time for extended periods.

So I think we are all on the same page. We understand that in high-density areas there is a problem and it is not correct for people simply to leave their boats parked on the streets unattended for months on end. But, unfortunately, this is not a "one-solution-fits-all" situation. It is unfortunate that the broader New South Wales region was not considered in drafting the legislation. I ask that the Government give consideration to regional areas and to how the bill may impact negatively on boat users in our electorates. The people in my electorate of Swansea definitely do not view the introduction of this legislation favourably; they feel as though they are going to be singled out as a nuisance on the streets. Like the constituents of Swansea, I love boating and I do not like to see people take that view of legislation that has a purpose—just not a purpose for everywhere. So whilst I accept that the Government is doing good work in fixing some problems, I point out that it is creating problems elsewhere. I hope that the Government will consider this issue further.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) [11.15 a.m.]: I support the Impounding Amendment (Unattended Boat Trailers) Bill 2015, which will give councils the power to impound boat trailers that have not been moved in three months, with a provision of 15 days notice to be given to owners. Across New South Wales, including in my electorate, this has been a major issue over the years.

Mr Gareth Ward: Newsletter.

Mr MARK COURE: Exactly right—it is newsletter material. This has been a major issue in my electorate, and I note there are members in the Chamber who formerly served in local government. The member for Macquarie Fields was on Campbelltown City Council, the member for Cabramatta is a former Mayor of Fairfield, and the member for Kiama was on Shoalhaven City Council. I spent eight years on Kogarah City Council.

Mr Gareth Ward: Eight long years.

Mr MARK COURE: Eight long years. During that period this issue has come up time and again in and around the bays and the waterways of suburbs such as Oatley, Lugarno and other parts of my electorate, across the St George area, in and around Kogarah, Rockdale and the Sutherland shire. So I welcome this amendment bill, which, hopefully, will put a stop to a practice that has been going on for many years. The bill will free up parking for residents and visitors and reduce the risk posed to all road users by unattended boat trailers. Under existing legislation a boat trailer can be parked indefinitely in on-street parking. Unless there are parking restrictions or the council has reasonable grounds to believe the trailer has been abandoned, owners are not required to move their trailers—there is a particular problem around Oatley Bay—and in many cases trailers are left for a long period.

Abandoned and unused boat trailers are a nuisance to residents, visitors and businesses in the local area. Residents who wish to use the wonderful parks and open spaces in my electorate see this as a major problem because trailers take up valuable parking intended for motor vehicles. Many businesses in my electorate are concerned that unattended boat trailers cost them business because locals and visitors struggle to park and access the surrounding facilities. I am delighted to learn that boat ownership has increased by more than 2.5 per cent over the past 10 years. Many people who enjoy the benefits of owning a boat live in my electorate around St George and the Sutherland shire—I note the member for Miranda is in the Chamber—or the South Coast and the Central Coast. I acknowledge the presence of the member for Terrigal. We live in one of the most beautiful parts of the world and many people enjoy exploring our coastline by boat. However, it is important that boat trailer owners are responsible and act in a fair and reasonable way when occupying on-street parking. Am I correct in understanding that the Opposition intends to vote against the bill?

Mr Ron Hoenig: No.

Mr MARK COURE: Opposition members are speaking against it but voting for it. Leave the interjections to me.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Adam Marshall): Order! The member for Oatley will not invite interjections. He will direct his remarks through the Chair.

Mr MARK COURE: Boat trailer owners using on-street parking is a major issue, particularly in Sydney. All boat users are required to share and negotiate the use of on-street parking. The amendment in this bill will apply only to boat trailers that are deemed unattended and only after council has made reasonable attempts to contact owners. It aims to balance the rights of boat trailer owners with that of local councils and residents. This amendment has been drafted with the assistance of the boat trailer working group, which involved Transport for NSW and councils in and around Sydney. An extensive public consultation process was undertaken and more than 100 submissions were received.

Last year the Government announced that \$37.5 million would be allocated to the NSW Boating Now infrastructure program, which supports better access to boating facilities and improvements to boat ramps, jetties, harbour car parks and pontoons. A pontoon and jetty in my electorate at Oatley Bay are being upgraded under this program. I congratulate the Minister on providing that much-needed funding. Through a Community Building Partnership grant, the local council has applied for additional funding to upgrade Oatley Bay with additional facilities. The improvements will ensure that boat trailer owners have access to quality facilities, thus reducing the need to occupy on-street parking sites.

Many of the upgrades and improvements are being done in partnership with councils and are due to be completed over the next two years. I acknowledge the great work of Kogarah City Council, in particular, and its contribution to upgrading the facilities at Oatley Bay. The amendment is part of a number of legislative policy measures that aim to increase on-water boat storage capacity and assist councils in managing abandoned boat trailers, which has been an ongoing issue. I congratulate the Minister on introducing this amending bill to Parliament. I support the amendment, and encourage all members in both Houses to do the same.

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) [11.23 a.m.]: On behalf of the New South Wales Labor Opposition I speak in debate on the Impounding Amendment (Unattended Boat Trailers) Bill 2015. The purpose of the bill is to provide special procedures for impounding boat trailers that have been left unattended in on-street parking for extended periods. If this bill is passed it will give council officers additional powers, allowing them to issue notices and impound boats that have been parked in the same spot for a period of three months or more. This sounds like a sensible measure because it recognises the concerns of frustrated residents who deal with traffic congestion on a daily basis. I understand residents become frustrated when they notice that boat trailers have been parked for a substantial time without being moved. Some boat trailers are of a considerable size, which makes it difficult for motorists to manoeuvre their vehicles in tight spaces.

Although this bill gives the impression that it will alleviate resident concerns with respect to the long-term parking of boat trailers, the Government needs to take note also of boat owners. An explanation must be provided as to how council officers will determine whether a boat has been parked in one spot for three months or more. Some boat owners go fishing in the early hours of the morning and return before anyone else is awake so neighbours would not know whether a boat had been moved. Notices issued unfairly to boat owners whose boats have been parked for a week to a month could cause outrage. Some owners are mindful of the rules and do whatever they can to comply with council regulations.

I stress that some residents rely on their boat trailers for work purposes. Labor has always advocated on behalf of workers; they have our utmost support because we care about their wellbeing and safety. I firmly believe this legislation should be refined to target owners of boats who are totally discourteous and uncaring. There are countless instances where boats have been unused for years and it is those boat owners who should feel the full force of this legislation. The bill should enable council officers specifically to target individuals who fail to exercise consideration and care towards others. If the Government wants the bill to achieve its intended purpose owners who park their boat trailers in front of other residents' properties without consent or who cause traffic problems should also be subject to these provisions. Trailers should be impounded if their owners fail to move them within one to two weeks of a complaint from a property owner to local council—not three months as stipulated in this bill.

A couple of years ago my son lived in Mosman. He had one parking space in front of his property. A substantially sized boat was parked in front of his property and the owner left it there for at least a month before returning to work on the trailer. My son approached him and asked him to move it because there was not enough room. The boat owner told him in no uncertain terms where to go because he said he was parked legally and his boat was licensed. His boat remained parked there for approximately four months. This caused concern not only to my son but also to other residents because it blocked the sightlines from their driveways. Eventually the boat was moved and parked 100 metres away in front of a child's playground, where it remained for three or four months.

It is those boat owners for which this legislation is intended. They are uncaring and have no regard for their neighbours. They do not park their boats locally so they do not cause angst with their neighbours; they leave them elsewhere. We are not out to punish the boat owners who park in front of their properties, as long as the boat trailer is registered and in a roadworthy condition. It is not acceptable for boat owners to park their boats in streets that are not their own. Sometimes this results in law-abiding citizens doing things they would not do normally. Let us hope people do not take matters into their own

hands, leading to legal action being taken against them.

We have truck stops; I think we need to give councils the ability, if they wish, to legislate for boat stops or trailer stops in certain places within council areas. Boat trailers, as long as they are registered, could be parked there for as long as the owner wishes or the length of time determined by the council. They may have to be moved every month or every three months. At least that way one would be able to keep an eye on the boats; one would not have to have ordinance inspectors travelling the length and breadth of a municipality or city looking for boats that are parked illegally. It would be impossible in some areas, especially on the North Coast, where there are thousands of boats. One would have to have a team of ordinance inspectors running around doing that job.

The Government should go back to the stakeholders across New South Wales, especially the coastal areas, where there are people who use their boats for work. We do not want to hammer them. On both sides of the Chamber, I take it, we are mindful of the small businesses and people who use their boats for work. But there are irresponsible people who could not care less and who park their boats outside other people's properties in suburbs or streets far away from their own properties. Those people should be given no more than two to three weeks to move the boats away; otherwise the boats should be impounded. If we do that, this boat problem, and the concern of residents, will be alleviated by this legislation. The scatter-gun approach that is now being taken will not achieve anything. It has to be refined so that it gets the people we really want to attack.

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) [11.31 a.m.]: I contribute to the debate on the Impounding Amendment (Unattended Boat Trailers) Bill 2015. As has been indicated to the House, the Opposition does not oppose the bill because of the sentiment behind it, but the legislation is—like most legislation introduced by this Government into this House—a shambles and a mess that cannot give effect to what the bill intends. There is water dripping into the Chamber. There is a leak in the Legislative Assembly. It is unheard of but there is a leak in the Legislative Assembly.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! I think that applies to both sides of the Chamber.

Mr RON HOENIG: It must be somebody from the *Daily Telegraph*. That is who I think it must be. I notice that the member for Balmain is going to participate in this debate. I am going to sit here and listen to his contribution, which I am sure is going to be riveting, because he is going to propose substantial amendments: no recreational boat owners can utilise boats unless they are battery powered. The reason I say that this bill is a mess is that it has not been introduced by the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, who is the appropriate Minister; it is being introduced by the Minister for Local Government.

Mr Gareth Ward: Point of order: As much as I am loath to interrupt my friend the member for Heffron—who is an outstanding member and would make a great Leader of the Opposition—I wish to point out that the member has so little to say about this bill that he is now reflecting on which Minister introduced it. I ask him to address the bill and to talk about the essential issue of boat trailers in electorates. It is critical to all members of the House.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! Second reading debates are broad ranging. There is no point of order.

Mr RON HOENIG: There is a particular reason that I raised my last point. If the member for Kiama patiently listens I will take him through the provisions of the bill so that he understands it. As the member for Kiama is paying such close attention I draw his attention to clause 1 of section 15—abandoned and unattended articles can be impounded. That clause proposes to deem any boat trailer that has not been moved for three months as being abandoned and therefore, under the principal Act, it can be removed. Can somebody indicate to the House—the Minister might, because he is a Minister of such great intellect—how it can be proved that a trailer has not been moved over a

three-month period? Who is going to be standing there for three months to see whether or not the trailer has moved?

Under clause 1 of schedule 1, if the boat gets taken away and is brought back again—even five minutes later—it does not offend against the proposed section 15 provision. It is almost impossible to enforce that provision. There is another thing that is ridiculous about this bill. It deems everybody's boat trailer to be subject to abandonment if they do not move it. There is a whole range of contributions from across the State—from people who represent regional, coastal parts of New South Wales where there is high boat ownership. At particular times of the year owners often park boats in front of their homes for extended periods. This provision will cause those boats to be subject to abandonment if they have not been moved—if one can show that they have not been moved.

The objective of this bill is well-meaning. That is why the Minister for Roads and Maritime Services engaged in that consultative process with various stakeholders. Somehow the issue disappeared from his portfolio and ended up with the Minister for Local Government. Consequently, the whole mechanism is trying to deal with the problems that currently exist. Boat owners currently leave their boats in front of somebody else's house near boat ramps. They store their boats in front of somebody else's house, as the member for Cabramatta pointed out. The argument is that, as they pay registration, they can park the boats in any public street. There are parts of the State where people are just storing their boats in residential areas far from where they live. I know that that occurs in areas of Cronulla. But there are other occasions when people are parking their boats in front of their own houses and they may not choose to move it for a time. They will be subject to having their boats impounded.

There is no point saying that this bill is discretionary, because if there is a vehicle that is deemed, under the principal Act to be an abandoned vehicle, and the council is aware of it, the council is obliged to discharge its statutory obligation by dealing with abandoned vehicles. It cannot say, "This vehicle has been here for four months. It belongs to John Sidoti but the council is not going to do anything about it." I have spoken to the Parliamentary Secretary, who is very informed on this issue. I compliment him for being so informed. He has done better than the Minister for Local Government. I am sorry if I have got the member for Drummoyne into trouble so I had better withdraw that remark in a hurry lest he be criticised.

Mr Gareth Ward: Run for the leadership. We want you; your party needs you.

Mr RON HOENIG: I acknowledge the interjection of the member for Kiama. I am delighted about his complimentary remarks. It is not like him to be so complimentary about me. One of the ways this bill can be fixed is to allow local governments to declare certain parts of their areas to be areas that can apply a provision similar to the proposed section 15. In other words, if a council knows that there is a problem in part of its area with parking boat trailers, the council should be allowed to make a declaration that that area will be subject to abandonment. The period should not be restricted to three months. The Government should nominate a shorter period or allow councils to determine the appropriate period.

When a problem occurs near a boat ramp in a residential area and in particular street, the Government should allow the council to declare that street to be an area in which a provision similar to item [1] of schedule 1 to the bill applies. To give effect to the proposal, let the council decide that the period would be, say, 14 days and not three months. Only councils know where the problems are. The State Government does not know where the problems are. When the State intervenes with legislation that is a shambles, it will apply to the entire State. For example, it will apply to somebody's five-foot rubber duckie that is parked in front of that person's house. When he has a blue with his neighbour, the neighbour will complain that the rubber duckie has been parked at the front of that person's house for three months. Under this bill, the council will be obliged to declare the rubber duckie to be an abandoned vehicle and have it removed. The bill as it stands will result in a shambles and circus-like conditions.

Mr Mark Coure: I am just checking: Are you still voting for this?

Mr RON HOENIG: I inform the member for Oatley that the Opposition adopts an informed position, not a knee-jerk uninformed position. The Government should amend item [1] of schedule 1 to the bill to give power to local government to make the declarations, which will give effect to the Government's proposal. But I have no idea how the Government will formulate a provision for impounding that is based on a declaration that a trailer has not moved for three months. What will the Government do for proof—use undercover operatives and covertly film a trailer to show that the trailer has not moved? This bill really is a shambles. I hope the member for Kiama is smart enough to have grasped the point I have made during my contribution to this debate and will assist in drafting its amendment too.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [11.41 a.m.]: On behalf of The Greens, I participate in debate to address some of the important principles of the Impounding Amendment (Unattended Boat Trailers) Bill 2015. One important principle is the use of public space. The truth is that the space at the front of a person's property does not belong to that person; it is owned by the public for the public.

Mr John Sidoti: What an extraordinary observation!

Mr Mark Coure: I am glad we sorted that out!

Mr JAMIE PARKER: It is interesting that some Government members are surprised by that. My electorate is approximately 15 square kilometres in area and residential areas are tightly packed. Especially in areas with a lot of terrace housing, there are many disputes. People adopted the attitude that they want to park their car at the front of their house. Who parks their car at the front of a house is a highly contentious matter. Members may be surprised to learn that the value of a property increases by between \$50,000 and \$80,000 or more if parking space is available. If people cannot park a car in their street, the value of their property is significantly reduced. Basically, public space is semi-privatised by people wanting to have exclusive use of the parking space at the front of their house.

Mr Gareth Ward: So parking your car on the side of the road is privatisation, is it?

Mr JAMIE PARKER: It is because it is the use of public space to store private property.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! The member for Kiama will cease interjecting. The member for Balmain will direct his comments through the Chair.

Mr JAMIE PARKER: I will, Mr Assistant-Speaker. What I have just said is the reason why the Government has introduced this legislation, which the member for Kiama supports. The Government is saying that that public space should be shared by the people. It cannot be made available for someone's private use on a permanent basis. That is essentially what the legislation states. I notice that the member for Kiama is now backing down. He knows that the reason for this legislation is that there needs to be sharing in the community and we must ensure that public spaces cannot be used indefinitely for private storage space. Of course, public space cannot be used indefinitely for a private storage purpose. That is why public space turnover is regulated and that is why we have parking meters and parking restrictions. Government wants public space to be used for the benefit of all instead of being used indefinitely by some.

This is an important issue in the Balmain electorate. The negative impact of not having this type of legislation is well known to the member for Drummoyne. The Balmain and Rozelle areas are almost exclusively residential parking areas. People are unable to park their cars in those areas unless they have a residential parking permit. Unlike the City of Sydney and the Leichhardt municipality, parking permits are as rare as hen's teeth. If a person whose house is in one of those areas owns a garage, he or she is able to park one car. If a person has no garage, he or she is able to park one car and to have space for one visitor, but that is it. A person having three, four or five cars just does not happen. If people have a boat and want to park it somewhere, where do they park it? They park it over the bridge in Drummoyne. Consequently, there is a proliferation of that problem throughout the community.

We need sensible legislation to ensure that we can share the public space that is owned by all of us. A significant concern in my electorate, and the reason this bill is welcomed but needs to be improved, is that councils are trying to solve the problem by introducing residential parking. There are areas in Annandale and Leichardt where businesses are located, and I can say without exaggeration that the whole street is full of box-trailers displaying advertising for builders, termite protection, et cetera. People are unable to park on the street. Public space is being used as a storage facility and advertising by private businesses. I encourage the Minister to examine the issue of trailers being parked in the street predominantly for the purpose of advertising. The trailers are not vehicles that are being used by the business. The trailers are locked, stuck on the side of the street and they stay there without moving for years and years. Local businesses and residents complain to me about that and the only solution is the introduction of residential parking, which severely if not entirely restricts the use of the parking space for everybody.

There should be a simple solution. The legislation should simply state that box-trailers are subject to parking regulations. They should not be left out on the street year after year when their predominant purpose is advertising. The issue of parking boats on the street also should be addressed. The bill goes part of the way towards addressing the issue with its abandonment provisions. Obviously, three months is a long time but the provision will not have a significant impact. Some boat owners will repeatedly move their boat to different parking spaces before three months elapse. However, in my electorate there are no other parking spaces to which the boat could be moved. If boat owners are required to move their boat, someone else—such as residents and visitors to the area—will use the vacated space immediately. We need to devise sensible solutions for rationing the scarce resource of on-street parking as a public resource that should be enjoyed by everyone.

My concluding comments go to the importance of managing the problems and giving local councils options and tools to be able to deal with streets full of advertising trailers and boats. Often the boats and trailers are owned by people who are not even local residents. For example, people who live in my electorate will park their boat in Drummoyne and leave it there for six months. This legislation is a start to providing councils with the tools they need to address the problem. I urge the Minister to examine, in particular, the issue of box-trailers and advertising because the existing solution, which is to simply introduce widespread residential parking, creates an impost on everyone in the community. Long-stay parking spaces should be accessible by anyone in the community, but if the authorities do not have legislation to regulate and ration parking space sensibly, it will be monopolised by people who wish to store private property. I appreciate the work done by the Minister and his ministerial staff. I hope this legislation marks the beginning of ways in which to empower local government and local communities to better manage public space.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) [11.48 a.m.]: When I say I am pleased to support the Impounding Amendment (Unattended Boat Trailers) Bill 2015, I really am.

Mr Mark Coure: You're off to a good start. Ten seconds into it and you're done.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON: There are a lot of things in this place that give me joy, and speaking in support of a bill is one of them. This amending bill is an outcome of consultation. I point out to mocking Opposition members that this Government prides itself on its community consultation. If ever the Opposition wishes to offer endorsement of my view, that would be most welcome. When the Coalition was elected to govern in 2011, we came into office on a platform of community consultation, which is essential. Mr Assistant-Speaker, I am finding it difficult to concentrate on my speech.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! If the member for Oatley and the member for Balmain wish to converse, they should do so outside the Chamber.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON: I commend members opposite for being respectful in the House.

Consultation is important in relation to this bill. We get good amendments to bills by consulting experts in the community. The Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, the Hon. Duncan Gay, is an outstanding Minister. He is hugely supportive of my electorate.

Mr John Sidoti: I am his Parliamentary Secretary.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON: I will come to the Parliamentary Secretary in a moment. I hope that the Minister for Roads has time to hear my contribution or that his staff bring it to his attention. He has been a tremendous supporter. I am sure the member for Macquarie Fields would acknowledge the outstanding work being done in our area, whether it is on Bringelly Road, Northern Road, Camden Valley Way or any number of other roads.

Mr Anoulack Chanthivong: Planned by Labor, I suspect.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON: Billions of dollars have been spent.

Mr Anoulack Chanthivong: Call it Labor planning.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON: Let us not talk about Labor planning it for years. This is all about being friendly and amicable. I thank the Minister because literally billions of dollars are being poured into our area. The Government understands growth in our area; we need to provide infrastructure as well as housing. I remember in my inaugural speech in 2011 talking about Camden Valley Way. I am proud to say that before long—surely in the next few months—Camden Valley Road will be fully complete, from Narellan all the way through to Liverpool. That is fantastic. Nearly \$400 million has been spent on that project. Given the amount of work done by the Minister and the time he spends in electorates, I am surprised that he had time to produce this bill. I give him credit for his outstanding work.

Key stakeholders include Transport for NSW, Woollahra Municipal Council and the City of Canada Bay council. I note that the Parliamentary Secretary is in the Chamber. I think his electorate of Drummoyne takes in the City of Canada Bay council. That council is extremely lucky to have such a hardworking local member. The amount of work the Parliamentary Secretary does for that council and the local community is fantastic. Often the council is not quick to praise or thank anyone.

Mr Gareth Ward: They came to mock but remain to praise.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON: I suggest that the council is happy to have such a hardworking local member. That is all good. We have done a bit of consultation. The working group researched the problem in each council area. It is always important to identify the problem, do some research and then discuss how to resolve it. When I read the working group's report I was interested to learn that 18 per cent of boat trailers kept on the streets of the Woollahra local government area had no plate and were unregistered, but the figure in Canada Bay was 7 per cent. I guess that is due to the good work of the local member ensuring that people know that they need to register and plate their trailers.

Mr Mark Coure: Zero mileage because they are law abiding.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON: The figures are astounding. The survey also demonstrated that a high proportion of trailers parked in the streets were in breach of existing regulations. That is the important issue. A high proportion were either unsafe, unroadworthy or over the allowable height or weight. To the law-abiding citizens of Woollahra and Canada Bay, this would cause concern as they drove past these over-height, unplated boat trailers.

Dr Geoff Lee: What colour were they?

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON: Many of them were rusty and unroadworthy, and that was the issue.

Who wants rusty trailers on the streets of Woollahra? Clearly, the existing enforcement framework needs to be strengthened, and that is where the outstanding Minister for Local Government comes into play. I have much more to say, but I must commend the Minister before I conclude my contribution. The Minister is a wonderful friend of Camden. I thank him for everything he has done and the time he has spent in my electorate. His work on local government reform is outstanding. One need only read the Opposition's questions yesterday to know that Labor is on board. There was excitement in the House as about 50 per cent of the questions yesterday related to local government because members opposite are interested. Everyone is interested in what the Minister is doing. The bill is wonderful. I commend the Minister for Local Government, the Minister in the other place and the Parliamentary Secretary, and I commend the bill to the House.

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Local Government) [11.55 a.m.], in reply: I thank the member for Camden for his efforts. I thank members for their valuable contributions to debate on this important bill: the members representing the electorates of Balmain, Wyong, Vacluse, Drummoyne, Holsworthy, Lakemba, Miranda, Swansea, Cabramatta, Oatley, Camden, Coogee, Lake Macquarie, Strathfield and Heffron. I reiterate that the object of the bill is to introduce a number of measures to improve the management of boat trailer parking. As we have heard from members, these changes will be welcomed in many areas across the State. I note the considerable attention this bill has received and the broad support from the community. I have also noted suggestions raised by members with regard to dedicated areas for boat storage, doing further work with stakeholders and enforcement authorities to ensure these new rules work practically.

In New South Wales we are blessed with an abundance of waterways and increasing numbers of families across New South Wales are enjoying the pleasures and enjoyment that comes from a day on the water. Indeed, one of the great treasures that New South Wales has to offer is its vast and diverse recreational waterways. However, as more families are taking up this pastime there has been increasing pressure on the storage of boats, especially in higher density areas. Increasingly, boat owners are using on-street parking as a long-term parking solution for their boats. This in turn has led to legitimate concerns about the loss of amenity and increased road safety risk. There are 204,000 boat trailers in New South Wales registered with Roads and Maritime Services. This number is forecast to increase by about 2.9 per cent per annum over the next decade. Consequently, the concerns of residents in these areas are likely to be exacerbated if the problem remains unchecked.

Currently, the Impounding Act 1993 confers powers on enforcement officers to impound a vehicle or a trailer when the enforcement officer believes on reasonable grounds that the vehicle or trailer has been abandoned or left unattended. While these powers allow enforcement officers to impound clearly abandoned or unattended boat trailers, the officers cannot direct that legally parked boat trailers are moved by their owners, however long they have been parked. Enforcement authorities, in particular local councils, the NSW Police Force and Roads and Maritime Services, are finding that the exercise of current powers is proving insufficient to effectively respond to residents' concerns about the negative impacts of boat trailer parking.

This bill amends the Impounding Act 1993 by conferring on enforcement officers enhanced powers specifically relating to the parking of boat trailers. It proposes to do this in the following ways: making parked boat trailers, whether parked legally or otherwise, subject to impounding by an enforcement officer if unmoved for a period of three months; allowing the time to be altered by regulation; providing that once a boat trailer becomes subject to impounding because the time has elapsed, the owner must be given a minimum of 15 days notice before impounding occurs.

These measures will provide council and other enforcement officers with a clear power to direct that boat trailers, although legally parked, be moved on or impounded after being parked in the same place for three months after a further 15 days notice has been given to the owner. The further 15-day notice period is provided as a matter of fairness to boat trailer owners, having regard to the length of time the trailer has been parked and the fact that in most cases the trailers will be registered and will be legally

parked. These measures are designed to balance the rights of boat owners to legally park their trailers on the street and the interests and amenity of residents and the broader community in the use and sharing of an increasingly scarce resource—namely, on-street parking.

This bill is part of a broader complementary package of legislative and complementary policy measures which seeks to increase long-term and on-water boat storage capacity. The amendments will not affect the power enforcement officers currently have under the Act to immediately impound, without notice, a boat trailer that is obstructing traffic or that is likely to be a danger to the public. Nor will the amendments affect the general power that enforcement officers currently have to impound a boat trailer where they believe on reasonable grounds that the trailer has been abandoned or left unattended. Further, the offences that currently apply under the Impounding Act where a vehicle is abandoned or left unattended will not apply to owners of boat trailers that are parked for more than the prescribed period. We look forward to jointly working with councils and Roads and Maritime Services to implement these changes to reduce the impost on local communities of unattended boat trailers. I again take this opportunity to acknowledge the work and continuing involvement of the Hon. Duncan Gay, Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, on this important bill. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Motion by Mr Paul Toole agreed to:

That this bill be now read a third time.

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

RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES AND HOUSING LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (PUBLIC HOUSING—ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR) BILL 2015

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 12 August 2015.

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.02 p.m.]: I support the Residential Tenancies and Housing Legislation Amendment (Public Housing—Antisocial Behaviour) Bill 2015. The object of the bill is to amend the Residential Tenancies Act 2010 to:

- (a) introduce a scheme for social housing providers to record strikes against tenants for breaches of social housing tenancy agreements and to seek a termination order on the basis of 3 or more breaches occurring within 12 months that, taken together, justify termination, and
- (b) require the Civil and Administrative Tribunal, on application of a social housing provider, to make a termination order for breach of a social housing tenancy agreement involving the premises being used for certain serious offences including drug manufacture or supply, storing a firearm for which a licence or permit is not held and violence involving grievous bodily harm, and

- (c) require the Tribunal, on application of a social housing provider, to make a termination order for breach of a social housing tenancy agreement in certain other cases unless the tenant satisfies the Tribunal that there are exceptional circumstances justifying the order not being made, and
- (d) introduce a scheme for the submission of neighbourhood impact statements to assist the Tribunal to understand the effect a social housing tenancy has had on neighbouring residents and other persons, and
- (e) allow social housing tenancy agreements to be terminated for non-payment of amounts owed as a consequence of variation or cancellation of rent rebates, and
- (f) limit the period within which an order for possession of social housing premises is to take effect, and
- (g) provide social housing providers with certain evidentiary aids in proceedings before the Tribunal.

This is important legislation; social housing is important. Some 140,000 social housing properties throughout New South Wales are managed by the State, with 60,000 people on the waiting list. Unfortunately; this State does not have a sufficient supply of social housing with demand outstripping supply. We have to reform the way we manage tenants. From the outset I acknowledge that 99.9 per cent of people living in social housing do the right thing. Those good people are living in social housing because they are in need, and the State should help people by supplying social housing. Social housing should not be supplied forever but should be a hand-up when people are doing it tough. It is to give these people an opportunity to get back on their feet and into the private rental market, if possible. We acknowledge that housing in Sydney is very expensive.

The vast majority of social housing tenants do the right thing in looking after themselves, their families and their communities. This bill is not directed at them. However, a few people in public housing cause major concerns to their neighbours and communities. Despite a social housing supply shortage some tenants terrorise, humiliate and harass their neighbours or destroy their properties. Some break up communities—a block of flats, a street or, in some cases, a suburb. They give people living in social housing a bad name. This bill is aimed at better managing these people and not allowing them to stay in social housing, which attracts rights and responsibilities. This legislation is aimed at enforcing those responsibilities.

Parramatta has its fair share of social housing—in fact, 10 per cent of residents of my electorate live in social housing. I will give three examples of difficult situations, which unfortunately are not uncommon, for social housing residents that have been brought to my attention. First, an elderly resident of a block of flats came to see me because her neighbour was suspected of dealing drugs. This neighbour harassed the lady, with people knocking on her door at all hours of the night. She would not leave her flat after dark and instead locked herself in, which was very sad. She cried as she asked me what to do and whether she should complain to the police. In all honesty, I could not advise her to press charges because I knew the drug dealer would continue to harass her and her life would be an absolute misery. This legislation is aimed at alleviating this situation so this poor elderly lady can have a life.

The second example involves many neighbours coming to my office to complain about residents of social housing who were well-known to police and who would never mow the lawn. The police finally caught these residents in possession of stolen goods and they were convicted. Then Housing NSW took them to the Consumer, Trader and Tenancy Tribunal [CTTT] to ask for an eviction notice. However, the CTTT saw fit to be lenient with those residents who had been convicted of being in possession of stolen goods. It made a direction that these residents should not conduct illegal activities from those premises. I could not believe that the law would treat the neighbours, who had complained about this behaviour, in

this way. I had to try to explain to the neighbours how residents of social housing caught doing the wrong thing could be allowed to remain in social housing by the CTTT when those residents had abused their right to be part of the community.

The third example involves an elderly couple who had recently retired and lived next to a social housing property where the resident had some significant issues. One day that resident was seen on the roof of his house without a shirt, ripping off the antenna and threatening to kill his neighbours. The police came to the premises three times, and finally got an apprehended violence order against the antisocial tenant. But again the CTTT decided not to evict that tenant. That is not an adequate response. People in social housing should not have to be in fear of living next to criminals or those who engage in antisocial behaviour. Yes, they have their rights, but they also have responsibilities. Criminals and those who behave antisocially should be kicked out of social housing. The good folk in the neighbourhood should not be fearful of making complaints against their antisocial neighbours; and this legislation will allow residents to make confidential neighbourhood impact statements about the bad behaviour of neighbours, and the tribunal has to take that into account. Concerned tenants will be able to make those statements without fear of retaliation.

This legislation puts on notice all tenants who commit such breaches of tenancy agreements. It will address issues that the tribunal seems to have been inadequately addressing in the past. People are dumbfounded when one tries, as a parliamentarian, to explain how it is that their antisocial neighbours can be convicted of dealing in drugs and committing other crimes yet still remain as their neighbours in public housing, especially when there are 60,000 people on the public housing waiting lists. Many people want to move into Parramatta because it is such a wonderful place.

A number of agencies have contacted me. They have told me they want to meet with me and explain why the rights of these people and the CTTT should not be removed. Clearly, the tribunal has failed many communities, not just in Parramatta but throughout the State. Unfortunately, that is why the Government has to bring forward this legislation. We must ensure that we protect the rights of the vast majority, the 99 per cent of good people who live in social housing and in private housing. It is their right to live in a safe and harmonious community without being terrorised by thugs. That is why I support this legislation. We should now put the rights of good people above those who do not do the right thing. The pendulum should swing the right way—back towards those preserving the rights of those in the community who are doing the right thing; and those who are doing wrong things should be kicked out of social housing. I still support the premise that we should kick these bums out if they do the wrong thing.

I conclude by thanking Minister Hazzard for putting this important legislation before the House. It redresses the current problem of abuses of the system, causing older people to lock themselves in at night, putting streets in fear of what their antisocial neighbours will do, worrying about their criminal activities such as drug dealing, as well as other antisocial behaviour such as playing loud music and knocking on the doors of good residents. It is an absolute sham that these antisocial residents should be protected; they should be kicked out onto the street. Social housing is a privilege. People in social and private housing have the right to have a safe, harmonious and secure environment. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) [12.12 p.m.]: I speak in debate on the Residential Tenancies and Housing Legislation Amendment (Public Housing—Antisocial Behaviour) Bill 2015. As a new member in this place, I am often asked by fellow members, by colleagues in the upper House and by people throughout my community, what it is like to be a local member of Parliament and the sort of work that I deal with in my electorate office. Overwhelmingly—and I am sure this would be the case for a significant proportion of members in this place—the single biggest issue which my staff and I deal with through the electorate office relates to public housing services.

Before I address the substance of the bill today, I want to outline the experience of a constituent of mine in the Blue Mountains; and it is not unusual. This woman came to my office very soon after the

election. She is living in accommodation in Katoomba, in the upper Blue Mountains, which is managed by Wentworth Housing on behalf of the New South Wales Government. When this young woman moved in, towards the beginning of the year, many repairs were required to her accommodation, and the heating system was broken. She had been assured at that time that it would be fixed in time for winter. Fast forward to April and early May, once she had been in touch with my office. The heating was still not fixed. Winter was fast approaching and there had still been no action on the broken heater.

Throughout this period, my office had been back and forth with the housing provider on behalf of this constituent, trying to get the provider to act on this plainly inadequate situation. As all members would know, in July it snowed throughout the upper mountains, and throughout winter it is regularly three or four degrees below zero with the wind chill factor around Katoomba. In my view, this Government failed in its duty of care to this family. It failed to provide basic services to a young mum and her children, in an area in which it knew they would experience extremely low temperatures. Rather than the Minister for Social Housing coming into this Chamber with punitive legislation that is designed to demonise vulnerable people living in social housing, my feedback to him would be to get out of this place in the city, come to the Blue Mountains and meet a few of the housing tenants in my electorate who have to tolerate the department's inadequate and tardy delivery of basic services.

Members in this place would likely have read the combined briefing paper provided by Eastern Area Tenants Service, the Marrickville Legal Centre, the Redfern Legal Centre and the Kingsford Legal Centre. This briefing paper analyses the impact of the proposed legislation on the communities to which these vital services provide assistance. Community legal centres—experts in the impact of this sort of legislation—provide tenancy advocacy services and caseworkers for social housing tenants as well as vulnerable citizens. They have expressed concern at the erosion of the rule of law for public housing tenants. They hold grave concerns for the impacts of proposed mandatory terminations, and they view the three-strikes provision as being ripe for abuse by vexatious landlords.

This bill will allow for anonymous evidence to be considered by the tribunal in determining whether a termination of a tenancy should go ahead. This flies in the face of the basic, universal legal principle that people are entitled to face their accusers and to know and understand the full extent or nature of the allegations against them. Given the prejudices which we know to exist against public housing tenants, this opens the door to the abuse of the tribunal by vexatious neighbours who may seek to settle inter-personal disputes with anonymous and specious claims.

Another basic legal principle that the Liberals' policy will undermine is the assumption that we are all equal before the law. By reducing the rights of public housing tenants and leaving alone the rights of private tenants, we are creating a two-tiered system, one which runs along stark class lines and which exclusively targets the disadvantaged and the poor. There is antisocial and criminal behaviour throughout society. It is as prevalent in the homes of the poor as it is in the homes of the wealthy, though the reporting and handling of it can often be quite different. Evidence of antisocial and criminal behaviour is to be gathered by police and tested by the courts. The problem with this legislation is that, for the poor and vulnerable people who occupy public housing accommodation, these basic principles of law are turned on their heads.

Finally, the proposed changes to the Act will dramatically increase the demand on already struggling community legal centres, as vulnerable citizens are forced to engage with a legal system that is beyond their means and beyond their experience. The Elizabeth Evatt Community Legal Centre in the Blue Mountains operates the Blue Mountains Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service from its office in Katoomba. It has one full-time equivalent tenancy advocate position, and is responsible for providing legal assistance in tenancy disputes from Lapstone in the east, to Mt Victoria in the west. Because of the service's proximity to Lithgow, it also picks up a substantial amount of spillover work from the Lithgow-Oberon region. The service is already flat out providing a complete service to vulnerable citizens who are facing difficulty under the current system. Jo Hibbert and Ben Connor from Blue Mountains Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service explain that one of their biggest concerns with the Government's

proposals is the implication of vicarious liability—wherein a tenant would be held responsible for the actions of a third party.

What does this mean for the single mum whose adult or adolescent son is found to be guilty of drug possession? What about the women in abusive relationships who are not in a position to throw out a violent partner who may be engaged in criminal activity? These vulnerable people will be rendered homeless, likely in a way that makes it impossible to find a private rental, for the actions of a third party. This is an appalling outcome. Just as the Minister appears to have been too busy to ensure his department is providing basic services to all of its tenants in the mountains, I note that he has been too busy to find money in this year's budget to adequately fund tenancy advocates to assist people with the punitive legislation he has proposed.

This is dog-whistle legislation. Just like their conservative mates in Canberra, the Liberals in New South Wales know that the best way to rally support from their base is to go out and find a vulnerable group in society and demonise them. Since immigration is beyond their remit, the conservatives in State Government must settle for demonising public housing tenants. The public housing system run by this Government is bad enough already, so I do not come to this place seeking to demonise the poor—I am fighting to see a fairer, more equitable and supportive program in place for public housing tenants. I will fight for holistic, wraparound services with affordable housing at the core. I am fighting to see affordable housing built in key regions so that working-class people can live near their jobs and not spend 50 per cent to 60 per cent of their income on rent. These are the housing reforms that this Government should be examining. Instead, the New South Wales Liberals are addicted to stamp duty from ever-increasing house prices and they are addicted to dog whistle.

On this side of the House we know that the only way you break through the cycle of disadvantage and marginalisation that exists throughout our community is to give people secure, affordable housing as well as access to decent, proactive healthcare systems and lifelong education. This Government is failing conspicuously on these measures. It is selling off public housing, demonising whoever is left and hammering the TAFE sector to make it harder for people to get the skills they need for a good job. Labor will be moving amendments to the bill to protect innocent parties from termination orders and to ensure that people who do receive a termination order are given enough time to make arrangements before possession is taken of their home. We will also be moving amendments to ensure procedural fairness for vulnerable tenants to protect them from being steamrolled by landlords or the department, and we will be moving to ensure that anonymous evidence is provided to tenants so they can actually respond to the allegations against them.

I concur with the combined Community Legal Centres NSW recommendations. The most vulnerable people in society must not be disproportionately affected by changes to this legislation. Labor's amendments will take the harsh edge off this Government's legislation. I encourage everyone to give those amendments serious consideration. By all means, deal with antisocial behaviour or illegal activity in society—deal with it wherever it occurs—but tying action on criminal behaviour to legislation that sits within the public housing domain is unfair and does nothing to improve the lives of vulnerable public housing tenants. It will make their lives even more difficult.

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.22 p.m.]: I support the Residential Tenancies and Housing Legislation Amendment (Public Housing—Antisocial Behaviour) Bill 2015. I commend the Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Social Housing, the Hon. Brad Hazzard, for introducing this bill. Listening to the member for Blue Mountains, I am not quite sure whether the Opposition is supporting or opposing the bill, because it is certainly supporting the 0.1 per cent of the element of bad public housing tenants—and there are bad public housing tenants just as there are bad people in society.

The member for Parramatta rightly said that 99.9 per cent of public housing tenants are very good tenants. This bill is not aimed at the 99.9 per cent of good public housing tenants; it is aimed at the 0.1

per cent of those tenants who are creating a bad image for public housing. They are the tenants who are giving public housing tenants a bad name and the Opposition wants to support them, calling them "vulnerable". Well, they are not the vulnerable party in this. The unfortunate reality is that the vulnerable party is those good public housing tenants whose name is tarnished by these vandals—people who have loud music, who break palings on picket fences, who urinate on next-door neighbours' houses and are free to get away with it because currently there is no legislation that will evict them from those premises.

Dr Hugh McDermott: There is.

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS: That legislation is not being used and that is why this legislation is being introduced. The most common issues raised in my electorate office come from people in public housing who complain about other public housing tenants. They complain of antisocial behaviour, loud parties and rocks thrown at cars and roofs. Police are constantly being called and incident numbers are recorded, yet those tenants remain. The judicial system has been in favour of and supports these people because, as the Opposition says, they are vulnerable. They are not the vulnerable ones here; they are the ones who are causing mischief in the neighbourhood. They are not the ones who suffer as a consequence of this poor behaviour such as loud music at night. I applaud the Minister. He has done the right thing.

The public housing tenants in my electorate will support this legislation. Patty McDonald is one of those residents. She has been to my office on a number of occasions. Patty appeared on *A Current Affair* because she was frustrated that nothing was happening with bad public housing tenants. Patty has been a public housing tenant for years. She is a terrific person. She looks after her property. She does everything right, but she sees other people who abuse that privilege, who destroy their property. At times she struggles to get public housing to fix a flyscreen, yet they are in the house next door installing a new kitchen and a new bathroom every three years because people abuse the system—and they are still in there. Why are they still there? This bill is aimed at getting rid of those tenants and creating good neighbourhoods. An article in the *Daily Examiner*, under the title "Woman outs bad neighbours on A Current Affair", stated:

"There are a lot of good people here, remember that", Ms McDonald said ...

She said the community was very supportive of her standing up against her aggressive neighbours ...

"So I can't sit here and let those people get away with it."

She said the system needed to change because taxpayer money was wasted on repairs.

Last year \$10.4 million worth of damage was done to public housing. That money would have gone a long way to building new public housing for the most vulnerable. The public housing waiting list is enormous yet we continually mollycoddle those who vandalise it. This has got to stop, and that is exactly what this legislation is doing. Patty went on to say:

"The problem isn't being fixed, it's just being moved on. The destructive tenants are being moved from one house to another, to another, before they end up in the same place."

"It's like a circle."

I assure Patty that this legislation will change that. If social housing tenants break the law and cause disruption then we have a new 600-bed facility being built at Grafton that will accommodate them. I am pleased that the Baird-Grant Government is committed to making social housing better and stronger with these social housing reforms. This promise was made before the 2015 election. We promised to crack down on antisocial and illegal behaviour in social housing. I am thrilled that the legislation will include a

one-strike policy for those who seriously breach their tenancy agreements.

The NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal must terminate a tenancy where it is proven that the individual has committed certain serious criminal offences, including serious drug offences. No longer can a drug dealer live in subsidised social housing forever and a day. That will end. Further, the legislation implements a three-strike policy so that Family and Community Services officials can issue a notice of termination if a tenant has received three breaches of tenancy agreement notices in a 12-month period. What is wrong with that? If someone is renting from a private landlord and breaks their tenancy agreement, they are out. Those in public housing should be subject to the same laws.

Mr David Mehan: It is the same law.

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS: That law is not working, otherwise Patty McDonald would not appear on *A Current Affair* and I would not have constituents in my office complaining about the antisocial behaviour emanating from public housing tenants and need for police presence time and again. If the member opposite wants to support the bad guys, that is fine. He can sit on that side of the House and call them vulnerable and needy. I say that 99.9 per cent of public housing tenants are good tenants. A long list of people is waiting to move into public housing but they are prohibited from doing so because these hooligans and thugs are running the show. It is about time they were stopped from running the show. This legislation will enable us to achieve that aim.

Another facet of this legislation will introduce confidential neighbourhood impact statements so that neighbours such as Patty McDonald are protected from recriminations. She was not afraid to come forward to speak her mind. She is trying to improve living standards in public housing and the health and wellbeing of residents in south Grafton. I commend Patty for having the courage to speak up. The changes to the legislation will increase the likelihood that tenants who fraudulently claim a rental subsidy pay back the money by classifying the debt as rent arrears. If they do not pay, they can be evicted. I am surprised that the Opposition, who supposedly supports the bill, is so vehemently opposing it. I cannot understand why the Opposition is not supporting public housing tenants.

Dr Hugh McDermott: We are. You obviously do not listen.

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS: I am listening. All I heard from the member for Blue Mountains was that the most vulnerable people must be protected in court. Members opposite suggest that the most vulnerable people will end up in court. They will end up in court because they have been charged due to their antisocial behaviour and their abuse of the privilege to live in public housing. It is about time we got rid of these people. The new facility will be ready in Grafton by 2019. If public housing hooligans continue to break the law, they will end up in court. I commend the bill to the House. I thank the Minister for introducing such a worthy bill.

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) [12.32 p.m.]: I speak in debate on the Residential Tenancies and Housing Legislation Amendment (Public Housing—Antisocial Behaviour) Bill 2015. I have many concerns about the bill in its current form and I urge all members to support the amendments being proposed by the Opposition before they vote on the bill. The object of the bill is to amend the legislation that currently regulates the relationship between landlord and tenant in this State, the Residential Tenancies Act 2010 and the Housing Act 2001. The bill will amend part 7 of the Residential Tenancies Act 2010 and the changes will affect all social housing tenancy agreements. This includes public housing tenancies as well as social housing tenancy agreements entered into with each of the 133 community housing landlords who are registered to operate in New South Wales. Importantly, the proposed changes will not affect private tenancy agreements.

I note at the outset that there has been no genuine consultation with the relevant community groups affected by this bill. The Government has failed to show the need for a new law to address behaviour that can be addressed by the current law. Under the current tenancy law, landlords can apply

to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal for orders to terminate a tenancy on the grounds that the premises have been used for an illegal purpose. Where this is proved, the tribunal may terminate the tenancy or, at its discretion, decline to terminate, given the circumstances of the case. New section 154D will remove the tribunal's discretion to decline to make termination orders, but only for social and public housing tenants. The tribunal's discretion will be removed in cases where it is satisfied that a high-level crime has been committed on or near the premises, including drug-related crime, firearms offences and violence occasioning grievous bodily harm. New section 154D (c) (ii) states:

... the tenant or other person has been charged with an offence relating to those circumstances (whether or not the person is or has been found guilty of the offence).

The tribunal will be required to terminate the tenancy regardless of whether the tenant is involved with or even aware of the conduct in question. The tribunal's discretion will be limited to considering exceptional circumstances of the case where it is satisfied that premises have been used for any other lawful purpose that justifies termination. They are listed in the bill. Again, this will apply regardless of whether the tenant was involved in, or even aware of, the conduct in question. When introducing the bill in the Legislative Assembly on 5 August 2015, the Hon. Brad Hazzard, MP, Minister for Social Housing, made reference to a particular scenario:

... a mother and son are living together in social housing with the mother holding the lease and the son found to be dealing drugs. While the mother is the tenant and is liable for the breach, if she is unaware of the drug dealing it is unlikely she will be evicted.

The bill will not produce that outcome. Quite simply, if the mother in this scenario is taken to the tribunal because of her son's conduct her tenancy will be terminated. To avoid the loss of her tenancy, her landlord will have to refrain from taking the matter to the tribunal. Thus the bill transfers the question of discretion on termination of tenancies away from the tribunal and places it in the hands of social housing landlords. This assumes they will not pursue matters that will result in an unjust outcome.

The case of the *Aboriginal Housing Office v Corrie* [2013] NSWCTTT 650 demonstrated clearly that this is not always so. The tenancy manager in that case was Housing NSW. It took Mrs Corrie to the tribunal after her casual boyfriend conducted several \$10 to \$20 marijuana deals from her social housing property over two weeks. The tribunal terminated the tenancy, believing it had no discretion to decline to make such an order because of the District Court's decision in the *New South Wales Land and Housing Corporation v Cain* [2013] NSWDC 68. This was subsequently overturned by the New South Wales Court of Appeal, but not before the Corrie matter was decided. In making this decision, the tribunal noted that the tenant was not involved in the drug deals, had not been charged, had cooperated with police, had no previous trouble with her tenancy, was an Aboriginal single mother with prior experience of domestic violence and mental illness and had no experience of renting privately, and that her four young children were settled in a local school. At the time the tribunal stated:

... if I had discretion whether or not to terminate the tenancy agreement, I would exercise that discretion in favour of the tenant and I would refuse to make the order of termination.

If this bill becomes law, the tribunal will have no such discretion—and it will make that statement again. Given such matters make their way to the tribunal from time to time, it is important that the tribunal retains its discretion not to terminate. I note new sections 154B, 154C and 156A set up a new three-strike rule. It has been a long time since a three-strike rule was suggested as a solution for social problems. Perhaps the Minister is betraying his age. The terminology comes from the 1980s. I thought it had gone the way of the television series *Miami Vice*, but *Miami Vice* is replayed in this bill. The bill provides that a social housing tenancy may be terminated for a series of breaches, each of which taken alone would not be sufficient to justify termination under existing sections 87 and 152 of the current Act.

I want to talk about the Liberal philosophy in relation to this bill. The Liberal philosophy, as I

understand it, has always stressed the importance of the rule of law and equality before the law. This bill is proof positive that those opposite are "Liberals" in name only. The bill creates different laws for a particular class of person: public and social housing tenants. It provides that public and social housing tenants are treated differently from tenants who rent in the private market. This is a remarkable abrogation of the Liberal principle by those opposite. The bill does not address the social problems that are at the root of antisocial behaviour in these communities. It just moves the problem on and strikes the innocent and guilty alike.

The bill will not help Dianne, who came to my office last week distressed after her landlord had exercised his right to end her expired but ongoing tenancy agreement. Dianne was concerned that she would find no other accommodation in the area and had expressed that concern to the landlord. The estate agent said that if she was not out of her accommodation by the due date she would be put on the tenant blacklist, referred to as TICA. When, fortunately, she found other rental accommodation she was then declined assistance with her bond by the Minister's department. This bill addresses none of her concerns. Likewise, this bill does not address the concerns of Michelle and her neighbours at Lisbon Close, Wyoming, whom I met the other week. They are concerned for their security. They want the street lighting repaired, the vacant and overgrown Housing NSW blocks cleared, and the vegetation in the common area pruned and cleared.

Mrs Tanya Davies: There is a 1300 number they can ring.

Mr DAVID MEHAN: The member for Mulgoa mentions a phone number. These tenants ring that number all the time but nothing happens because of Government cutbacks. We will not improve social conditions by making life harder for disadvantaged communities.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): Order! Members will come to order.

Mr DAVID MEHAN: There is less social and affordable housing than is needed. This bill does not address that issue. I acknowledge the work done by the New South Wales Tenants Union in scrutinising this bill and providing information to all members of Parliament. I call on the Government to heed the request of the Tenants Union to withdraw this bill and amend the legislation as those on this side of the House have suggested. The Government must develop a plan to tackle the issues of social disadvantage and the lack of affordable housing.

Mr GLENN BROOKES (East Hills) [12.42 p.m.]: I support the Residential Tenancies and Housing Legislation Amendment (Public Housing—Antisocial Behaviour) Bill 2015. This bill will deliver much-needed reform to our tenancy laws, giving public housing tenants a "three strikes you're out" system for less serious offences and a "one strike you're out" rule for serious offences. Before discussing the definitions of "serious crime" and how the system works, I would like to talk about the East Hills electorate and the change in housing tenants over the years. As some members may know, I grew up in a Housing Commission house in Matthews Avenue, East Hills, and I lived there until I could afford to buy a family home. Our house in Matthews Avenue, humble as it was, was our castle. We treated it as if it were our own and never forgot our sense of gratitude and responsibility that came with custodianship of that property. My family treated that house in the same way as I treat the house I live in now.

When I think of all the memories I have growing up in that Housing Commission house, I cannot understand how people would misuse or abuse such an opportunity. I cannot think of a greater gift than to provide vulnerable members of our society with a permanent and stable roof over their heads. Those who abuse the generosity of this State simply do not deserve it in the first place. For every bad housing tenant that misuses this privilege, there are hundreds—if not thousands—of families waiting to be offered a house. They would love and cherish that opportunity. The majority of the 3,000 Housing NSW houses in my electorate have good, decent families living in them. These good tenants understand and appreciate the privilege afforded to them. They understand, as I understood throughout my childhood, that a Housing NSW home is a privilege, not a right.

It is the decent applicants and tenants of social housing who are most outraged when they hear of misconduct or misuse by Housing NSW tenants. For the handful of bad tenants, this bill will assist in delivering swift punishments and ensure that the limited resources are given to people in our community who deserve and appreciate them. The total tenant damage in 2013-14 for New South Wales was a huge \$10.4 million plus. Without going into the details, a serious case in Lawler Street, Panania, took more than 12 months to solve. Had this bill been in effect, locals would have seen a swift result and would not have lived in fear of their lives during that time. Instead, under the current system they had to endure tenants shooting at each other outside a house; the neighbouring school being placed into lockdown twice as the tenant avoided police arrest by running into the school; disturbing behaviour at all times of the night; and threats of physical harm to residents of the street.

To add insult to injury, it was discovered that this particular family had been moved to Lawler Street after committing similar acts in two other areas. Rather than taking the privilege of housing away from them the first time, the only solution the tribunal and the department came up with, on two occasions, was to reward them with a new house in a new area. This bill will ensure that following the first serious strike a bad tenant will be stripped of the gift that so many others in our State want and require.

The bill will ensure that the tribunal issues a termination order when required by a housing provider, based on the following serious offences: the property is being used for the manufacture or supply of drugs; storing a firearm for which a licence or permit is not held; violence involving grievous bodily harm; non-payment of amounts owed as a consequence of variation or cancellation of rent rebates; the tenant or someone jointly occupying the property causing serious damage to the premises or any neighbouring property, including common areas; a tenant or joint occupant causing harm to the landlord or the landlord's agent, an employee or contractor of the landlord or the landlord's agent, or an occupier or person on neighbouring property; the property is used as a brothel; the tenant is charged with the offence of producing, distributing and possessing child abuse material; and the tenant is found to have used the property for the rebirthing of cars and boats.

The bill also requires the tribunal to make the termination effective immediately unless there are mitigating circumstances. A termination notice will deliver the swift justice that the community deserves. Many locals who put up with bad housing tenants and who are abused or intimidated by these tenants will finally be liberated. They can again feel free, knowing this Government is on their side and has taken the relevant steps to fix the situation. Under this bill, community impact statements will hold the same relevance in helping establish the urgency of obtaining termination from the tribunal. With the introduction of these laws, individuals can feel confident about coming forward and speaking out to help with bad tenants being removed for good. I commend the bill to the House.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) [12.49 p.m.]: I support the proposed Opposition amendments to the Residential Tenancies and Housing Legislation Amendment (Public Housing—Antisocial Behaviour) Bill 2015. The Government is introducing a bill that significantly alters the tribunal process in regard to social housing tenancy and limits the discretion available to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. If this bill is passed in its present form, the tribunal will be mandated to evict social housing tenants if they are found to have committed an offence from a prescribed list.

The Opposition understands that reform is needed to improve the safety of social housing tenants and neighbouring communities. Tenants have the right to clean, safe and affordable housing, and ought not to be endangered by the actions of their neighbours. However, the Opposition, unlike the Baird Government, understands that there are shades of grey when it comes to the tribunal process. The Opposition also understands that the issues surrounding problem tenants is often rooted in social disadvantage, mental illness, drug abuse and lack of education.

The Opposition agrees that a social housing tenant who manufactures, sells or supplies drugs, stores a firearm without a licence, commits an act of violence that results in grievous bodily harm, uses

social housing as an illegal brothel, or produces or disseminates child abuse material or rebirths cars or boats should be penalised appropriately. In many cases, that will involve eviction. It is important to understand the distinction between criminal law and tenancy law when dealing with those matters. The offences I have mentioned are very serious and are already punishable under the existing criminal justice system, as they should be. I have no hesitation in supporting the punishment of those who store illegal firearms, manufacture illicit drugs or commit the other mentioned offences, and I especially have no hesitation in punishing those who abuse children.

But that is an issue of criminal law, not social housing policy. The unsightly reality of social housing is that often it is the only housing available to convicted criminals who have served their court-mandated sentences. Much of the purpose of social housing is to reduce crime in the long term by keeping those with criminal histories off the streets and reducing the number of motives they have to continue to commit serious crimes. As unsightly as it is, the State Government must be prepared to accept that reality and understand that it is its job to strike the appropriate balance between effectively managing problem tenants and protecting society's most vulnerable people.

That is exactly the alternative offered by the Opposition. The Opposition proposes that the tribunal maintain its discretion in a range of circumstances. The first is protecting the innocent. The Opposition does not believe that an entire household should be evicted if only one member of that household has committed an offence. Secondly, orders for possession should take no effect later than 28 days for one- or three-strike terminations for criminal or antisocial behaviour, and no later than 60 days for all other terminations, including rent arrears. Thirdly, the tribunal needs to have regard to the remedies of breaches. The whole purpose of the tribunal is to seek fair and effective justice at low cost. It is not necessarily an adversarial system. Tenants ought to have their existing efforts to remedy a problem taken into account.

Fourthly, out-of-time submissions should be allowed in some circumstances, especially as many of the tenants who are at risk of termination often have issues with low literacy, may be the victims of domestic violence and/or have medical issues that prevent them from responding quickly. Finally, for the purposes of safety, neighbourhood impact statements should not identify complainants. Essentially, the Opposition is calling on the Baird Government not to view social housing tenancy in black and white, especially when it comes to tribunal hearings. Effective policy requires the precision of a surgeon's knife, not a baseball bat.

The issue of social housing across New South Wales, and particularly in Western Sydney, is a very important one. Every day our electorate offices in Western Sydney deal with a raft of social housing issues raised by constituents who fear they have nowhere else to go. Due to a range of poor decisions in the past, which were often made with the best of intentions, we have been left with entire social housing estates that are seen as the bad part of town. It is not uncommon in some areas, particularly in Western Sydney, to see houses with boarded windows and graffiti, children without good role models and the harsh effects of the ice epidemic. The structural problems are deep.

As a Labor member of Parliament, I believe in social equality. It is our core belief as a party. As the New South Wales Opposition, we believe in a robust and sensible approach to social housing and that we must care for our society's most vulnerable people. The Baird Government does not seem to understand those facts. Already it has evicted all but seven community members of a Sydney icon, the Sirius Building, and has sold off the historic Millers Point neighbourhood. To quote the member for Sydney, this is an act of social cleansing.

Herein lies the main problem with the Baird Government—and possibly every future Liberal government—money comes first. Historical communities are being demolished to build shiny buildings to sell to society's wealthiest, or at least to the most savvy foreign property investors. Herein lies the key distinction that separates the Opposition from the Baird Government: Labor puts people first; the Baird Government puts money first. It is as simple as that.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): Order! Members on both sides of the House will come to order. The member for Prospect will be heard in silence.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT: The Baird Government's policy in relation to social housing has been to demolish whole streets and start again without regard to generations-old communities or the history of our State and without compassion towards the disadvantaged members of our society. This Government wiped out the Millers Point community for a quick buck. And where do the profits go? The answer lies in a case study in the electorate of Prospect. Recently the Baird Government announced that the proceeds from the sale of the Millers Point community would go towards 11 new single-bedroom apartments in Smithfield—just 11 apartments.

Despite 56,000 families being on the waiting list for social housing across New South Wales, a dire shortage of three- and four-bedroom dwellings and a 20-year waiting list for social housing in the Prospect electorate, the Government has committed to building only 11 new one-bedroom units. Surely the Government can do better than that. The Baird Government is continuing to seriously neglect the social housing needs of New South Wales. It is willing to use the proceeds of electricity grid privatisation to fund tax cuts for the biggest corporations and slap a bedroom tax on society's poorest. As I said earlier, the Baird Government cares about money, not people.

Sadly, every time I get a call from a constituent who has been on the waiting list for social housing for 10 years or longer, I know they are only halfway through the process of obtaining social housing. If the Baird Government was serious about improving the lives of social housing tenants in New South Wales, it would not accept a 20-year waiting list for social housing. The severe shortage of social housing is one of the biggest crises facing our State, if not the biggest crisis. The disadvantage that is perpetuated over generations must be stopped. There is no simple solution, such as the Government's attempt with this bill.

Threatening social housing tenants with eviction by changing rules for lawyers does little to solve underlying problems. They can be solved only with increased efforts on improving education; accessing health care, jobs and opportunity; improving transport; implementing a culture of equality; working to end discrimination; and effectively managing and preventing the effects of domestic violence and child abuse. That is another difference between the Opposition and the Baird Liberal Government: We understand the need for long-term structural solutions to end disadvantage.

What the Government has offered is not even a bandaid solution. It is better than nothing but it will prove to be extremely ineffective in the long term. The Opposition will support this bill with the necessary amendments. The disadvantaged people in our society should not be forced to live near those who are committing very serious and dangerous offences. The Opposition's amendments better articulate this objective. For many of the serious offences that lead to termination of tenancy, there are existing provisions under criminal law to deal with them. Neighbours of tenants who have committed a dangerous offence will be safe as in most cases the guilty party will be sent to jail.

Prior to the 2015 State election, many of my volunteers and I heard the same story when we doorknocked in disadvantaged areas. Often a household would be occupied by an elderly person, a refugee family or a disabled person who faced the issue of antisocial behaviour by their neighbour. "Antisocial" is a broad description. Some of the complaints I heard included a window being broken on a weekly basis by a neighbour who kept throwing bricks over the fence. Very common were stories about the enormous impact of drug abuse that plagues our community.

Ultimately, the Opposition's argument to amend some elements of the bill is that social housing and the issues that surround these tenants are individualised and complex. There is no blanket solution. The Government is already failing a vulnerable portion of our society—hundreds of thousands of people. Governance is not about shiny new buildings and catchy slogans funded by the taxpayer; it is about ensuring we have a cohesive and fair society. Shamefully, the Baird Government is failing on this

important concept. Introducing provisions to protect the community by removing dangerous tenants from social housing is essential, and the Opposition supports this motive. However, the tribunal must retain some discretion in practically dealing with cases in the future. The State Government needs to acknowledge the disadvantage faced by many social housing tenants. I commend the amendments to the House. [*Time expired.*]

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.59 p.m.]: I support the Residential Tenancies and Housing Legislation Amendment (Public Housing—Antisocial Behaviour) Bill 2015. Towards the end of my contribution I will address the comments of the member for Prospect as I have a few comments to add. I congratulate the Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Social Housing and his team, some of whom are in the advisers area, who have worked carefully to develop a bill that I believe responds to an overwhelming chorus of tenants and community housing providers calling for the Government to provide a safer and more secure social housing system. As the Parliamentary Secretary for Youth Affairs and Homelessness, I have had the great privilege to join Minister Hazzard in visiting the homes of a number of social housing tenants. We have visited Bonnyrigg, Potts Hill and Telopea, with the excellent member for Parramatta.

I have also visited Washington Park at Riverwood with former New South Wales Premier Morris Iemma. During these tours and site visits I was impressed with the style of the built form, integrated functionality and quality fit-out that are the new social housing forms. But more significantly, I was pleased by the tenants overwhelming appreciation and joy expressed as they proudly take us on a tour of their home. And these properties are their homes. The properties are where many are raising young children, where more mature tenants are caring for elderly parents and where great people are living productive lives. These properties are their homes. Just as we in this House expect to live in properties and communities that are secure and safe, so too the expectation of social housing tenants is to live in properties and communities that are safe and secure.

The clear message we have received from social housing tenants and managers is that we need social housing to be safe and secure. How it is operating at the moment is not good enough. The purpose of the Residential Tenancies and Housing Legislation Amendment (Public Housing—Antisocial Behaviour) Bill 2015 is to make social housing safer for the tenants and many vulnerable people who live in that housing and to address antisocial, illegal and fraudulent behaviour. Social housing providers across New South Wales manage 140,000 tenancies. Most social housing tenants are good tenants. They are law-abiding people who treat their properties and neighbours with respect and appreciation. As I said, the tenants I have had the privilege to meet were grateful and very happy tenants who have turned their social housing properties into warm, inviting homes.

However, a minority of tenants choose to engage in antisocial behaviour. This behaviour can range from ongoing nuisance and annoyance to outright physical violence or the manufacture of and dealing in illegal drugs and other activities. This behaviour adversely impacts on neighbours and the broader community. The law-abiding tenants are threatened, intimidated and sometimes do not leave their properties at night. It is only fair and right in a just society that all current tenants comply with the terms of their tenancy agreement, including respect for their property and the property of others, and respect for their neighbours. The 2014 Public Accounts Committee report on tenancy management identified the need for better management of antisocial behaviour in and around public housing.

A recent survey of 780 tenants indicated that 78 per cent think antisocial behaviour in public housing is a problem and 72 per cent think eviction is an appropriate response for people who commit criminal acts in public housing—I repeat: for those who commit criminal acts. It also found that 51 per cent of tenants have experienced antisocial behaviour in public housing and one-third have experienced or witnessed serious crime. On 25 May 2015 Minister Hazzard hosted a social and affordable housing forum at the Australian Technology Park. At this forum leaders from the finance, banking, housing and not-for-profit sectors and tenants shared their skills and perspectives to provide direct feedback on the barriers to more housing for those in need. It was a unique opportunity to develop positive proposals for

the community and private sector to partner together in delivering more and better quality social housing.

After a four-hour forum involving hundreds of participants, six key themes emerged. One theme was the requirement for government to provide safe and secure housing for those who need it. The message has been made clear. Our social housing tenants want safe and secure environments, and this will demonstrate that the Government has heard our tenants and our communities. It also demonstrates that the Government is committed to improving the quality of life for people living in social housing. It is also a demonstration of and a commitment to our election promises. The primary goal of the bill is to improve the behaviour of a minority of tenants engaging in antisocial, illegal and fraudulent behaviour, and to create safer communities for the majority of law-abiding tenants, including those who are ageing and vulnerable.

The bill amends the residential tenancies and housing Acts to introduce the one-strike policy that will require the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT] to make a termination order for a breach of a social housing tenancy agreement where an occupant has been charged with illegally storing firearms or show cause offences under the Bail Act, particularly drug supply or manufacture and violence involving grievous bodily harm. Concern has been raised about the impact of the one-strike policy on potential innocent victims who have been caught up by the illegal actions of others. The bill will help to protect vulnerable tenants by removing those engaged in serious breaches of their tenancy agreement from their social housing property. If a tenancy is at risk through the one-strike process because of the behaviour of other household members, the Department of Family and Community Services will still have to prove, as now, that the tenant intentionally or recklessly caused or permitted the behaviour.

Family and Community Services will continue to respond to cases where people with a vulnerability, such as those who experience mental illness or disability, get caught up in situations for which they are not responsible. The Residential Tenancies and Housing Legislation Amendment (Public Housing—Antisocial Behaviour) Bill 2015 amends the Residential Tenancies and Housing Acts to require the NCAT to terminate social housing tenancies in certain other serious cases such as running a brothel unless there are exceptional circumstances. Should the tribunal not terminate a tenancy in such cases, it will be required to document its reason for that decision. The amendments introduce a three-strikes policy to deal with repeated low-level antisocial behaviour by recording strikes against tenants for breaches of social housing tenancies, and when three strikes occur within a 12-month period to seek a termination order.

The amendments introduce neighbourhood impact statements to assist the NCAT to understand the effect that antisocial or illegal behaviour has on neighbouring residents and other persons, and reinstate the previous arrangements—overturned by a recent NCAT decision—that when a tenant has fraudulently claimed a rent subsidy the debt arising is treated as rent arrears and not a separate civil debt. This will make it easier to recoup the money. On these final points in relation to debt and fraudulent claims for rental subsidy, the implications are quite simple. When tenants are not paying their correct and fair share towards their homes it deprives other members of our community of possibly their own homes or much-needed property repairs. Someone in the social housing system misses out. I am pleased that this Liberal-Nationals Coalition Government is addressing that inequity in the current social housing system.

Those who are ripping off the system are ripping off other people who deserve support, who deserve homes and who deserve the maintenance and repairs for which they are waiting. I thank the Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Social Housing and his fantastic team, who I have had the pleasure of working with. They work diligently to turn the social housing system into a fairer, safer and more secure place for our most vulnerable. In regard to the costs on our community and the costs that people on the social housing waiting list are having to sustain, it has been shown that tenant damage in 2013-14 totalled \$10,429,453. Imagine how many homes we would be able to provide with that sum. Every year people are missing out because we are not spending this money on building homes.

[Interruption]

All I am hearing is noise.

Ms Linda Burney: No, you are not. You are hearing me clearly.

Mrs TANYA DAVIES: I am happy to switch off. I refer to the comments of the member for Prospect. During the 16 years of the Labor Government the housing situation grew worse. We are taking serious steps to amend that trend. The Labor Government sold properties to pay for repairs and maintenance; it was cannibalising its own system. We have stopped that now. The Liberal-Nationals Government can be thanked for stopping that crazy practice. Premier Mike Baird has released the Premier's Innovation Initiative and the social benefit bonds proposal.

Premier Baird has facilitated a memorandum of understanding with Infrastructure Partnerships Australia and the Council of Social Service of New South Wales [NCOSS] to work collaboratively to find systemic ways to rework the system to begin to meet the growing need for social housing and to address the current crisis. This Government is determined to put vulnerable people first. We show real and targeted compassion to those in our community who are in need. We will help the vulnerable and work hard to provide them with the support they need. This bill is a large step towards achieving that objective. I commend the Minister for this legislation and I commend the bill to the House.

Ms LINDA BURNNEY (Canterbury) [1.09 p.m.]: I realise that debate on the Residential Tenancies and Housing Legislation Amendment (Public Housing—Antisocial Behaviour) Bill 2015 will be interrupted before I conclude my contribution but I will pick up on some extraordinary comments in the debate thus far, particularly from the member for Mulgoa, who appears to have drunk Kool-Aid. The Opposition is not concerned so much with what is in this bill but with what is not in it. This is why the shadow Minister has crafted a number of amendments that will be put forward to try to remediate the consequences of some measures in this bill, particularly those affecting vulnerable people. As the shadow Minister explained, these amendments will include ensuring that the Consumer, Trader and Tenancy Tribunal examines all the relevant facts concerning a decision to terminate a tenancy agreement and, as I have indicated, is given some discretion where vulnerable tenants are involved.

I have no faith in Housing NSW and the Department of Community Services being able to deal with tenancy issues on their own, given the extraordinary level of job reductions and chaos. I do have faith in the people who work in those agencies because they are dedicated, but there are additional expectations on these people due to job cuts. How do I know that? I know that as well as any member of this House who lives in or represents an area with a high level of social housing. We know the most regular visitors to our offices are people in housing crisis—and I suspect this is the case across this State. Everyone in this House knows that the most desperate people who visit our offices are those who are homeless or have been on the housing waiting list for long periods, many covering the years in which a generation has grown up.

It is true that this waiting list has been an issue for some time. However, if members read the *Hansard* of budget estimates 2014-15 they will see clearly that the then Minister for Housing—Minister Upton, from memory—who started the process of selling houses in Millers Point would not guarantee that the money realised would go back into acquiring more properties. We know it will not, and the budget estimates transcript makes that clear. It is an insult to imply that the Opposition does not understand issues affecting tenants living in social housing where neighbours are not doing the right thing. That is not the issue in question; rather, it is the apparent lack of understanding of what happens to people evicted from public housing and the cumulative impact of evictions. The Minister for Social Housing may explain where this process of evictions ends.

Mr Christopher Gulaptis: Why are they being evicted?

Ms LINDA BURNEY: They end up on the street; there is no question about that, in response to the interjection.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): Order! The member for Clarence will come to order. The member for Canterbury will direct her remarks through the Chair.

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

Pursuant to sessional order community recognition statements proceeded with.

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION STATEMENTS

LOWER CLARENCE RELAY FOR LIFE

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence—Parliamentary Secretary) [1.15 p.m.]: I congratulate the Lower Clarence Relay for Life organising committee on its successful event earlier this year. I particularly congratulate chairperson Lorraine Breust and her committee on their achievement in raising over \$73,000. Funds from the Lower Clarence Relay for Life enabled Cancer Council NSW to establish a new transport-to-treatment service in collaboration with Clarence Valley Community Transport, and maintain the existing home help partnership with CRANES palliative volunteer service.

Cancer Council NSW's transport-to-treatment service enables eligible patients to access free transport to their medical appointments and cancer treatment. Cancer Council NSW's home help programs assist people who have been diagnosed with cancer and their families deal with everyday household tasks such as light housework, dog walking, shopping and carer respite, or simply providing some friendly company. Cancer Council NSW's continued investment into local cancer prevention programs, local support services, advocacy campaigns and cancer research are only made possible through the generosity of the Clarence Valley community. This is an outstanding achievement and I thank them on behalf of the New South Wales Parliament.

TRIBUTE TO GLADYS MORRIS

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON (Blacktown) [1.16 p.m.]: Gladys Daphne Morris was born at home in Blacktown in September 1923. Gladys has lived in Blacktown her whole life and has spent countless hours volunteering in our community to make Blacktown a great place to live. Over many decades Gladys worked to secure the first swimming pool in Blacktown in 1961 and the Blacktown hospital in 1965, and she has helped to organise both the Blacktown and Royal Easter shows, including the final show at Moore Park in 1997 and the first at Homebush in 1998. Since 1981 Gladys has been a member of the Blacktown RSL Sub Branch Women's Auxiliary, serving as honorary treasurer, and has served as administrator for the Bungaribee Day Club since it began in 1985. I was delighted to attend the Bungaribee club's thirtieth birthday celebrations in July this year. I congratulate Gladys on her many years of service to the club and the wider Blacktown community.

PENRITH BICENTENARY

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Trade, Tourism and Major Events, and Minister for Sport) [1.17 p.m.]: I congratulate and recognise Penrith City Council on coordinating the celebration of the bicentenary of Penrith. This year highlights 200 years since the first government building was constructed at the site, a military police depot which is now the Penrith police station, and the city of Penrith was established. This significant milestone will be acknowledged with events that will be held throughout the

year, allowing locals and visitors to celebrate Penrith's vibrant and unique past.

Events include a heritage display at Penrith City Library featuring: important documents and artefacts from the early settlers and explorers; the burying of a time capsule; and ghost tours of The Arms of Australia Inn, Mamre House and the Old Emu Plains Public School. The recent launch of a seven-part bicentenary video series features locals of all ages and backgrounds reminiscing about Penrith and sharing what they love most about our wonderful city. The Bicentenary Community Festival will be held in September at the historic Thornton Oval, which was built in 1870. Penrith is a community that has come a long way in 200 years and which will continue to grow and prosper.

TRIBUTE TO DARRYL MARSHALL

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) [1.18 p.m.]: I acknowledge the contributions to the State Emergency Service [SES] of former Lake Macquarie controller Darryl Marshall, who recently stepped down from the role after 27 years. Darryl has been part of the SES for 35 years and has received national recognition for his work. His departure from the service came just weeks after he expertly directed the Lake Macquarie team's response to the devastating April east coast low weather event, one of the most challenging incidents the unit has experienced. I was privileged to attend Darryl's farewell function at Club Macquarie three weeks ago, at which the high level of respect and affection his former team members have for him was clearly apparent. I wish Darryl and his wife, Joan, well in retirement and congratulate him on his valuable contribution to the SES.

SCONE GRAMMAR SCHOOL OPEN PRIMARY RUGBY LEAGUE TEAM

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) [1.19 p.m.]: I take this opportunity to congratulate the Scone Grammar School Open Primary Rugby League Team on its wonderful achievement in winning the Knights Knockout Rugby League Open Primary grand final held at Hunter Stadium in Newcastle. This team, over the course of a few months, played several games to be at this top level. On 21 May 2015 the team travelled to Croudace Bay to compete in the first rounds of the Newcastle Knights Rugby League Knockout. The competition was made up of 34 teams from around the Hunter Valley area. Scone Grammar School played five pool games against Valentine Public School, Warners Bay Public School, Hamilton South Public School, Tanilba Bay Public School and Telarah Public School, winning all games comfortably. Finishing first in its pool, Scone Grammar School played and beat Nulkaba Public School in the first final. I do not have time to mention all in the team, but it included Beau Devenish, Reagan Holstein, Edward Arnott and Charlie Brooks. [*Time expired.*]

DR HANNAH POWER INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE PRIZE FINALIST

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) [1.20 p.m.]: I congratulate Dr Hannah Power on being one of three finalists—all of whom were female—in the search for an Australian nominee for a prestigious international science prize. Dr Power is a young scientist and lecturer at the University of Newcastle whose research has recently focused on modelling tsunami inundation in New South Wales waterways. Recently she was named runner-up to Australia's successful nominee for the 2015 APEC Science Prize for Innovation and Research Education, and was recognised for her commitment to improving disaster resilience in the Asia-Pacific region. Sadly, the Women in NSW 2014 report found that girls are 14 per cent less likely than boys to study science, technology, engineering and mathematics-related subjects at university. We must celebrate the achievements of female scientists, such as Dr Power, who make up less than 20 per cent of senior scientists nationwide.

CANCER COUNCIL CITY MILE DASH

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson—Parliamentary Secretary) [1.21 p.m.]: I acknowledge the Cancer Council's City Mile Dash, its fourth annual event, held earlier this month. It is a fun and challenging corporate race for everyone to enjoy, while at the same time raising funds for cancer

research. It is also a great way to promote to Sydneysiders the advantage of taking a lunch break, having healthy meals and doing regular exercise to avoid cancer-related risks. On behalf of the Minister for Sport, I fired the starting gun and then ran the mile. It was a great setting at Barangaroo headland, a beautiful urban waterfront renewal, which opened to the public just this past weekend, further showcasing what Sydney has to offer. The Cancer Council's Daffodil Day is on this Friday, 28 August, and I urge all to support this fantastic cause.

BOSSLEY PARK PUBLIC SCHOOL 125TH ANNIVERSARY

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) [1.22 p.m.]: I congratulate Bossley Park Public School on celebrating its 125th anniversary this year. We recognise Bossley Park Public School as one of the oldest public schools in New South Wales, having been established in 1890. I note the long history of Bossley Park Public School and the impact it has had on the Bossley Park community. It provided an alternative school in 1890, so that primary school-aged students would not have to walk several kilometres to school, it was a hub for community volunteer activity throughout the twentieth century, and it has educated thousands of children over many generations from Bossley Park and its surrounding suburbs. I also recognise the importance of public education in New South Wales. I commend the organisers of Bossley Park Public School's anniversary celebration and the principal of Bossley Park Public School, Mr Graeme Brims.

TRIBUTE TO ANDREW JEFFERIES

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) [1.23 p.m.]: I congratulate Andrew Jefferies on his successful term as Mayor on The Hills Shire Council. Mayor Jefferies has served The Hills council with distinction over a number of years, in recent years leading the council in both deputy mayor capacity and his current mayoral role. As was said in today's *Daily Telegraph*, under Mayor Jefferies' bold leadership, auditors at PricewaterhouseCoopers have emphatically stated that The Hills Shire Council is one of the strongest councils in New South Wales. The auditor said further:

On all asset and management ratios, The Hills Shire Council is better than double the benchmarks and those ratios are very hard to actually achieve. The council now meets five of the seven Fit For The Future benchmarks, and was on track to meet a sixth this year. The only benchmark council didn't achieve is a debt service ratio because council is not proposing to have any debt.

This is in no small part due to the great work of Mayor Jefferies and Deputy Mayor Michelle Byrne, a very strong leadership team. The Hills council has a bright future, thanks to Andrew and Michelle. I commend Andrew for his tireless work. While Andrew's moving on will be The Hills council's loss, it will be Amanda Jefferies' great gain, as Andrew will now have more time to spend with his two children. [*Time expired.*]

CAMPBELLTOWN LOCAL AREA COMMAND 100 YEARS OF WOMEN IN POLICING

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) [1.24 p.m.]: On Friday 14 August I had the pleasure of attending the Campbelltown Local Area Command 100 Years of Women in Policing celebration. I joined many of our local policewomen from Campbelltown station along with supporters from the local community for a baton relay from Campbelltown police station to Queen Street Mall to commemorate the anniversary. The event was a great success, and it was fantastic to see so many members of the Campbelltown community attending the event in support of the amazing job that women in our police force do.

One example is Chief Inspector Meg Grady, who has given 34 years of service to the force and the community, 10 years at Campbelltown. It is testament to our local area command that nearly half of its force is comprised of women, and it was great to see so many of them at the event celebrating the achievements of women in the force. These women, along with all our police officers, do an amazing job

protecting and serving our local community, and it was great to be a part of their celebrations. I ask the House to join me in congratulating the Campbelltown Local Area Command and the NSW Police Force on the centenary of women in policing.

HAWKESBURY RIVER WAKEBOARDS BAN

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Parliamentary Secretary) [1.25 p.m.]: Many residents from within my electorate have voiced their concerns regarding a recent motion passed by Hawkesbury City Council, proposing a ban of wakeboards on the Hawkesbury River. I place on record my opposition to the council's motion. As the former member for Hawkesbury for eight years, I fully understand the recreational enjoyment water sports such as wakeboarding provide to thousands of local residents, many from within my now adjoining electorate of Castle Hill. My office has received many letters from concerned constituents who are anxious about the impact this proposal may have on their family, business and the wider community, not to mention the local economy.

I have also received correspondence from the general manager of Malibu Australia, a local boating manufacturer, which was specifically targeted by the council. It was noted the company's brand and sales have been adversely affected by the council's deliberate attacks on this company. Through its motion, Hawkesbury City Council has threatened the livelihood of Malibu employees and the recreational freedoms of the families who enjoy a product that is especially designed for wakeboarding. I have written to the Minister for Roads and Maritime Services condemning the actions of Hawkesbury City Council.

CANTERBURY-BANKSTOWN BULLDOGS

Ms LINDA BURNEY (Canterbury) [1.26 p.m.]: This year, 2015, is the eightieth anniversary of the Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs. The club is based in Belmore. The Bulldogs have had an impact on the rugby league landscape for a long time. The Bulldogs' Hall of Fame was established, and the first five players to be inducted were Eddie Burns, Les Johns, George Peponis, Steve Mortimer and Terry Lamb. The club's origins go back to 1922 when a meeting was held at the Ideal Milk Bar in Campsie and the Canterbury-Bankstown Junior Rugby League was established. The team won its first premiership in 1938 and has won seven since. Over its 80-year history the club has become the heart and soul of the community. To further celebrate the rich history of the club, two matches have been played at Belmore, our spiritual home. I congratulate the players, the people involved, the management and governance and the supporters on their outstanding contribution to the local area for the past 80 years and well into the future. Just watch the finals.

DANIEL ALVARO, STATE RUGBY LEAGUE REPRESENTATIVE

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) [1.27 p.m.]: I congratulate 21-year-old Daniel Alvaro, formerly of the Mittagong Lions Rugby League Club, on his selection in the 19-man VB New South Wales Cup Representatives team. The annual interstate clash was held on Sunday 3 May at Tapout Energy Stadium, Coorparoo in Queensland, and the boys in blue certainly gave it their all. Through the hard work of his formative years at the Mittagong Lions, Mr Alvaro was selected as a forward for the Wentworthville Magpies, a feeder club for the Parramatta Eels. Attending the VB Cup, Mr Alvaro joined players such as Nathan Gardner and Mitch Brown of the Cronulla sharks, indicating his promise of a bright future in the sport of rugby league. I wish Mr Alvaro the best of luck in his career and look forward to hearing of his future achievements.

BONNIE WOMEN'S REFUGE

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [1.27 p.m.]: I had the pleasure of attending the fortieth anniversary of the Bonnie Women's Refuge, better known as Bonnie's. Bonnie's is an all-female not-for-profit organisation which has been providing an invaluable service to members of our local community for the past 40 years. Words cannot describe the positive impact Bonnie's has made to our local area since its

inception. I would like to say from the bottom of my heart, thank you to all the wonderful women at Bonnie's for their outstanding work. They are a pillar in our community. I also congratulate Bonnie's on the launch of its new website, which is dedicated to providing helpful information for women and children who are homeless, at risk of homelessness or escaping domestic and family violence.

ORANGE PUBLIC SCHOOL RUGBY UNION TEAM

Mr ANDREW GEE (Orange—Parliamentary Secretary) [1.28 p.m.]: I draw the attention of the House to the fact that today, at the TG Milner Oval in Eastwood, the Orange Public School rugby union team finished third in the New South Wales Primary Schools Sports Association's Rugby Union Knockout title. It was a magnificent effort from the Orange public boys. The team included Will Burdack, Billy Ridley, Alec Hoskin, Dylan Ryan, Jackson Hill, Charlie Bird, Seth Haydon, Gus Staniforth, Charlie Harris, Harry Greatbatch, Harry Taylor, Samuel Gee, Jack Besgrove, Rodi MacKenzie, Harry Gutterson, Darcy Shaw and Harry Grant. The team was well coached by Drew Bale, who is an Orange Emus rugby star. Although the Orange Public School team members did not make it through to the gold medal round, as they were not able to defeat a Sydney school, they proved to be very worthy adversaries, and indeed champions of country rugby.

MAX POTENTIAL YOUTH LEADERSHIP EXPO

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) [1.29 p.m.], by leave: Give our young people an opportunity and they will demonstrate their many skills and level of dedication to make our community a better place. This was certainly the case at the recent Max Potential Youth Leadership Expo, where local students were asked to develop projects on issues that affect young people in our local area. I take this opportunity to recognise three students from Macquarie Fields High School on their successful projects.

Jackson Tallon developed a peer support project to help younger students adjust to high school, Jerard Tungcab had an idea about helping students come up with strong internet passwords to prevent their accounts from being hacked, and Dilki Senanayake offered a peer-tutoring counselling program for other students. These are all worthy projects that have positive impacts. Their parents, teachers and principal have every reason to be proud of these three talented students who are making a positive difference to other students and their local community. I am confident that these three students will have many successes in the years to come. I wish them all the best for the future.

TRIBUTE TO MARGARET-ANNE HAYES

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Parliamentary Secretary) [1.30 p.m.], by leave: I recognise an extraordinary woman who is commonly referred to as a "gem", a woman who is as giving as she is brave and as resilient as she is energetic, a woman by the name of Margaret-Anne Hayes. Margaret has set herself the challenge of raising \$500,000 with the Can Too foundation for Cure Cancer Australia. The challenges she puts herself through would be a feat for anyone, but at the ripe young age of 74 Margaret's efforts are astounding. Margaret-Anne jumped 14,000 feet out of a plane to complete a tandem sky dive, shaved her head and decided to undertake a planking challenge—all to raise money for cancer. For those of you who do not know, planking is the act of propping oneself up by your elbows and toes and using your abs to hold yourself up. It is tiresome for anyone, and almost unthinkable for any pensioner, but not for Margaret-Anne.

Margaret-Anne has raised more than \$185,000 through her intriguing fundraising ideas. She spends months training for her challenges and has even contacted the *Guinness Book of Records* about her attempts. This anecdote, however, is just another line in the incredibly long list of things that Margaret-Anne has done to raise money for cancer research. She is the highest fundraiser for Can Too and has been awarded the title of "Can Too Sensation". Margaret is such an inspiration. With more people like Margaret-Anne in the world, cancer would be eradicated sooner rather than later and people

would not have to suffer the loss of loved ones as Margaret has.

With the concurrence of the House, a further 10 community recognition statements were taken forthwith.

GUNAWIRRA

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [1.31 p.m.]: I congratulate and offer my support to Gunawirra, a grassroots not-for-profit organisation now based in my electorate after relocating from Redfern. Gunawirra has been operating for six years. Its work has made a genuine difference to the lives of young women and their children who may be at risk. Gunawirra's programs are designed by a team of experienced professionals, including social workers, health professionals, Aboriginal cultural and art specialists, nutritionists, maternity and early childhood nurses and preschool specialist educators. The organisation focuses on delivering programs that empower young Aboriginal mothers, and through them fathers, to break the intergenerational cycle of disadvantage.

Much success has been achieved by using a unique and innovative approach to transform young parents' lives by engaging them in preschool programs with their young children up to five years of age. Gunawirra intends to expand its current programs and train educators from regional New South Wales, ensuring far-reaching and long-lasting impacts for young mothers and children across the State. I congratulate founder Norma Tracey, chairperson Carol Flanagan, chief executive officer Joy Krahe, Ursula Kim, directors past and present, consultants and staff on the successful relocation to Rozelle and thank everyone involved for the significant contribution they make to our community.

KURRAJONG-COMLEROY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Hawkesbury—Minister for Finance, Services and Property) [1.32 p.m.]: I commend the Kurrajong-Comleroy Historical Society on its dedicated work preserving the unique local history of the region for the benefit of present and future generations. With financial assistance from the New South Wales Government's Cultural Grants Program, the society will be able to publish volume two of the historical registers of St Stephen's Church, Kurrajong. I recognise the hard work of society members, and I extend my gratitude to Carolynne Cooper, Joy Shepherd, Wanda Deacon, Val Birch and Carol Roberts for the wonderful morning tea they hosted this week. I look forward to enjoying the society's ongoing work and catching up with them again soon.

TRIBUTE TO PROFESSOR JOHN FORBES

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) [1.33 p.m.]: Today I recognise one of the world's leading scientific researchers, a Member of the Order of Australia for service to medicine in the field of breast cancer research, and also one of my constituents: Professor John Forbes. Professor Forbes is the Director of Research at the Australia and New Zealand Breast Cancer Trials Group, which is based in Newcastle; Professor of Surgical Oncology at the University of Newcastle; and Director of Surgical Oncology at the Calvary Mater Newcastle Hospital. Recently Professor Forbes was awarded the 2015 New South Wales Premier's Award for Outstanding Cancer Researcher of the Year. The award is presented to an individual who has made a significant and fundamental contribution to any field of cancer in New South Wales. The award recognises Professor Forbes' significant contribution to improved patient outcomes both in Australia and internationally, as well as his breast cancer clinical trials research program. I congratulate Professor Forbes on this recognition.

ALBURY ELECTORATE COMMUNITY ACHIEVEMENTS

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) [1.34 p.m.]: Congratulations to the team at the Atura Albury Hotel, who won brasserie/cafe of the year, bar of the year—regional hotels, and mid-range hotel of the year at the 2015 Tourism Accommodation Australia New South Wales Awards for Excellence held in Sydney. What a

huge achievement in winning three State awards. Congratulations to Derek Schoen, who has been elected president of the NSW Farmers Association. Derek is a former deputy mayor of Corowa, president of the Redlands bush fire brigade, and a member of the Corowa and District Landcare and Riverine Plains Farmer Group. Derek farms in both Corowa and the New England Tablelands. Congratulations to Paul Routley of the Almondvale Stud in Urana, who has been nominated for the Livestock Producer of the Year Award. Paul is a fourth-generation farmer and with his family runs a bond, poll merino and White Suffolk stud. All the best to Paul for the finals.

SAME-SEX FAMILIES

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) [1.35 p.m.]: I recognise the invaluable contribution that the organisers and participants of Wear it Purple Day, the Safe Schools Coalition and the makers of the *Gayby Baby* documentary make to ensure that inclusiveness, diversity and acceptance are a part of our schools and education system and therefore part of our community. I also recognise all the young and not so young people who live with same-sex parents or in same-sex families, and I recognise that their families, just like all of our families, are special provided they are loving and supportive. I send a special shout-out to all the schools holding Wear It Purple Day events this Friday, including Burwood Girls High School. I thank them all for their contribution to our community and for ensuring that our schools and our society are safe and inclusive and celebrate diversity for us all. I also send a special shout-out to Oli and thank him for joining us last night at New South Wales Parliament House to watch a screening of *Gayby Baby*.

ST GEORGE CANCER CARE CENTRE

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) [1.36 p.m.]: I draw to the attention of the House the fact that last week I accompanied the Minister for Health to the St George Cancer Care Centre to announce \$1.5 million in funding for extra services. The centre has provided more than 850,000 individual patient services since it opened 21 years ago. The centre is a place of great hope, and the Government is committed to supporting the work being done there. Funding from the Government, coupled with fundraising activities, will allow the centre to boost its capacity by 20 per cent, including providing additional chemotherapy chairs.

Cancer care centre staff administer chemotherapy to around 25 patients per day. The centre is situated alongside the Prostate Cancer Institute, which offers the nation's most comprehensive range of treatments for the management of prostate cancer. I am proud of this Government's commitment to St George Hospital and the people it serves, including \$41 million for a new emergency department that was opened last year and \$307 million for a major redevelopment, along with the \$1.5 million that was announced recently for the cancer care centre.

HILLS DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Corrections, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) [1.37 p.m.]: I convey to the House my hearty congratulations to the Hills local Julie Graham, who was re-elected president of the Hills District Historical Society at its annual general meeting on 15 August. My congratulations also extend to Ms Lyn Gorman, who was made a life member of the society, having served it in many capacities. I am honoured to have been reappointed patron of this esteemed organisation. From its inception in 1967—before I was even born—the Hills District Historical Society has been concerned with the need to preserve the built and written heritage of the local area. I have no doubt Julie will continue to ably lead the society in fulfilling its mission.

INNER WEST TENANT GROUP SOCIAL HOUSING STORIES

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [1.38 p.m.]: I draw to the attention of the House the successful project Social Housing Stories Write ... Right Now, conducted by the Inner West Tenant Group [IWTG],

under the auspices of the Rozelle Neighbourhood Centre. In 2014, the Inner West Tenant Group was awarded funding from Housing NSW to coordinate a series of writing workshops. The themes covered storytelling with award-winning screenwriter Kristen Dunphy, who has more than 20 years' experience in the industry; poetry with international artist Candy Royalle; and blogging with local tenant and activist blogger Judy Singer, whose "Diary of a Desperate Houso" blog is in the Australian archives.

The first edition of the newsletter was published, with a launch at Rozelle Neighbourhood Centre on 30 June 2015 attended by tenants and community members. It peeks behind the scenes of living in social housing and celebrates the richness of stories found there. I congratulate the writing working party: Lisa Smajlov from Rozelle Neighbourhood Centre and volunteers Susan Hawkeswood, chair of the Inner West Tenant Group, Judy Singer, Marie-Christine Sancho, and Oumani Browne, who has sadly passed away. Together, they planned, promoted and implemented all aspects of the project. I also congratulate other key members, including Matthew Liotta, Malcolm Waldron, and Deidre Hokin, as well as all the Inner West Tenant Group members who supported the project and distributed newsletters throughout the local housing community. I congratulate them all and say well done.

TRIBUTE TO FATHER DAVID CATTERALL

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Parliamentary Secretary) [1.39 p.m.]: I congratulate Father David Catterall, Pastor of St Paul's Catholic Parish in Albion Park, on his outstanding contribution over the past nine years. He has served his parish with enthusiasm and energy, and I expect his exemplary record as a church leader will serve the new Oran Park diocese in good stead for the future—the Oran Park diocese being in the electorate of the member for Camden. Thank you, Father David, for your wonderful work in our community and your ongoing contribution to the life of the church.

AUSTRALIAN SURF LIFE SAVING POOL RESCUE CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Heritage, and Assistant Minister for Planning) [1.40 p.m.]: I congratulate Chris King, Sam King, Kira Hood, Ethan Garland and Lachlan Moyle of Elouera and North Cronulla surf life saving clubs on their success in the Australian Surf Life Saving Pool Rescue Championships. They have been chosen for the Australian youth target squad for the World Surf Life Saving Championships in The Netherlands next year.

I congratulate Elouera member Troy Racklyeft, who broke multiple Australian records at the Australian Surf Life Saving Pool Rescue Championships this month in his 35 to 39 years age category. He set new records in the 200 metre obstacle race, 100 metre tow, 50 metre manikin carry, 100 metre manikin carry with fins and 50 metre swim with fins. He won gold in each of those events. He also scored a silver medal in the line throw and finished twelfth in the 50 metre carry without fins.

Community recognition statements concluded.

[Acting-Speaker (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith) left the chair at 1.40 p.m. The House resumed at 2.15 p.m.]

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I draw the attention of members to the presence of visitors in the gallery. Firstly, I acknowledge the presence of 23 representatives from the Family and Community Services graduate talent program and their graduate coordinator in the Chamber, guests of the Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Social Housing, and member for Wakehurst. Welcome to you all. I also welcome Mrs Robyn Young, President of the Beacon Hill Branch of the Liberal Party, also a guest of the Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Social Housing, and member for Wakehurst. I also warmly welcome to the gallery this afternoon members of the Combined Probus Club of Helensburgh, guests of the member for Heathcote. Welcome to all of you. I also extend a very warm welcome to all the students sitting up at the top of the gallery—58 students and their teachers from the

Presbyterian Ladies' College Sydney in Croydon, guests of the member for Strathfield.

MILLICENT PRESTON-STANLEY

The SPEAKER: Today marks the ninetieth anniversary of the inaugural speech of Millicent Preston-Stanley in the New South Wales Parliament. Ms Preston-Stanley was the first female member of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly and was elected in 1925 as the Nationalist Party member for the Eastern Suburbs. Rejecting the view that women should be protected from the "hurly-burly" of politics, she argued that, as taxpayers and workers, women were touched by every "turn of the political wheel". Never one to mince words, she went on to say that women "are subject to the laws you make, the inadequate wages you impose, the taxes you collect and the injustices you perpetuate".

Ms Noreen Hay: Hear, hear!

The SPEAKER: Nothing has changed. Were it not for pioneers such as Ms Preston-Stanley, we may not be sitting here today in the presence of the first female Treasurer of New South Wales and the first female Attorney General of New South Wales, along with so many of our female members of Parliament who are sitting here today, who serve their communities with distinction and professionalism. I am sure all of your communities and families are extremely proud of all of the female members of Parliament. Thanks to the individual who lit the way for all of you, and that is Millicent Preston-Stanley.

[Interruption]

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

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Notices of Motions

Government Business Notices of Motions (for Bills) given.

QUESTION TIME

[Question time commenced at 2.22 p.m.]

ELECTRICITY PRICES AND HOME HEATING

Mr LUKE FOLEY: My question is directed to the Minister for Emergency Services. Does the Minister endorse recent comments from the Fire and Rescue NSW Assistant Commissioner that higher electricity prices are in part responsible for people using dangerous forms of home heating, which can lead to deaths from carbon monoxide poisoning?

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: I am delighted to finally be asked a question. I have been the Minister for four months during which so many major issues have affected the people of New South Wales—

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order. The Minister has said only a few words. The member for Canterbury will come to order.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: After all the incidents that have occurred in the past four months and, indeed, as volunteers of the State Emergency Services [SES] are now working to address the floods in southern parts of this State, I thought that the Leader of the Opposition would have taken an interest in those matters. But, no, he has decided to dedicate his first question regarding brave emergency service workers to something that is blatantly political—but that is what we expect.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister has the call. He is being relevant to the question.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: I understand that the Commissioner of the NSW Rural Fire Service and the Commissioner of Fire and Rescue NSW raised concerns with the Australian Energy Regulator at the end of last year about electricity pricing determinations. I am advised that any reduction in the operational expenditure of electricity businesses has the potential to impact on the community fire protection by the NSW Rural Fire Service and Fire and Rescue NSW. Cuts to electricity companies could potentially reduce activities such as maintenance and repair of powerlines and clearing vegetation around public infrastructure. Vegetation management around electricity poles, wires and infrastructure is a critical bushfire mitigation measure. The Rural Fire Service is concerned that any reduction in vegetation management and preventative programs by the industry could potentially—

Mr Guy Zangari: Point of order: It is Standing Order 129. The question was about heating in the home, not what the Minister is talking about at the moment.

The SPEAKER: Order! I will hear further from the Minister. There is no point of order at this stage. The Minister has the call.

Mr Luke Foley: Just ad lib, you will be right.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: I am happy to take any questions from the Leader of the Opposition.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: Only last month the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal released its draft report into the performance and competitive nature of the New South Wales retail electricity market. Their report found that new retail deals on offer due to our reforms could save typical residential customers between \$290 and \$390 per annum. I am surprised because this is the party that wanted to sell electricity.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Kogarah will come to order. This is not an opportunity to argue with the Minister.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: They talk about electricity prices but they forget that under 16 years of their government electricity prices went through the roof. Electricity prices hurt New South Wales families.

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

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: They forget that electricity prices under their 16-year administration went to record levels. They forget that under their administration—

Ms Linda Burney: Point of order: I am not sure which note of the three the Minister is using.

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

Ms Linda Burney: My point of order is relevance. We are asking about the Minister's views on the Assistant Commissioner's statement about electricity prices. The answer has to be in there somewhere—probably at the bottom.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Canterbury will resume her seat. The Minister's answer is relevant to the question.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: I like what you are wearing. I liked it yesterday too.

The SPEAKER: Order! Is the member for Swansea arguing with me?

Ms Yasmin Catley: No, I am speaking through you.

The SPEAKER: Order! If the member for Swansea wishes to speak she should seek the call.

Ms Prue Car: Point of order: The Minister should be asked to withdraw his comment about what the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is wearing.

The SPEAKER: Order! Every day I overlook comments from Opposition members about the attire of Government members. There is no point of order.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: I was being complimentary but if the member for Canterbury finds it offensive I withdraw the remark. I am hoping that the Leader of the Opposition will give me an extension because I have so much to talk about.

The SPEAKER: I draw the attention of members to the presence in the gallery of Heidi Morrison and her son Charlie, and the former member for Murray-Darling, John Williams, who are visiting our Parliament.

STATE ECONOMY

Mr LEE EVANS: My question is addressed to the Premier. How is the Government driving innovation, investment, jobs and growth across New South Wales?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The member for Heathcote comes from a small business and understands the needs of small business—it is all about driving jobs growth in the economy. It is great to have guests in the gallery from the Combined Probus Club. It is great to have in the gallery people from the Beacon Hill branch of the Liberal Party; they have a great local member who is loved by everybody in this House. Last night I had the job of sharing the stage with the member for Wollongong. That is something that I have never done before and will never do again. I was very proud of her support for the member for the former Murray-Darling; there is a lot of love there.

It is an exciting day for New South Wales. I was very proud to be with the Minister for Small Business and the Minister for Industry, looking at how we will take this State forward and how we are going to drive future job growth in New South Wales. We cannot become complacent. That is one of the big challenges. We have become used to leading the nation but we cannot rest, we cannot become complacent, because there is much more to do. When Labor was in government, New South Wales had the slowest jobs growth. We cannot go back to those days. We need to stay at the top. We need to go where the future of jobs will be. That is why I was proud to announce David Thodey as the inaugural chair of Jobs for NSW. He brings incredible experience.

We make no apologies for this: we want to give the funds that we have available to attract investment and jobs in New South Wales to those with the best minds and experience and ask them to make recommendations about attracting jobs and driving jobs growth in New South Wales. We have certainly turned jobs growth around. We need to understand how to facilitate jobs of the future which, in many respects, are not in the economy now. The opportunities we have seen are significant, and that is why we were so proud to make an announcement today about Jobs for NSW.

Whilst, since we came into Government, we have created over 250,000 jobs, we need to do more. Those jobs have not been created by chance. We have taken a number of measures to drive this economy forward. We understand the importance of investing in housing. As we have heard, housing is

now at record levels—the highest approval levels in 20 years. We have invested significantly in infrastructure. We have also gone about reducing the costs of doing business in New South Wales—we understand the importance of that—by taking away payroll tax for new jobs. We will continue to reduce those costs.

Whilst those opposite might think that that just happened, it has taken hard work. Jobs for NSW will continue that hard work by making strategic decisions. We continue, as well, to drive the budget. You have to have the budget under control and maintain the highest possible credit rating. All of those things together create a package. It will not surprise anyone in this Chamber that the only risk to jobs—the risk that jobs will be taken out of the economy—are those opposite. For the life of me I do not understand it. We all remember the election campaign but for some reason members on the opposite side of the Chamber decided that they wanted to tax every business in the State \$7,500. That was the strategy they pursued.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: We all know what job the member for Maroubra wants. He had the numbers, but what happened? Remember, Martin Ferguson said that they would wait for the phone call. The phone call came and he was told, "Member for Maroubra, we know you want to be leader and we know you have the numbers, but now is not your time." I do not know when it will be his time. We know that the Labor Party are against infrastructure. I have never seen a group of people so against public transport in this State's history than this State Opposition. They hate public transport; they do not want anything to do with it. Even though the shadow Minister reads serious report after serious report, and those reports recommend more public transport, he said there should be less. He said, "Take it away, cancel it, stop it." That is also holding back jobs in the economy and the Government will not make that mistake.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: This Government is about driving jobs growth in New South Wales. Jobs for NSW is a great initiative. It will provide opportunities to put more jobs into New South Wales. We have done that; we will not become complacent and we will continue to do more.

ELECTRICITY PRICES AND HOME HEATING

Ms PRUE CAR: My question is directed to the Minister for Emergency Services. Given comments from the Assistant Commissioner Fire and Rescue NSW and the New South Wales Chief Executive Officer of St Vincent de Paul that high electricity prices are a driver for people using makeshift and potentially deadly forms of home heating, why is the Government pursuing even higher electricity prices by appealing the Australian Energy Regulator [AER] determination?

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

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: I am delighted that the Opposition is so concerned about electricity costs because it is important for us to reflect on the history of electricity prices in this State. I mentioned in my answer to a previous question that, thanks to the work of the Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy, and thanks to the reforms, there has been a net gain to the taxpayers of New South Wales in the savings that they have had as a result of the reduction in electricity costs. But that has been achieved no thanks to those on the opposite side of the Chamber. I think they have a hide to talk to us or attempt to lecture us in this Chamber about electricity prices.

For 16 years Labor Party members did absolutely nothing to reduce the cost of energy in New South Wales homes. What have they got against New South Wales households? I must say that at last one person in the Labor party room was in favour of electricity privatisation. He was very effective in

lobbying but unfortunately he did not have the numbers then, just as he does not have the numbers now. But we should all give a cheer to the member for Maroubra. He is a wonderful man.

Mr Guy Zangari: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The question was about the comments of the Assistant Fire Commissioner as well as St Vincent de Paul, about rising electricity prices and the fact that people are bringing heating into homes such as—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is being relevant to the question, which was about electricity prices. There is no point of order.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: Under the administration of those opposite, there was a 60 per cent increase in electricity prices in this State. How many families in this State can cope with a 60 per cent increase in any of their bills? The member for Maroubra knew about that. That is why he worked so hard to promote electricity privatisation under that administration. He worked hard, but unfortunately this issue has cost three leaders of his party their jobs. I suspect it will eventually cost the current leader of the Labor Party his job. But under us there has been a real reduction in the price of electricity in this State. That is thanks to the work of the Premier, the Treasurer and the Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy. Those opposite were too lazy, for 16 years, to do anything. They did not even put in a submission to the Australian Energy Regulator [AER].

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Canterbury will cease wandering around the Chamber and resume her seat. Does the member have a point of order?

Ms Linda Burney: I do.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister's answer is relevant to the question, which was about electricity prices.

Ms Linda Burney: I do not agree with that.

The SPEAKER: Order! I am the Speaker. The member for Canterbury will resume her seat.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: I like Opposition members asking me about electricity privatisation because a former Labor leader appointed me as a member of the committee to assist formulation of the Labor Party package.

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

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: Luckily, I subsequently became a member of the Baird Government, which was in favour of leasing it. Labor members voted against the lease even though the Labor Party, as far back as the leadership of Bob Carr and Michael Egan, was consistently in favour of privatising electricity.

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

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: But when it came to lodging a submission in respect of the determination by the Australian Energy Regulator, what did Labor do? Nothing!

Mr Guy Zangari: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 94, tedious repetition, and Standing Order 129. The question was about people who are bringing lit barbecues into their homes and dying from carbon monoxide poisoning.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister remains relevant to the question. Would the member for Fairfield like another early exit from the Chamber?

Mr Guy Zangari: No, thank you.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: If I am being repetitive, I am being repetitive just like Labor was every year when there was an increase in the price of electricity in this State. It is appalling for the Labor Opposition to lecture this Government about the cost of power in this State. It is absolutely appalling. Why did Labor not lodge a submission in respect of the AER determination? Why did Labor not support this Government's leasing plans, even though throughout 16 years individual Labor members discussed the need for reform of the power industry with Government members?

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Bankstown will come to order. This is not an argument.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: This is an appalling attempt at politicising the misfortune of New South Wales taxpayers.

The SPEAKER: Order! When members come to order I will give the call for the next question.

[Interruption]

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Canterbury to order for the second time. Members will come to order. I will wait for members to come to order before I take the next question. Members will cease interjecting.

REGIONAL JOBS

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN: My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier. What is the Government doing to encourage regional jobs growth?

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will cease interjecting.

Mr TROY GRANT: I thank the member for Upper Hunter for his question. As he represents a regional area of the State, he has certainly witnessed the positive impact of the Liberal-Nationals Government in action to increase jobs. I acknowledge the presence in the gallery of the former member for Murray-Darling, whose presence in this place is missed. We hope that he is doing well.

Mr John Robertson: You shipped him out; you threw him out.

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

Mr TROY GRANT: I thank the member for Blacktown for that pretty crude and incorrect interjection. It is called an electoral redistribution, you dope. The Government has witnessed the creation of more than 3,800 full-time and 4,500 part-time new jobs in the Hunter since 2011. Like every other member of the Government, the member for Upper Hunter knows that since the Government was elected it has secured more than \$537 million in investment for the Hunter region.

[Interruption]

Again, the Labor Opposition displays no interest in regional areas of New South Wales. When it comes to regional New South Wales, all we get from the Opposition is rudeness and ignorance. The member for Upper Hunter knows, unlike Opposition members, that the Government secured more than \$537 million in investment for the Hunter region. The Government has created an environment that produces jobs instead of deterring job creation, as Labor did. I am proud to report to the House that New South Wales has the top-performing regions in the top-performing economy of this country. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the State's regional unemployment rate in July 2015 shows that New South Wales is leading the way and is well below Australia's regional unemployment rate of 6.1 per cent.

The unemployment rate in regional areas of New South Wales has decreased because the regions have confidence in this Government whereas they did not have confidence in Labor.

The State's unemployment rate has dropped across the board by 0.3 per cent, which is a rate not seen by our regional counterparts in other States. The Murray and Riverina region's unemployment rate is at an all-time low of 4.7 per cent, which is well below the State and national averages. The unemployment rate for the south-eastern region is at 3.2 per cent. The unemployment rate for Newcastle and Lake Macquarie is 4.2 per cent. Opposition members can say thank you at any time. Unemployment rates have decreased across regional New South Wales. The rate has dropped in the south-east, the Murray, the Riverina, and in the Far West, and Central and north-western areas of New South Wales.

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

Mr TROY GRANT: At the same time, employment in regional New South Wales increased by 5.2 per cent, which is twice the rate of growth of employment in Sydney. That means there has been an increase in employment of 61,300 people as a result of increased confidence in the regions in the work done by this Government. The Liberals and The Nationals are getting on with the job of creating jobs. This Government is absolutely focused on investing in the key drivers of our economy, which make regional job growth possible. Unlike Labor, this Government has not asked our communities to rely on government funding. This Government has removed red tape in the interests of job creation and has produced something that our regions have not had for many years: real opportunity for real jobs.

For each dollar invested by the Government, \$40 has been invested by the private sector in jobs creation. The Government has funding available to assist businesses but, more importantly, the reason for our success is that the Government is listening to communities across the State and delivering for them. The Government has taken back to the regions public sector roles that never should have been located in metropolitan areas. This has meant relocating 470 public sector positions. When an examination of jobs growth in this country is undertaken, we can see that employment is increasing in New South Wales—and the Government is damn proud of that. The prosperity of our regions is a big reason for that growth. Since January employment in New South Wales has grown by 85,600. Our regions are critical to this increase, and will remain so into the future. Regional New South Wales is the largest and most diverse regional economy in Australia. Regional areas of New South Wales employ 1.215 million people.

Pursuant to standing order additional information provided.

Mr TROY GRANT: As I was saying, regional New South Wales employs 1.215 million people. In the past year alone, that has increased by 5.2 per cent. The Government is determined to grow our regional economy and create jobs in our regions. Under the Government's Jobs Action Plan, New South Wales businesses will be given incentives to employ new workers. To support regional growth, the Premier announced today—and I congratulate the Premier, the Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy, and the Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business on this wonderful initiative—the allocation of 30 per cent of the \$190 million Jobs for NSW Fund to regional areas of New South Wales. I thank the Premier for that announcement and congratulate him.

Interestingly, that was a policy initiative adopted by the Labor Party during the campaign for the recent State election. It was probably just another media announcement that Labor would not deliver, but at least Labor members were listening. The Government will extend payroll tax rebates to assist small business. The Government will also boost the State's investment attraction schemes to attract businesses from interstate and overseas to set up in New South Wales. The Government is committed to driving the State's regional economy to peak performance. That will be good for the regions, good for New South Wales and good for everyone.

NSW CORRECTIVE SERVICES COMMISSIONER PETER SEVERIN

Mr GUY ZANGARI: My question is directed to the Minister for Corrections. Does the Corrective Services commissioner have his full support?

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: Yes.

TAX REFORM

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: My question is addressed to the Minister for Industrial Relations. How is the Government leading the national debate on reforming Australia's taxation system and keeping New South Wales strong?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I thank the member for Ku-ring-gai for his question and recognise his strong interest in this very important area of government policy. It is not underestimating the situation to say that we have before us an historic opportunity to reform our tax system and modernise Federal-State economic relations. This proposal is about strengthening our State's finances, keeping our economy strong, and ensuring that we continue to do important things such as create jobs and provide quality services to the people of this State.

We also need to ensure that our State and our nation retain their global competitiveness. That is why the Premier took the courageous step and important decision to put forward a proposal to increase the GST by 15 per cent. Together with that, the Premier proposed to ensure that there is a compensation package for households earning under \$100,000. The Premier's proposal kickstarted a nationwide debate and showed that New South Wales was, and is, serious about reform. I am pleased that the Premier's position on reform has revealed that all the States and the Commonwealth, no matter what their political persuasion, are equally committed to this important process.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Kogarah will come to order. I remind him that this is not a debate.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Last week I met with my State, Territory and Commonwealth counterparts in Canberra to discuss these and related issues regarding taxation reform. I put the New South Wales proposal to increase the GST rate, with compensation. I noted that Australia's GST rate is among the lowest across the OECD while our income tax rates are among the highest. Given this, I highlighted that the overall tax reform package proposed by New South Wales would allow for other income tax cuts as well. This package of increasing the GST, ensuring that low-income households are compensated and allowing for income tax cuts—

The SPEAKER: Order! I place the member for Kogarah on three calls to order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: —will ensure that the States are better off. That is key to why New South Wales is adopting this position. Last week at the meeting of Treasurers, New South Wales was pleased to put forward this option as part of its discussions about the options proposed by all jurisdictions. Without exception, all States and Territories and the Commonwealth agreed to put all options on the table and to continue to keep them on the table. That is critical. I take this opportunity to acknowledge both the leaders and Treasurers of all jurisdictions and the Commonwealth, who are committed to this ongoing important reform process. We have already demonstrated our ability to work hard to put the interests of our State first. We have shown that in the past, whether it is through our approach to the National Disability Insurance Scheme—

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: —or our approach to the Gonski reforms. First and foremost, we will always do what is in the best interests of the people of this State and the future of our State to build

services and infrastructure, and to create jobs. We will continue to take that opportunity. That is why the current reform process is so critical. That is why New South Wales is not only doing what is in the best interests of the State but also putting aside its political differences to pursue this important reform agenda. I reiterate to the House and to communities, which rely on State governments to provide leadership and good reform, that we will continue to embark on this important process, which was started by the Premier.

We will continue to modernise Commonwealth-State financial relations wherever possible. We will continue to work cooperatively with the other States and Territories because, at the end of the day, reforming our taxation system and modernising our relationship between the Commonwealth and the States puts us in a strong position for not only today but also years to come by ensuring that the State has the necessary revenue to continue to provide quality services, build infrastructure and create jobs. That is what good governments are about. I take this opportunity to acknowledge all my colleagues and counterparts in the other States. I commend the Premier for his strong leadership—indeed, he started a national debate, and we are pleased to continue participating in that debate. We strongly support this reform process because it is in the best interests of our communities—no matter which political party we belong to. No matter what our personal views, they can be put aside to ensure that our State has the opportunity to be the best. [*Time expired.*]

WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: My question is directed to the Treasurer and Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party. Given the Minister's recent comments about increasing the number of female Liberal politicians, why did she oppose the preselection of Dai Le and her now colleague the member for Miranda?

The SPEAKER: Order! I rule the question out of order as it does not comply with the standing orders and it is not in the public interest.

[*Interruption*]

The SPEAKER: Order! I have ruled the question out of order. It does not comply with the standing orders. It has nothing to do with the Treasurer's portfolio and it is not in the public interest.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! What is the member's point of order? I have ruled the question out of order.

Mr Michael Daley: The standing orders permit Ministers to be questioned about public affairs.

The SPEAKER: Order! I have ruled the question out of order. I do not think it is a question about public affairs or is in the public interest.

Mr Michael Daley: The Treasurer made a significant speech about having more female members of Parliament. She is willing to answer the question.

The SPEAKER: Order! If the Treasurer wants to talk about that issue she is entitled to do so. Does the member for Swansea wish to rephrase the question? The Treasurer will then take the question.

Mr Michael Daley: I do not understand what part of the question is out of order.

The SPEAKER: Order! It is not in the public interest.

Mr Michael Daley: It is about public affairs.

The SPEAKER: Order! It is not about public affairs.

Mr Anthony Roberts: To the point of order: Madam Speaker, as usual you are entirely correct.

The SPEAKER: Order! I wish all members shared that view.

Mr Anthony Roberts: With that in mind, despite the question being ruled out of order, I understand that the Treasurer is happy to answer it. However, I ask that the question be rephrased in such a manner—

The SPEAKER: Order! I have suggested that the member rephrase the question.

Mr Michael Daley: We cannot rephrase the question because we are not sure what part of the question is out of order.

The SPEAKER: Order! Does the member for Swansea wish to rephrase the question to refer to the status of women or women members of Parliament, or what the Treasurer has said about women members of Parliament?

[Interruption]

The SPEAKER: Order! I do not need advice on the matter. I invite the member for Swansea to rephrase the question. It can relate to the Treasurer's views on women members of Parliament but it cannot be about a subject that is not in the public interest or about public affairs. I call the member for Kiama to order for the third time. I call the member for Keira to order for the first time. I remind the member for Kogarah that he is on three calls to order.

WESTERN SYDNEY JOBS

Mr MARK TAYLOR: My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning. How is the New South Wales Government driving industrial development approvals and creating jobs across Western Sydney?

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order.

Mr ROB STOKES: I thank the member for Seven Hills for his question. I recall the halcyon days when he captained Australia to Ashes victory. This issue is important to the people of Sydney.

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

Mr ROB STOKES: We want to see employment and industrial growth across Western Sydney and across all the seven hills. We want to see more growth and opportunities across Seven Hills, Rooty Hill, Castle Hill, Cecil Hills—all the hills. We want the hills to come alive with the sound of employment. I confess, I worked on that for quite some time.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will cease interjecting.

Mr ROB STOKES: The question is crucial because the Government has a clear focus on employment growth in Western Sydney. There is a great historical disparity in this city between where the population is located and where jobs are located. Western Sydney has 47 per cent of the population with access to only 36 per cent of the jobs locally. We need to correct this disparity.

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

Mr ROB STOKES: There are a couple ways to correct this historical disparity. One is improvements in infrastructure, with projects like WestConnex and Sydney Metro, to open up more opportunities for the flow of labour markets from the east to the west and from the west to east. Another way to increase opportunity is by using existing tools within land-use planning to open employment growth opportunities in regions across Sydney. That is why last week we released the Employment Lands Development Program, which indicated that 13,548 hectares of land are zoned for industrial use in Sydney. The great news is that 80 per cent of that land is located in areas proximate to the growing population of Western Sydney. This is increasingly important, given that the population of Western Sydney will increase from about 2 million at present to 2.9 million by 2036. There is a real urgency to creating zoned and serviced land for more employment opportunities.

Industrial land today is not what it once was. It is no longer limited to an unidimensional idea of heavy industry. There can be a multitude of uses for industrial land relating to all types of industrial development and mixed uses, as well as advanced engineering and industrial processing jobs that will be the jobs of the future. We also know from the Employment Lands Development Program that last year development applications to the value of almost \$800 million were approved. That was an increase of around 40 per cent from the dark, dismal and oppressive days of the former Labor regime.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: That is not in your nature!

Mr ROB STOKES: It was alliterative.

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

Mr ROB STOKES: It is even more important that about 80 per cent of the approved development applications related to developments in Western Sydney. This Government is doing a lot to liberate opportunities for industrial development, employment growth and greater depth of labour markets across the Sydney Basin, including in Western Sydney. I was in Parramatta last week with the member for Castle Hill at a presentation by Deloitte where we worked on the idea of focusing on the need for deep labour markets in Western Sydney. It was great to have a range of business leaders and educational leaders attend.

Pursuant to standing order additional information provided.

Mr ROB STOKES: The member for Parramatta has raised Camellia, a structural plan looking at more opportunities for jobs growth just three kilometres from Sydney's second central business district that has just been released. These jobs will be close to where people live and have great transport opportunities. Recently I was with the member for Mulgoa at Luddenham, where we saw firsthand the development of the great Sydney Science Park. This is a mixed development, not one consisting just of homes. Traditionally, in Western Sydney more and more greenfield residential developments have been rolled out. The Sydney Science Park will offer residential opportunities—about 3,400 new homes—as well as 12,000 new job opportunities. These jobs will be located close to where people live to make communities more liveable and to improve productivity. This will be a more sustainable outcome for families, employers, those who already call Western Sydney home, and new generations of people as the area continues to grow.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra will come to order. I refer him to Standing Order 126 (1). The member will see why I ruled the previous question out of order. It had nothing to do with the public affairs of this State.

SCHOOLS SEXUALITY EDUCATION

Mr JAMIE PARKER: My question is directed to the Minister for Education. The Department of Education policy states:

Secondary schools must address homophobia within their student welfare structures and through the curriculum.

How does the Minister justify banning from being shown in school hours a film that celebrates diversity, promotes tolerance and was entirely voluntary?

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: Burwood Girls High School will celebrate its sixth annual Wear It Purple Day this Friday and a preview screening of the new feature-length Australian documentary *Gayby Baby* was to be screened as part of this celebration. I directed the Department of Education that the film must not be shown during school hours so that it does not impact on the delivery of planned lessons. Screening the film may be considered if it is an integral part of the planned curriculum for an age-appropriate year group. I have reinforced that if a school decides to screen the film outside school hours or as an integral part of the curriculum all relevant policy and procedures must be followed. Senior department officers have spoken with the principal regarding the consequences of any principal not following correct policy and procedures. She understands that correct policy and procedures must be adhered to in the future.

Mr John Robertson: Have you been writing policy on the run now?

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Blacktown and the member for Port Stephens should have listened to the question.

Mr John Robertson: We did; it is the answer that we don't agree with.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: How are gay kids going to feel about that?

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

Mr John Robertson: Watching a movie won't make them gay.

The SPEAKER: Order! Interjections are disorderly at all times. The Minister has the call.

Mr John Robertson: He doesn't look happy answering it.

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

Mr John Robertson: Were you made to do this?

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

Mr John Robertson: Did the Premier ring you and make you do this?

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

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: Screening the film may be considered if it is an integral part of the planned curriculum for an age-appropriate year group.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: My question is addressed to the Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business. What is the New South Wales Government doing to increase the number of tradespeople needed to support the State's record investment in infrastructure?

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I thank the member for Tweed for his fantastic question. He understands the importance of jobs in regional New South Wales. He also understands the importance of delivering training in skills sets for young people to keep young people in the State. The member is 100 per cent for the Tweed. The North Coast is a fine example of what the New South Wales Government is doing to increase the number of tradespeople needed to support this Government's record investment in infrastructure across this State. We have invested significantly in the Pacific Highway duplication—one of the largest transport infrastructure projects not just in Australia but in the Southern Hemisphere—and this has created 2,200 jobs. But according to the shadow Minister and member for Wyong, this is just a bubble.

Enrolments at the North Coast TAFE in civil construction in 2015 increased by 200 per cent compared to 2014. But according to the member for Wyong, this is not a ray of sunshine. Increased demand for online and on-the-job delivery of vocational education and training has underpinned what the institute is doing. In relation to the North Coast institute, I put on record this afternoon the Labor and union lies on TAFE—and I have volume 6 of the Labor lies. Today the Public Service Association, the puppet masters of those opposite, put out a press release saying that more than 200 TAFE staff would be sacked from the North Coast institute. I can tell this House that that is an absolute lie. For the benefit of those opposite, I can tell the House what the proposal offers.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maitland will cease shouting and interjecting, as will the member for Newcastle. Members who continue to interject will be removed from the Chamber.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: The proposal offers the creation of more long-term jobs. Currently there are 87 full-time jobs; the proposal offers 157 new full-time jobs.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: In addition, up to 40 temporary jobs will assist with transition and peak periods of customer demand.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: No staff have been told that they have lost their jobs.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Labor has also said that there will be a jobs cut right across all North Coast colleges. Again, that is incorrect; it is a lie.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: One of the worst things those opposite said in their statement today is that the institute director—and I have met Elizabeth McGregor, a fantastic institute director for the North Coast—is doing this so that she gets a bonus for cutting staff. What an absolute lie—a disgusting lie from the perpetrators opposite and their puppet master unions. They are putting out rubbish and lies, attacking the TAFE brand, attacking the institute director, and attacking the staff and teachers.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I call on the Labor Party and the unions to apologise to the institute director. What they have said is a disgrace. What is worse is that they go out this afternoon—

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will cease shouting at the Minister.

[Interruption]

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is allowed to shout; he is answering the question.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: In the same press release this afternoon in which they talk about all these service cuts, they say that students will now need to phone a call centre, possibly located in India or the Philippines. Once again, that is a dog whistle of racism by those opposite and their union puppet masters. This week is National Skills Week, an opportunity—

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order. I call the member for Newcastle to order for the first time. The Minister will wait until members come to order. The level of interjections is atrocious. The member for Rockdale will cease interjecting. The Minister has the call.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: This week is National Skills Week, an opportunity to highlight the importance of the vocational education and training pathway for young people to get skills not only for the jobs of today but for the jobs of tomorrow. This is an opportunity to encourage people to consider an apprenticeship or traineeship; to encourage young people and let them know that the vocational education and training pathway will lead them to a life with a good job that pays well and a lifestyle that will support a family in the future. But those opposite and their union friends again choose to use National Skills Week to damn the brand of TAFE and to attack TAFE. Those opposite should be embarrassed. We on this side are focussed on the job ahead.

Mr David Harris: Point of order: For the Minister's information, I did not retweet that; I said it was wrong. I only deal in facts; I do not support things that are not right.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Wyong is out of order. I call the member for Wyong to order for the first time. There is no point of order. The member simply took the opportunity to argue with the Minister. I call the member for Wyong to order for the second time.

Pursuant to standing order additional information provided.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: This is a time when we should be talking up the North Coast institute, when we are seeing an \$8 million investment in Kingscliff TAFE for a new state-of-the-art automotive centre, when we are seeing 74 certificate II automotive students, 57 heavy vehicle apprenticeships and 42 automotive certificate III apprenticeships. In National Skills Week we should be highlighting the importance of the vocational education and training pathway. This is in a week when we welcome back the Skillaroos—26 young men and women who have just visited Brazil to promote the skill sets of this nation on the world stage. They have returned with three silver medals.

The SPEAKER: And a highly commended for a South Coast croissant maker.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: They have come back with two bronze medals and 11 medallions of attainment. These fantastic young people are showcasing the skill sets, and they are supported by fantastic staff and teachers within TAFE in the vocational education and training sector. This week is yet another opportunity to talk about the good news that is happening in vocational education and training, and in TAFE. But those opposite again choose National Skills Week to attack TAFE. We have put in place the policy setting to make sure more people have the opportunity to get the training and the skills going forward.

We have done that by making a number of changes. We have invested another \$100 million to ensure 47,000 commencements for apprentices and trainees in 2015-16. Those opposite should read the budget papers. The TAFE budget is at an all-time record high, with a \$122 million increase on last year's budget. We are investing in premises, facilities and courses. We are investing in the staff and teachers,

who do a wonderful job delivering the skillsets for young people. This Government is committed to creating jobs in this State over the next four years. We will be doing that through Jobs NSW. We are making sure we are putting in place the programs that deliver the skilled workforce, giving young people the opportunity to have the jobs of tomorrow.

AMBULANCE SERVICE OF NSW

Mr RON HOENIG: My question is directed to the Minister for Health.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order. I cannot hear the question. Government members will come to order.

Mr RON HOENIG: Given the Productivity Commission has reported that New South Wales ambulance response times are now amongst the highest in the nation, and that they have blown out from 9.5 minutes in 2006 under Labor, to 11 minutes and 27 seconds in 2015 under the Baird Government, will the Minister now admit that there is an ambulance crisis in New South Wales?

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: It is a very revealing question. Did members listen carefully? What year did they use?

Government members: 2006.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: Yes, 2006. Tell me what the response time was in 2010? It was much worse. Anyone can play with statistics.

The SPEAKER: Order! Government members will cease shouting. The Minister is waiting to answer the question.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: Let me set the record straight.

Mr Andrew Constance: Walt Secord wrote that.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: He gets it wrong every time.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will cease interjecting.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: For 2014-15, for 1A cases—which are imminently life threatening; the only one where there is a target of 10 minutes—the response time was 7.65 minutes. So we are doing very well.

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Kogarah that he is on three calls to order. This is his final warning.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: There are always peaks in demand, and I have very interesting data about this peak in demand. I think everyone will be very interested in this document, which I will lay on the table of the House. These are tables that indicate the peaks in demand in our hospitals, particularly in relation to the influenza season. In some hospitals, peaks are absolutely through the roof; and the statistics are not completed yet. In the next two weeks we are anticipating even greater demand in our hospitals—which is what I have been saying. It is not a lack of resources for paramedics or ambulances.

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

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: It is about ensuring that more ambulances are available out on the road to deal with 000 calls.

The SPEAKER: Order! I have warned the member for Maitland several times. I call the member for Maitland to order for the second time.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: Madam Speaker, I cannot hear myself think because of the member for Maitland. Could you please ask her to keep quiet?

The SPEAKER: Order! I am doing my best.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: I would have thought she would be interested in this answer because it affects people across the system. It is not about ambulance resources. We have increased the ambulance budget by 26 per cent; we have put on an extra 270 full-time equivalent paramedics; we have increased the number of ambulances on the road; and we have invested money in building ambulance stations. We have in fact increased the number of staff right across the system.

The proof of the pudding is that when Labor was last in office only 59 per cent of patients went through the emergency departments in four hours, which is the benchmark. Now, it is 74 per cent. We can do better; we have targets to do better. And especially in peak demand times, we need to continue to development and introduce patient flow strategies. I am pleased to advise the House that today Ms Susan Pearce, who is the Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer in New South Wales, has been appointed to lead the implementation group that will be looking at these continuous improvements in getting better patient flow through the hospitals.

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

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: Some of the things I mentioned yesterday, like appointing a nurse-led ambulance release team in our big teaching hospitals to take patients off ambulance trolleys so those ambulances can be available to respond to other 000 calls, will now be introduced in every tertiary hospital across the State. We will be introducing more efficient protocol-led discharge of inpatients on weekends, when we have a large number of doctors not doing rounds, and on Mondays—if you look at the statistics that is always a day where there is a peak demand for ambulances—as one of the initiatives.

Other initiatives include the development of new medical units where patients can almost bypass emergency departments to be located in the medical units; and increasing the use of community care and Hospital in the Home packages. These are all things that we have introduced recently and we will be upping the ante on those, particularly in peak times, to ensure that our hospitals are able to cope with demand. People should understand that the Ambulance Service of NSW responds to 3,000 calls a day—that is a call every 28 seconds—and those opposite and the paramedics union are talking about one or two cases. [*Time expired.*]

Question time concluded at 3.21 p.m.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Order of Business

Motion by Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS agreed to:

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

- (1) Government business.

- (2) Private members' statements.
- (3) Matter of public importance.
- (4) The House to adjourn without motion moved at the conclusion of the matter of public importance.

PETITIONS

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

Edgecliff Railway Station and Interchange

Petition requesting that the New South Wales Government upgrade the Edgecliff railway station and interchange to provide full access, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Millers Point, Dawes Point and The Rocks Public Housing

Petition opposing the sale of public housing in Millers Point, Dawes Point and The Rocks, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Inner-city Social Housing

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

Same-sex Marriage

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

Pet Shops

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

Slaughterhouse Monitoring

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

Plastic Bags Ban

Petition calling on the Government to introduce legislation to ban single-use lightweight plastic bags at retail points of sale in New South Wales to reduce waste and environmental degradation, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

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

John Hunter Hospital and Hunter Stadium Shuttle Bus

Petition requesting the continued operation of the free shuttle bus between John Hunter Hospital and Hunter Stadium, received from **Ms Sonia Hornery**.

CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO BE ACCORDED PRIORITY

Housing Supply

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) [3.23 p.m.]: My motion should be accorded priority because when the Baird-Grant Government came to office we were faced with a situation where housing starts and housing approvals were at their lowest in 50 years and New South Wales was coming eighth in economic performance of the eight States and Territories in Australia. That lack of housing approvals and housing starts led to an undersupply which can only lead to a legacy of unaffordability in the housing sector. Such was the heritage left to us by the previous Labor Government.

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

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY: But that picture has been transformed, just as this State is being transformed. In the latest financial year we had 57,500 building approvals—the third highest on record in this State. This will support the generation of thousands of jobs in the construction industry and in the many flow-on industries that are supported by the housing sector. The New South Wales economy is now at number one. We are leading the nation in job generation, in economic performance and in providing for our citizens. This motion should be given priority because good economic growth is not an end in itself. It is a means to an end, and that end is to provide the services, facilities and infrastructure that the citizens of this State deserve, and to provide support to the vulnerable in this community. Those things can only be provided if the funds are generated by a healthy economy.

This motion should be accorded priority because it is about doing the real job for the people of this State. New South Wales is now number one, having been number eight nationally. We are now producing near record levels of new homes compared to record low levels under the previous Government and jobs are being generated, yet we were in the doldrums under Labor. We will continue on this track and provide the services, facilities and infrastructure that the good people of this State deserve. The Baird-Grant Government is stimulating the housing market. The House should be focusing on these important issues so that the needs of the people of New South Wales can be met.

Illawarra Economy

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) [3.26 p.m.]: Today members can either accept the self-congratulatory and back-slapping motion of the member for Riverstone or we can work together as a Parliament to deal with some of the economic challenges facing the third largest region in New South Wales—the Illawarra. We have a choice this afternoon to put down our political bats and to work together and show the people of the Illawarra that we can come together at a time when they are facing economic challenges, at a time when at least 500 workers are set to lose their jobs, and at a time when our local economy faces enormous challenges. They are looking to this Parliament for leadership. The Opposition is not in the game of supporting motions that are about back-slapping.

The member for Wollongong, the member for Shellharbour and I will continue to bring to this Parliament the issues that are important to the people of the Illawarra. Currently, there can be no more important issue for the people of the Illawarra than the future of the steel industry. We are facing the potential for thousands of jobs to be lost as a result of the announcement made this week by one of our largest employers, BlueScope Steel, to cut 500 people from their Port Kembla plant. The member for Wollongong, the member for Shellharbour and I make no apologies for making sure that this motion comes to the floor of the oldest Parliament in Australia. We stand ready to work with the Government to support the hundreds of men and women and their families who are going through some of the most difficult and uncertain times they have ever faced.

Labor makes no apologies for bringing motions to this House—not self-congratulatory motions or

motions about praise or giving ourselves a pat on the back—that are about working with the community, developing solutions and finding answers to one of the biggest economic challenges our region has ever faced. The Illawarra community is looking to the Premier, to the Government and to each member of Parliament to show that the third largest region in New South Wales is important enough to be considered for debate in this House today.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! I remind members that a number of them are on three calls to order.

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

The House divided.

Ayes, 50

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

Noes, 39

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

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! I welcome to the gallery this afternoon Craig Power from Penrith, a great publican, who is a guest of the member for Tamworth.

HOUSING SUPPLY

Motion Accorded Priority

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) [3.37 p.m.]: I move:

- (1) That this House notes that residential housing approvals are at their highest rate in 20 years.
- (2) Supports the Government's approach which is:
 - (a) boosting housing supply and placing downward pressure on the cost of new homes;
 - (b) supporting the creating of local jobs; and
 - (c) growing the New South Wales economy.

An important part of the mission of the Baird-Grant Government has been to focus on releasing the potential for prosperity for the people of New South Wales by stimulating the housing sector, which we know is critical to the fortunes of people in this State. For too many years not enough homes were being approved and built in New South Wales. Much of that was due to difficulties in the planning processes of the former Labor Government and its inability to manage money and pay for the infrastructure needed to support development. The Baird-Grant Government, and prior to it the O'Farrell Government, has focused on those issues and sorted through them. The product of that effort came to fruition with 57,500 new homes being approved in the past 12 months. It is no accident. It is the result of hard work and planning but, more importantly, it is a means to an end to achieve better outcomes for the people of this State.

One significant element of that task was the creation of the Housing Acceleration Fund [HAF]. The recent State budget injected a record \$400 million into the Housing Acceleration Fund to speed up the delivery of more housing and to put downward pressure on house prices. The \$400 million boost takes the total HAF to \$966 million since 2012. So far the HAF has been allocated for infrastructure projects supporting 161,000 new dwellings and 1,200 hectares of employment lands. We expect the new funding will at least double the number of dwellings. This round of the HAF will include a focus on projects that enable increased housing in existing areas. It will include projects that help facilitate new housing investment while improving infrastructure and amenity of existing areas. The HAF has already funded projects in various parts of Western Sydney such as upgrades to Camden Valley Way, Richmond Road and Schofields Road.

More importantly—although perhaps less glamorously—is the sewerage provision that is made possible through the Housing Acceleration Fund. One of the key problems in releasing new development areas is the lack of sewerage and the expense of providing it. The HAF has helped solve that problem through the creation of the First Ponds Creek wastewater carrier, resulting in the release of thousands of new home sites. In fact, since we came to Government, in my region in the north-west we have either rezoned or released for planning the Area 20 precinct, the Riverstone East precinct, the Schofields precinct, the Marsden Park precinct and the Box Hill and Box Hill North precincts. The Government is working on other precincts, which are not far from exhibition, to ensure that they are added to the mix.

A backlog had built up over many years. Labor had promised for years to release land. In some cases the former Government rezoned the land but did not provide the infrastructure or the capacity for

the land to be developed. But that infrastructure and the capacity to develop land are being provided under the Baird-Grant Government and, as a result, there are thousands of new jobs. Those visiting the electorate of Riverstone will see that the place is abuzz with tradies, construction workers and people working on infrastructure projects. They will see the infrastructure for the skytrain taking shape for the North West Rail Link and the major upgrades on Schofield Road and Richmond Road. They will see finished products, such as the schools that have been built and opened as part of this process. They will see work occurring from one end of the electorate to the other.

People are busily employed in public and private sector work. Jobs are being generated for the people of New South Wales. The Government has implemented good planning. As part of the process, the Government has released housing precincts and lands for employment. In particular, town centres have been planned around stations on the proposed Sydney Metro Northwest—which will include job generation areas—to ensure that people can obtain work close to home. This Government is focused on the needs of people in New South Wales. The Government has done the hard yards and will continue to in order to provide the services and infrastructure that the people of New South Wales need and in order to support the vulnerable. [*Time expired.*]

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) [3.42 p.m.]: I am delighted to be able to put some facts on the table and remind the member for Riverstone that in the middle of a housing affordability crisis in this nation, particularly in Sydney, a paltry \$400 million has come from this Government. That money came out of the \$7.29 billion stamp duty revenue that this Government collected in the last financial year. I remind the member that that is about 5.4 per cent of the stamp duty collection. That is the amount of money that this Government has put towards housing affordability. This Government has spent only 4.7 per cent of the stamp duty on social housing.

Government members should not be patting themselves on the back. In the middle of Homelessness Week and as homelessness effectively reached crisis point in Sydney, the Premier attended a Council of Australian Governments [COAG] meeting. Instead of raising the issue of stamp duty—which earlier in the year he had promised he would—the Premier did Mr Abbott's bidding by raising the issue of GST. He said that he wanted to see an increase of 50 per cent in the GST. According to experts, this would mean that an extra \$50,000 would be added to the cost of every new home built.

This Government is not concerned about the housing affordability crisis in this State. Let me be clear about the focus of the Premier. He threw a hissy fit during the COAG meeting and threatened that if he could not convince the other States that an increase in the GST would be of benefit to our nation—and, thankfully, he could not—he would double stamp duty and payroll tax. Following his threat, someone must have advised the Premier to pull back because it did not take long for him to go quiet on the GST issue and wind back his comments about increasing—"doubling" was the word he used—stamp duty and payroll tax if he could not get a GST increase.

I remind members in the Chamber about the housing roundtable organised by the Minister for Social Housing and the Minister for Planning and the words of Nick Greiner, a former Liberal Premier of this State. In his opening remarks, he effectively said that he was giving the wooden spoon to the New South Wales Government when it came to housing because the Government had lost the plot on the issue of providing affordable housing in this State. The general theme that we hear from community housing providers and the industry sector is that there has been a loss of direction in the last three or four years when it comes to providing affordable housing options for people in Sydney.

Now, more investors than owner-occupiers purchase property in Sydney and 70 per cent of people under the age of 35 cannot enter the housing market at all. I do not know what else can be said to this Government to highlight the very real housing affordability crisis that we have in New South Wales, particularly in Sydney. People have put their concerns on record. The Housing Industry Association [HIA] has warned the Government that increasing the GST would also increase the cost of housing. The HIA Chief Executive of Industry Policy and Media said that new housing was usually seen as an easy cash

grab by governments. He said:

Adding another five per cent, or more, on top of the price of a new home will put housing out of reach of many people that are trying desperately to get into the market.

I know what the Government likes to hear. It tends to listen to developers, so I will quote the Chief Executive of Monarch Investment, who said:

It's going to whack another \$50,000 on every new home.

This Government boasts about job growth but I remind the House that unemployment has grown. The unemployment rate in this State has grown by 30,000 more people in this State since March 2011. [*Time expired.*]

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) [3.47 p.m.]: It gives me pleasure to support the motion moved by the member for Riverstone, who is a fellow member from north-western Sydney. Over the past four years this Government has gone about rebuilding New South Wales and it plans to do much more. This Government is committed to making Sydney more liveable, providing people with access to a home and a job and a convenient way to get between the two. We need to ensure that Sydney does not just get bigger, it must also get better. Housing matters to the people of this State. Shelter is a basic human need that we all share. Whilst we deal with many complex issues in this place, the basic notion of the importance of housing must never stray too far from our minds.

Housing affects all of us in many different ways. It provides a place to live. It is the fundamental building block of neighbourhoods and cities. Generally, it is the largest purchase a family will make and it is their most important asset. Housing provides jobs for builders and tradespeople, for designers, architects and planners, and the list goes on. Promoting housing growth has social and financial benefits for individuals and the economy. Our record investment in infrastructure will pave the way for new and high-quality communities to be established across the State. But it is not all about being faster and cheaper; we also need to be better. We need to create great places to live.

Recently, this Government released new policy to improve the quality of apartment design. This policy aims to deliver a better living environment for residents now choosing this form of housing and enhance our streetscapes and neighbourhoods across the State. As well as increasing the quality of apartments, the policy will help reduce the cost of delivering new apartments by creating a consistent compliance framework. One of the areas that Sydneysiders will call home in coming years is Camellia in Sydney's west near Parramatta. Recently the Government released a vision of how this industrial area will be transformed in the near future to become an exciting and vibrant waterfront community. The area is set to become a brilliant new community. It will border the Parramatta River and will have parks and shops. Local residents will enjoy natural areas and will be able to take advantage of the natural assets.

The area will be regenerated to become a clean and healthy environment. The New South Wales Government is working hard to help homebuyers to break into the market by unlocking land. The figures I have cited show that the Government's policy is working well. By increasing the supply of housing, the New South Wales Government is offering homebuyers more choice and is putting downward pressure on home prices. I support the motion.

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) [3.50 p.m.]: I wish to correct a number of assertions that have been made by Government members. Yes, there is a housing boom happening in Sydney; it is a cyclical boom. The increase in house prices largely is driving the increase in housing construction in Sydney and has very little to do with the actions of the Government. This Government came to power by claiming that it would return planning decisions to local communities.

Mr Chris Minns: Did they do it?

Ms JULIA FINN: No. Instead the Government introduced a planning bill that handed planning decisions almost exclusively to developers and purported to remove a lot of planning powers from local councils. The Government consequently could not get the legislation passed by this Parliament. The Government has made very little progress in reform in that area. Any change that has occurred largely has been driven by demand, which in turn has been driven by low interest rates. Low interest rates are driven by low rates of economic growth. For many years the Reserve Bank has held back interest rates in an attempt to stimulate our economy. Since this Government was elected, unemployment across New South Wales has increased by 30,000 people. In my electorate of Granville, which is part of the statistical division of Parramatta, unemployment has increased from 5 per cent when the Government was elected to 8.4 per cent. That is a huge increase in unemployment.

At the same time, the Government is patting itself on the back for the creation of casual jobs in the construction industry. I would prefer investment in employment lands and long-term sustainable jobs rather than jobs that exist for the construction period of new homes. Any downward pressure that the Government claims to be placing on prices for new homes clearly is not happening in Sydney where average house prices have increased by almost 20 per cent in the past year. In Sydney currently, the median house price is more than \$1 million, which is not affordable when the average combined family income is less than \$100,000.

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

Ms JULIA FINN: Part of the high increase in city property prices is due to people buying properties but not renting them because they do not want to risk damage by tenants. They simply put the property back on the market six months later and make a windfall gain. More than half of new home loan approvals are granted to investors. That has been the case in Sydney for a very long time. [*Time expired.*]

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) [3.53 p.m.], in reply: I thank the member for Bankstown, the member for Seven Hills and member for Granville for their contributions to the debate. I wish to point out a few things that I found quite remarkable. The member for Bankstown criticised the Government for allocating a paltry \$400 million to the Housing Acceleration Fund, which increased the fund to a total of \$966 million. That is precisely \$966 million more than Labor allocated to a similar fund. Labor did not fund infrastructure at all, which is why housing development did not occur in New South Wales in past years. That is why New South Wales had 27,000 homes starts under Labor and now has 57,000 starts.

It seems to have escaped the member for Granville that demand supports growth. When only 27,000 houses are produced each year and the need is for 50,000 houses a year, of course, that will result in unmet demand. For years there has been pent-up demand in the housing market and this Government has been working to address that so that the people of New South Wales can afford to move into their own homes and set themselves up for the future. That achievement has not been accidental or merely cyclical. If it were cyclical, it would be occurring elsewhere in Australia. The converse is true: while New South Wales is strengthening, other States are weakening. The housing boom is the result of strategic investment by this Government in infrastructure to promote development and targeted government policies.

A couple of years ago the Government made a deliberate decision to target new homes for homebuyers. At that time, the Government copped some criticism from Labor. But, guess what? The policy is working. The policy is supporting the increase in new homes. It is good public policy because it is achieving the outcome of providing more homes for the people of New South Wales. This motion is important because it focuses on things that matter to the people in our communities. People need access to homes. They need the jobs that construction creates. They need services, facilities and infrastructure that are affordable, which occurs if a government runs an economy well and is prosperous. That is exactly what the Baird-Grant Government has been doing and will continue to do.

The precincts of the north-west sector and the south-west growth sector that have been released are adding to the mix, and there are more to come. As well as that, there has been an intelligent release of new housing sites within the existing metropolitan area and across regional areas of New South Wales so that in all parts of our State there are opportunities for people to break into the housing market. People have the opportunity to realise their dream. There is also support for the New South Wales economy, which meets the needs of the State's citizens.

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

Motion agreed to.

Pursuant to sessional order Government business proceeded with.

STATE ARMS, SYMBOLS AND EMBLEMS AMENDMENT (FOSSIL EMBLEM) BILL 2015

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Anthony Roberts, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy) [4.00 p.m.]:
I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The State Arms, Symbols and Emblems Amendment (Fossil Emblem) Bill 2015 seeks to introduce into the inventory of State Arms, Symbols and Emblems mandageria fairfaxi as the official State Fossil Emblem of New South Wales. As all members of this House would be aware, currently there is no legislated form of a State fossil emblem in New South Wales. This bill seeks to remedy that and put in place a State fossil emblem that has special palaeontologic significance to New South Wales. The fossil will join our other familiar State emblems: the animal emblem, the platypus; the bird emblem, the kookaburra; the State fish, the blue groper; the gemstone emblem, the black opal; and, of course, our wonderful State floral emblem, the waratah. The inclusion of the mandageria fairfaxi in New South Wales' officially recognised emblems is a widely supported move by a wide range of palaeontologists and geologists alike, such as those at the Australian Museum and at the Geological Survey of NSW.

The mandageria fairfaxi roamed freshwater rivers and lakes around the State 370 million years ago. This period—the Devonian period—was also known as the "Age of Fishes", and is recognised as an era in which fish life ruled supreme throughout the ecosystem. The fossil was discovered in a most innocuous manner. Midway through 1955, just outside the town of Canowindra in the Central West a bulldozer driver conducting roadworks in the area was excavating some rock slab. Upon turning one piece of slab, he noticed some marks on the rock that he had never encountered before. Thinking that this could be something special, he put the slab to one side, and in early 1956 it was moved to the Australian Museum in Sydney for storage and analysis. However, nearly 40 years passed before further exploration of the site was undertaken. It proved to be the richest fish fossil site of its kind in the world.

Eight types of long-extinct fish were discovered, the largest being the mandageria fairfaxi. The fossil was first thoroughly described by Dr Zerina Johanson, followed by the Australian Museum in Sydney, after which the Natural History Museum gave the fossil its final description. Significantly, the head region of the fossil was preserved and demonstrated that the mandageria fairfaxi had a functional neck joint—the first discovery in those types of fishes. The mandageria fairfaxi is named as such due to the Mandagery Sandstone Formation, in which it was found in 1993, as well as after Mr James Fairfax, whose kind financial support to Canowindra fish fossil research made finds such as these possible.

The naming of the mandageria fairfaxi as the State Fossil Emblem of New South Wales is just recognition for a fossil of such paleontological significance to the State and the people of New South Wales. The Division of Resources and Energy is starting a naming competition among the State's primary school students to establish a nickname for the fossil. I look forward to reporting the results of this competition back to the Parliament. Of course, I invite members of Parliament to take part in the competition—

Mr Michael Daley: Call it Bronwyn.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: Call it Bronwyn. Members can participate in the competition or, indeed, name it after one of their own. I thank the people in the Division of Resources and Energy for their tireless work in driving this fantastic, innovative item. I commend the bill to the House.

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

JOBS FOR NSW BILL 2015

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Anthony Roberts, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy) [4.07 p.m.]:
I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

New South Wales is the engine room of the national economy. Since the Liberal-Nationals Government came to office in 2011 more than 250,000 new jobs have been created in New South Wales. This is about 100,000 more jobs than were created in Victoria over the same period. As members would be aware, we have come from ranking last among the States and Territories in economic performance, thanks to members opposite, to again leading the nation on the same key indicators. The latest figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics show that New South Wales has the lowest unemployment rate and the strongest monthly jobs growth rate of any State in this great Commonwealth of Australia. In July alone 29,500 jobs were created in New South Wales—four times the amount of the next highest State. This success is no accident.

We have taken the necessary steps to provide the economic policy settings to allow businesses to invest and create jobs. We have cut expenses growth, running rampant under Labor, and brought our budget back under control. Our triple-A credit rating has been reaffirmed by Moody's and Standard and Poor's. And we have allocated \$68.6 billion over the next four years for unprecedented investment in infrastructure, spreading new economic opportunities throughout the State. This position of strength builds confidence for businesses to invest in the strongest economy in the nation and provides the platform for a strong economic outlook for our future.

The New South Wales Government has set a target of creating 150,000 jobs within four years. We have worked hard to improve the broader economic investment environment. We now turn to modernise our approach to incentivising economic development so that commercial innovation and entrepreneurship can come to the fore. New South Wales is the leading State in the Australian economy but for the State to remain strong and prosperous it needs to prepare for the future and embrace innovation and rapid workplace change. The Jobs for NSW Bill 2015 is a bill to establish a new body, known as Jobs for NSW, which will leverage private sector expertise to provide strategic advice to the Government for the purpose of creating jobs and driving investment in New South Wales.

The world we live in is changing rapidly. New technologies and business models are bringing about fundamental change in supply chains, industry structures and the nature of work. In a globalised world we need to innovate to compete. We need to welcome disruption in order to grow the economy. We need to focus more on new and emerging growth opportunities. We need to change as the old models of industry assistance do not deliver the best value to New South Wales taxpayers. Jobs for NSW will provide the foundation for change, innovation and focus. It is a new and strategic approach.

Rather than the old, reactive approach of responding to economic issues as they arise, Jobs for NSW will be charged with taking a strategic approach to identifying the competitive advantages of the New South Wales economy; then attracting, developing and consolidating new and existing businesses in New South Wales to strengthen our economic leadership. To ensure that the advice to government reflects the needs of investors and job creators from the business community, Jobs for NSW board members will largely be drawn from the private sector and will include some of Australia's pre-eminent business leaders. We are determined to leverage the expertise of some of the best business minds in the nation to help drive investment and create jobs across New South Wales.

Jobs for NSW gathers together substantial commercial acumen and extensive knowledge and experience in growing jobs and improving industry competitiveness. We are delighted that Mr David Thodey has agreed to be the chairperson of Jobs for NSW. Mr Thodey brings a wealth of experience to the role that New South Wales will draw on and benefit from. Jobs for NSW is different from other jobs creation advisory boards. It is not only an advisory board. It will be held accountable and required to report on its operations, jobs creation incentives and other measures to demonstrate the success of its strategies. Jobs for NSW will provide advice to the Government on how to improve New South Wales and its region's competitive advantage, and how to make New South Wales a place where businesses want to come and grow.

Jobs for NSW will work with all key stakeholders to develop and implement strategies that ensure that the Government's legacy is meaningful, long-term jobs creation for generations to come. The bill also establishes the Jobs for NSW Fund which will be used to fund innovative and strategically targeted incentives for economic development in New South Wales. The Jobs for NSW Fund will be a dedicated funding pool to ensure that priority actions, as identified by the board, will have access to a ready source of funding. This bill delivers on the Government's election commitment to boost the State's investment attraction schemes to \$190 million over four years. Initial funding for the Jobs for NSW Fund will include existing funds from the now ceased State Investment Attraction Scheme [SIAS] and the Regional Industries Investment Fund [RIIF]. Payments out of the now ceased SIAS and RIIF funds under existing contracts will now be paid out of the Jobs for NSW Fund.

Jobs for NSW will recommend for approval by the Minister robust eligibility and assessment criteria for proposals for jobs creation incentives from the Jobs for NSW Fund. These criteria will consider where New South Wales Government funding can best add value, that is, where it will have the biggest impact, both now and in the future in growing employment and the economy. The eligibility and assessment criteria will be reviewed annually. This will ensure that the criteria reflect contemporary priorities as the economy grows and transforms. In addition to recommending criteria, Jobs for NSW will call for, assess and make recommendations to the Minister on funding proposals for jobs creation incentives to be paid out of the fund.

Through Jobs for NSW we are raising the bar for New South Wales Government support to ensure a more robust, systematic and transparent approach to assessing and reporting on jobs creation incentives. The bill gives me, as the Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy, the power to appoint advisory committees to assist the Jobs for NSW Board. As an example, these advisory committees may consider issues relating to innovation, skills and regional development, and may provide specialist advice to Jobs for NSW. The bill provides New South Wales with an opportunity to enlist the brightest and most engaged minds, allowing us to do the most good and unleash the most potential.

The bill contains robust transparency arrangements for Jobs for NSW. Jobs for NSW will submit an annual report outlining the particulars of all jobs creation incentives paid for from the fund during the year. The annual report will also include particulars of the total amount of payments made from the fund for proposals in rural and regional New South Wales, outside the metropolitan areas of Sydney, Wollongong and Newcastle. This includes whether that amount is at least 30 per cent of the total payments made from the fund. It will be clear to all where New South Wales Government funding for jobs creation incentives is being directed and for what purpose.

Jobs for NSW will complement other New South Wales Government economic development initiatives benefiting New South Wales businesses including: the Jobs Action Plan, which has been extended until 2019 and provides \$5,000 payroll tax rebates to employers to take on additional employees; the small business employment incentive, which provides \$2,000 grants to small businesses that do not pay payroll tax for additional employees they take on; and the \$25 million Jobs of Tomorrow Scholarship Fund, which provides scholarships for students undertaking qualifications in technology and growth jobs. These are real initiatives and real support that help New South Wales businesses create jobs, grow and contribute to the State's economic success. They are achieving real results.

To build on this success, the Government has established the Department of Industry, Skills and Regional Development to lead a bold policy agenda targeted at jobs creation—real, long-term, sustainable jobs for all of us, our children and their children. The Department of Industry, Skills and Regional Development is a mix of old and new. It will ensure that we maintain, regulate, develop and protect our natural resources so they continue to provide ongoing wealth and jobs for our State for generations to come. Through Jobs for NSW we will also ensure that government assistance to industry is targeted, and that New South Wales leads the charge across both State and Federal government to bring policy change to drive jobs growth.

The Government and Jobs for NSW will build on the work from the previous term of government, in particular the initiatives identified in the industry action plans. The industry-led knowledge hubs are proving to be an exciting way to harness the collaborative spirit between industry, big and small businesses, researchers and educational institutions. Jobs for NSW will also build on the Government's efforts to grow regional New South Wales, including through Restart NSW programs such as Resources for Regions and Water Security for Regions, and through a network of advisers working across the State to ensure that regional New South Wales benefits from targeted government support.

A strong New South Wales requires a diverse, productive and thriving regional New South Wales. Jobs for NSW provides an opportunity for government to capitalise on the body's expertise, and support fresh initiatives that will create jobs, drive economic growth and unleash the economic potential of regional New South Wales. The addition of skills and TAFE to the department will ensure that industry and business can work with government to identify New South Wales skills needs as our economy continues to grow and develop. It will also ensure that service providers deliver graduates with the skills that business needs. A strong economy supports a strong State, where people and businesses can thrive and prosper. The New South Wales Government has committed to deliver 150,000 new jobs over four years. This bill and Jobs for NSW will help us achieve this goal and strengthen our position as Australia's economic powerhouse. I commend the bill to the House.

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

DAMS SAFETY BILL 2015

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Anthony Roberts, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy) [4.19 p.m.]:
I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I introduce this bill on behalf of the Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water in the other place. As the bill contains money provisions it must be introduced in the Legislative Assembly. Dams are the lifeline of rural and metropolitan New South Wales. They provide safe drinking water in our cities and towns, allow farmers to irrigate their paddocks and play a vital role in containing contaminated run-off from mining activities. The New South Wales Government is committed to the safety of dams and the safety of the people of New South Wales.

The Dams Safety Bill 2015 replaces the Dams Safety Act 1978. This bill will modernise the regulatory framework for dam safety in New South Wales and ensure that the Act reflects the outcomes of the review of the dams safety regime conducted in 2013. The bill establishes new objects that seek to balance the risks arising from dams, encourage the proper and efficient management of dam safety together with promoting greater transparency, and encourage the application of risk management and cost-benefit analysis in regulating dams. The Dams Safety Act 1978 constitutes the Dams Safety Committee and confers on the committee functions and powers to ensure the safety of prescribed dams in New South Wales. While the Act constitutes and sets down the functions and procedures of the Dams Safety Committee, the current standards and prescriptions are in the form of guidelines that sit outside the regulation. This is inconsistent with current best practice regulation.

Following a recommendation by the Commission of Audit, the New South Wales Government conducted an independent review of the Dams Safety Act and the Dams Safety Committee. The primary reason for this review was to address the Commission of Audit's finding that there are relatively high levels of spending on dam safety in New South Wales that are not commensurate with risk reduction. KPMG were engaged to conduct the independent review. In its report KPMG found evidence that the current approach may result in a disproportionate level of investment on infrastructure for limited safety gains. KPMG suggested that a regulatory approach where the regulator has appropriate independence and dam owners are more clearly responsible for ensuring and demonstrating compliance with safety standards could reduce compliance costs. It would also bring greater clarity to the respective roles and responsibilities of dam owners and government.

KPMG identified a number of weaknesses in the current approach, including a lack of clear objectives in the Act, resulting in a primary focus on engineering solutions to achieve public safety. They noted a lack of transparency for dam owners in regard to what they are required to do in terms of upgrading dam infrastructure to reduce the risk of dam failure beyond the "limit of tolerability". There appeared to be a limited focus on applying cost-benefit analysis to identify the most efficient dam safety risk reduction options. KPMG also noted that the dam safety regulator, being comprised, in part, of representatives of the same dam owners that it was regulating, was inconsistent with best practice and open to concerns regarding conflict of interest.

The current approach to dam safety does not clearly establish the point at which compliance has been reached and has contributed to a strong focus on engineering measures over alternative approaches to risk reduction. The lack of a clear minimum standard and the focus on engineering solutions has, in some cases, resulted in large capital expenditures without appropriate consideration of whether alternative risk management methods may have achieved improved safety outcomes at a lower cost. The interagency Dams Safety Review Steering Committee observed that the Dams Safety Committee, despite being a regulatory authority, does not in practice establish clear standards against which dam owners can simply assess their compliance. They also observed that the Dams Safety Committee currently has only very limited enforcement powers.

Community and stakeholder input was sought throughout the review. Workshops were held with

large dam owners, relevant agencies and representative organisations. A community consultation process was also undertaken on the findings of the review during which 39 submissions were received. Overall, these submissions indicated broad support for the reform direction identified in the review. The review steering committee reviewed the results from the consultations and identified a number of reform proposals to give effect to many of the KPMG recommendations. The bill seeks to retain important elements of the current dam safety regime, to modernise and address gaps in the current legislation and to provide a best practice framework for the ongoing regulation of dam safety in New South Wales. In so doing, the proposed reforms will achieve the desired public safety outcomes more efficiently.

I now outline the provisions of the bill: first, the proposed objects of the Act. The current Act has no objects, which the review found may have contributed to a lack of clear direction and a blurring of the functions of the Dams Safety Committee. Clause 3 sets out the proposed objects, which are centred on ensuring that the risks imposed by dams are appropriately and transparently managed by the regulator and by dam owners. They provide a definitive basis on which the proposed new regulator will operate. The bill introduces the process of declaring dams, which replaces the current process of prescribing dams. Under clause 5, Dams Safety NSW will declare a dam through a gazettal notice. The list of declared dams will also be available on the department's website, making it more readily accessible to the public. The regulations will prescribe the type, class and categories of the declared dams.

The Dams Safety Committee previously developed the criteria for prescribed dams outside the legislation; however, the list of prescribed dams is contained in schedule 1 to the current Act, creating inefficiencies when changes were required. Gazetting the declared dams as outlined in the bill should reduce this inefficiency. Those dams on the current prescribed list will be recognised as declared dams once the Act comes into effect. The Interim Dams Safety Advisory Committee will be tasked with developing the criteria for declaring dams; however, it is not anticipated that the criteria or number of dams that are to be regulated will differ markedly from what is currently in place. The bill replaces the "Dams Safety Committee" with "Dams Safety NSW", updating the name of the regulator, and marking the beginning of the reformed regulation.

As mentioned previously, the review found that the inclusion of dam owner representatives on the Dams Safety Committee was not in keeping with regulatory best practice, creating the risk of concerns regarding conflict of interest. Consequently, the bill proposes that Dams Safety NSW will comprise at least five members who collectively have professional expertise in: dam engineering; mine engineering; emergency management; dam operations and management; and best practice regulation, including cost-benefit analysis and business case development. It is intended that the new composition and the broad range of expertise of Dams Safety NSW will better equip the regulator to meet the objects of the Act and undertake all its required functions informed by a best practice and modern risk management approach. These functions are set out in clause 9 of the bill.

A key recommendation from the review was that the dam safety regulator should be responsible for monitoring compliance of dams with public safety standards and, while the regulator should have powers to compel owners to comply with the standards, there should be no blurring of the fundamental legal responsibility of dam owners in the provision of public safety. It was further proposed that the regulator should have powers to enforce compliance with standards, but should not take a prescriptive approach in determining particular dam safety investment strategies that dam owners may choose to achieve compliance. Rather, dam owners should have flexibility to explore a broad array of options to deliver the required level of public safety and should apply a risk management framework and cost-benefit analysis to identify the most efficient dam safety risk reduction strategy.

This concept lies at the heart of best practice regulation and paves the way for effective and efficient risk reduction solutions for dams. As a result, the functions of Dams Safety NSW include recommending to government the dams safety standard, or standards, that dam owners must meet. This differs from the current approach, which directly references Australian National Committee on Large Dams [ANCOLD] guidelines. Under these guidelines dam owners are required to meet a defined

minimum standard in relation to public safety risk, known as the "limit of tolerability". They are also expected to strive to achieve the largely undefined target of public safety risk being "as low as reasonably practicable".

The current situation creates a lack of clarity for dam owners on whether they have met their statutory responsibilities, and it also means that changes to the ANCOLD guidelines, over which the New South Wales Government has no control, are translated into the New South Wales regulatory system without the filter of normal regulatory impact assessment processes. In forming recommendations regarding minimum public safety risk standards, Dams Safety NSW will take into consideration the relevant Australian and international standards and dam safety guidelines. Once established by regulation, the standards will be enforced by the regulator, which is consistent with the functions outlined in the bill. Dam owners will be required to demonstrate how they have complied with the standards on an annual basis.

Another key finding of the review was that the functions of the regulator need to extend beyond the physical safety of the dam wall to the way the dam is operated and managed, including emergency plans. In this regard, the Dams Safety Committee's current role in approving the operational and emergency management plans for dams is considered to be open to improvement. More rigour is required on the completion and review of these plans. It is therefore proposed that the regulations will specify the requirements for the plans. Dam owners will be required to submit plans that must meet these requirements and be updated on an annual basis. It is proposed that Dams Safety NSW will be a compliance-driven regulator with the onus on the dam owner to prove compliance, and the regulator will have the power to take action to ensure that compliance is achieved.

Many council submissions indicated that they traditionally rely heavily on engineering expertise and information provided by the Dams Safety Committee, and argued for a future regulator to retain this role. While provision of general information on dam engineering and safety issues, and information on what is required to meet regulatory requirements would be within scope for a regulatory authority, it is considered that a direct advisory role of the nature proposed would not be appropriate. Therefore, a specific function is proposed that Dams Safety NSW is to provide guidance to dam owners in complying with the Act, including guidance on applying risk management and the principles of cost-benefit analysis. It is proposed that one of the first tasks of the new regulator will be the development of an appropriate cost-benefit analysis framework and process to be incorporated into dam safety regulator guidelines.

The analysis will be standardised in line with New South Wales Treasury requirements, and guidance will be provided for dam owners on this process. The proposed penalties in the bill have been significantly increased from those in the current Act, where the penalty for failure to comply is only 10 penalty units. This penalty is not considered commensurate with the potential consequences of dam failure—which, as members would be aware, can be catastrophic. The new penalties have been framed through consideration of the penalty regime for tier 2 offences under the Water Management Act, and are within the range of dam safety non-compliance penalties in the Australian Capital Territory and Queensland.

As I mentioned previously, a key function of Dams Safety NSW will be to prescribe dam safety standards. The provisions in the bill acknowledge that the introduction and subsequent amendment of dam safety standards will have a significant impact on declared dam owners, so there is a specific requirement that consultation occur with those affected by the proposals. Further, the bill requires that Dams Safety NSW conduct a cost-benefit analysis on the proposed standards before they are enshrined in legislation. These amendments recognise the recommendations from KPMG, that the regulator should achieve high levels of public transparency with respect to the basis of its regulator standards and the roles of the dam owner versus government to ensure that the legal liability is clear and rests firmly with dam owners. KPMG also found that the regulator should consider the views of industry and stakeholders when making decisions on changing regulation, and should advise industry and stakeholders once decisions have been made.

The bill provides that dam owners must submit operations and maintenance, and emergency plans in accordance with a more compliance-based regulatory model. Dams Safety NSW will have the power to audit plans, and this power will be enhanced by the emergency management and dam operations and management expertise that will be available through the membership of Dams Safety NSW. The bill enables compliance notices to be issued where Dams Safety NSW is of the opinion that an owner of a declared dam has not met the requirements in relation to the dam safety standards or dam operations and management, and emergency management plans. These notices provide a useful mechanism by which Dams Safety NSW can require dam owners to address the failure to comply. In addition, Dams Safety NSW will also have the power to undertake an action specified in the compliance notice, if the owner has failed to take action, and to recover any costs from the owner.

The bill proposes that Dams Safety NSW will have the power to order a person to do such things that are necessary to ensure the safety of a dam, when the safety of the dam is in question. Importantly, Dams Safety NSW also has the power to issue stop work directions where Dams Safety is of the opinion that anything being done or proposed to be done may endanger the safety of the dam. These two powers are significant, but equip the regulator with the means to properly ensure the safety of declared dams. The bill recognises that there is a continuing need for emergency powers in situations where there is an immediate threat to public health or public safety or in situations where a dam has collapsed or is liable to collapse.

The Government has undertaken an extensive process of consultation on the proposed reforms with dam owners and the community. The Government is committed to further consultation with affected owners during the implementation of the Act. In summary, this bill introduces important reforms to improve transparency in the regulation of dams safety in New South Wales and ensures that the regulator is properly equipped to enforce the new safety standards. Not only does the bill provide for clear safety standards for dams, it will provide dam owners with better flexibility in how they achieve it. The New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government's number one objective remains protecting the community from the risk of dam failure. In commending this bill to the House I acknowledge and pay tribute to the Minister for his fine work in this area. It is work that is long overdue and it is to his great credit that it is before this House. I commend the bill to the House.

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

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): I extend a very warm welcome to the Deputy Consul-General of the People's Republic of China in Sydney, Tong Xuejun, and standing committee member Sha Hailin. They are here with a delegation as guests of the Speaker. Welcome to the New South Wales Parliament.

REAL PROPERTY AMENDMENT (ELECTRONIC CONVEYANCING) BILL 2015

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 6 August 2015.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) [4.37 p.m.]: I lead on behalf of the Opposition on the Real Property Amendment (Electronic Conveyancing) Bill 2015. I state at the outset that the Opposition will be supporting this bill. Work around electronic conveyancing has had bipartisan support not only in New South Wales and in this Chamber but right across Australia since approximately 2008. In 2008 the Council of Australian Governments [COAG] agreement determined the need for a national e-conveyancing process so that we could have a seamless national economy. A national partnership

agreement was put in place at the time. It was decided that New South Wales would become the lead in this process and that it would set up a nationally applied standard and platform.

In 2010 New South Wales collaborated with Victoria and Queensland to form National E-Conveyancing Development Limited [NECDL] to build the online platform to deliver on national e-conveyancing. That led to the development of Property Exchange Australia [PEXA], which was established to provide time and cost efficiencies to conveyancing and associated industries by reducing time spent preparing instruments for lodgement, removing the need to attend settlement in person, and employing technology to greatly reduce the incidence of errors and failures in land transactions. Property Exchange Australia was established to provide the ability to perform online lodgements and property settlements in a simple single transaction, including new mortgages, mortgage discharges, transfers of ownership, settlements, caveats and notices. Importantly, when Property Exchange Australia was originally established it was unfortunately limited, although limited by necessity, to only the four major banks.

Indeed, initially it was only the Commonwealth Bank, the National Australia Bank and the ANZ Bank that signed up, with Westpac Bank joining shortly after. One of the important outcomes of the Real Property Amendment (Electronic Conveyancing) Bill 2013 was that it allowed other industry players to come on board and participate in that process. A result of those reforms in 2013, following on from the good work done in 2008, 2010 and 2012, Property Exchange Australia was able to begin processing transfers of land and caveats as well as mortgages, including an allowance for land titles offices and registries, other banks and financial institutions including credit unions, solicitors and conveyancers, State revenue offices and peak industry bodies such as the Australian Institute of Conveyancers and the Law Council of Australia.

Those changes took place under a bill that was originally instigated in 2013 and ultimately became a tool of legislation by 2014 because it just took so very, very long, with bipartisan support, to get through this place. If there is one criticism of this bill being before the House at this particular time it really is: What took so long? It has bipartisan support, and it has always had bipartisan support in every State of Australia and at a Federal level. It took 18 months for the introduction of the initial Electronic Conveyancing (Adoption of National Law) Bill 2012, it took 12 months for the next piece of legislation to come through, which was the Real Property Amendment (Electronic Conveyancing) Bill 2013, and it is taking a further two years for the Real Property Amendment (Electronic Conveyancing) Bill 2015 to come into this Chamber.

Mr Damien Tudehope: Cautious.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: I acknowledge the interjection from the other side—it is cautious. The only thing we should be cautious about is that we do not all die before it becomes a reality. There are nine important elements in the bill, which in essence will amend the Real Property Act 1900. The objects of the bill are:

- (i) to enable the Registrar-General to make rules (called the **conveyancing rules**) for or with respect to the preparation and lodgment of paper documents to give effect to conveyancing transactions under the Act, and
- (ii) to enable a person who is involved in a conveyancing transaction under the Act to give a client authorisation to a representative to enable the representative to do things on the person's behalf in connection with the transaction.

I note that in his second reading speech the Minister speech gave an excellent outline of exactly why that needs to apply in this age of e-conveyancing. The objects continue:

- (iii) to consolidate standardise the provisions of the Act concerning the certification of the

correctness of certain conveyancing transactions (whether conducted in paper or electronic form);

- (iv) to provide that certain paper conveyancing documents that are required under the Act to be executed or witnessed can be certified or authenticated by such other means as may be provided by the conveyancing rules;
- (v) to enable a person who intends to lodge a dealing to give effect to a legal or equitable interest in land claimed by the person to lodge a priority notice to prevent the Registrar-General from recording certain other dealings concerning the land for a limited period pending the lodgement of the proposed dealing for registration;
- (vi) to enable the Registrar-General to cease to issue certificates of title on and from a day to be declared by the Registrar-General by order published in the Gazette and to confirm that, before that day, the Registrar-General may cease to issue certificates of title on a staged basis;
- (vii) to provide that, after certificates of title are no longer issued, the Registrar-General may rely on either paper or electronic consents for certain conveyancing transactions given by the person who is recorded in the Register as having control of the right to deal in the land concerned;
- (viii) to enable the Registrar-General to designate certain persons employed in the Public Service to be Deputy Registrars-General and to provide for their functions;
- (ix) to enable an Australian address to be specified as an address for service in a caveat lodged under the Act.

I repeat: We have bipartisan support for the Real Property Amendment (Electronic Conveyancing) Bill 2015. We welcome the bill and support its carriage through this House, but we encourage the Government to move more swiftly on such an important matter.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) [4.43 p.m.]: I speak in support of the Real Property Amendment (Electronic Conveyancing) Bill 2015. The bill amends the Real Property Act 1900 to align paper and electronic conveyancing processes to facilitate the adoption of electronic conveyancing. This is an exciting piece of legislation. An understanding of the importance of this legislation is predicated upon an understanding of the manner in which conveyancing traditionally has been conducted in New South Wales under the Conveyancing Act and the Real Property Act. When I first commenced practice as a solicitor many years ago, the practice of conveyancing was a complicated and meticulous process. When attending to conveyancing transactions as a fledgling solicitor I was preoccupied with detail, ensuring that all the paper documentation was correct, including the detail of title, that signatures were authentic, and that the instruments involved were able to be registered.

In circumstances where we received defective documents, we would complete a conveyancing transaction at our own peril and, in many instances, would hand over people's life savings. I recall attending settlements and taking a long time to check final searches, signatures and title details to ensure the ultimate title would be placed in my client's favour. All this is completely understandable. When people enter into conveyancing transactions they are spending probably the largest amount of money in their lives to purchase a property—most negligence claims against solicitors resulted from negligence in conveyancing matters. Given this background, it was important to see a more streamlined process put in place to ensure that a title ended up in the hands of the correct purchaser and that the person selling the property was in fact the owner. This legislation seeks to achieve that outcome in a much more simplified and streamlined manner.

Another problem that besets conveyancers and gives rise to a number of claims on the fidelity fund of the Registrar General, are claims that arise out of fraudulent transactions conducted by a registered proprietor or someone purporting to be the registered proprietor. This is in circumstances where a property is either sold or mortgaged where the registered proprietor was not the signatory to the documents. New South Wales has prided itself on an advanced system of land ownership. We ought to be proud of the Torrens system and the manner in which it has delivered certainty of title within conveyancing transactions. That system is predicated on the notion of indefeasibility of title which has, at its foundation, the notion that the registered proprietor, in the absence of fraud, is the owner of the property. Accordingly, circumstances in which a property is mortgaged or sold fraudulently often places a new registered proprietor on title where his or her title was incapable of challenge.

I was involved in the case of *Benal v Westpac Banking Corporation and the Registrar General*, where a company secretary, with the assistance of a bank employee, obtained a certificate of title and used that certificate of title to obtain funds from Westpac. The bank was successful in maintaining its title to the mortgage. However, the company ultimately succeeded in recovering the value of the transaction against the Registrar General's fidelity fund based on the fact that although the bank had an indefeasible title—that is, its mortgage was registered on the title—the insurance fund should pay out the defrauded company. All this is grist for the mill for lawyers and conveyancers. They understand the pitfalls and perils of conveyancing in a manner that is often confusing to the public at large.

Lawyers will argue, of course, that is the reason they should be entitled to charge substantial fees for ensuring that the title placed in the hands of their clients is the correct title and that they will have ultimate ownership of the property that they have purchased. This legislation is exciting because it addresses a number of the issues that have constituted pitfalls for conveyancers. The introduction of electronic conveyancing, which commenced in October 2013, allows mortgage transactions to be completed in a paperless manner. Electronic conveyancing commenced in November 2014 also with respect to transfers, caveats, withdrawal of caveats and primary applications. This process results in less fraud or error.

The system of electronic conveyancing in circumstances where there is an unequivocal national form of authorisation called a "client authorisation" is also a step that is designed to reduce the possibility of fraud. This Act adopts a common form of identity framework that ensures all parties to conveyancing transactions must have their identity verified in accordance with the national framework, which has been verified by conveyancing stakeholders. As a result of this legislation the Registrar General will be able to set verification provisions for New South Wales. The legislation, because of the requirement for verification of identity, also allows dealings to be registered in circumstances where signatures have not been attested because the identity of the party entering into the transaction has already been verified.

An additional component of electronic conveyancing that is also important is the manner in which it simplifies the completion process. Lawyers will be aware that, on completion, parties to conveyancing generally attend for the purposes of handing over cheques and collecting title documentation. This can lead to a complex settlement. One must appreciate that often the vendor will sell to a purchaser and the purchaser may in fact be the vendor to another purchaser, who is a vendor to another purchaser. It is not unheard of to have as many as 20 conveyancing transactions being completed simultaneously. A problem arises when one of the transactions in the chain fails to complete because of a failure in the documentation or an absence of finance, then a multitude of transactions ultimately fail.

Electronic conveyancing allows multiple transactions to be simplified in circumstances where there is one clearing house for the money and one for the exchange of title documents that have already been verified. Clearly, that is an improvement on the current system where multiple transactions take potentially many hours to complete because of the number of transactions that need to be completed. This legislation also introduces priority notices, which can be electronically lodged in circumstances where a party to a conveyance seeks to reserve priority for the deal that they will be ultimately seeking to register. Priority is reserved for a limited period of time to enable the registration of title documents. An

example of why priority is important is the case of *Garnock and Ors v Black and Ors*, where the respondents registered a writ on title for a debt that was owing to them.

The writ was registered on the title after the contract for sale was signed and just hours before its completion. The registration was unbeknown to the purchasers who were the appellants. The Registrar General declined to register the transfer to the appellants who then sought relief in the Equity Division of the Supreme Court. The relief was refused and the appellants appealed and subsequently lost. Due to the notion of indefeasibility of title, the writ on the title existed first in time and had priority over the subsequent transfer. The introduction of the priority notice in this legislation enables a purchaser, after the exchange of contracts, to immediately lodge the notice to protect their ultimate transfer. This process would have prevented the writ in my example being registered on the title and would have preserved the conveyance in favour of the purchaser.

I welcome this legislation because it simplifies the conveyancing process and it provides a simple form of ensuring the title of purchasers. The priority notice will not prevent the Registrar General registering, noting, recording or giving effect to dealings that are lodged prior to the priority notice, dealings that are the subject of the priority notice, dealings that have consent, caveats, court orders or statutory charges. Additionally, the priority notice will operate for only 60 days. However, an application can be made for a further 30 days.

Members may be surprised to hear anyone suggest that this sort of legislation is exciting. However, I think steps like this, which minimise fraud and simplify conveyancing transaction, ought to be welcomed because often the purchase of a property is the largest transaction that people effect in their lives. We ought to do our utmost to ensure that that transaction is as pain free and as trouble free as possible. I welcome this legislation, which is progressive legislation from a progressive Minister. The staff in his office, who have been instrumental in preparing this legislation, should be applauded for their admirable work. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) [4.52 p.m.]: I support the Real Property Amendment (Electronic Conveyancing) Bill 2015. This bill represents yet another step in the Baird Government's resolve to maximise efficiency in the provision of government services, as New South Wales continues to embrace best-practice governance in the twenty-first century. At its essence, the bill addresses a number of important matters that have emerged with respect to the way in which the conveyancing process operates in New South Wales. Most notably, this bill rectifies persistent inefficiencies in current conveyancing practices by enabling the phasing out of paper certificates of title, along with aligning requirements for paper conveyancing with those already established for electronic conveyancing.

Moreover, the bill brings about nationally consistent conveyancing practices through providing the Registrar General with the ability to establish requirements for paper conveyancing, so as to ensure that, as far as practicable, they are consistent with those of other jurisdictions. These reforms, alongside the introduction of priority notices, will provide an enhanced risk mitigation framework to underpin conveyancing practices, whilst simultaneously lessening the regulatory burdens, and unnecessary costs and complexities that have come to typify and encumber the industry. In order to fully grasp the significance of the reforms provided for in this bill and the impact that they will have on my constituents in Miranda, it is necessary, first, to understand the integral role that conveyancing plays in our contemporary society.

Conveyancing is the process of transferring interests in land that results in transactions being lodged with the Registrar General for registration. The most common example of conveyancing is when one party sells a parcel of land to another. However, the term also encompasses other types of activities, including taking out a mortgage and placing caveats on land. Unsurprisingly then, the processes required for recording interests in land impact upon most people at some point of their lives, whether that be in the form of buying, selling and leasing property, inheriting property or taking out, and subsequently paying off, mortgages. Such a realisation is reflected in the fact that land title registration accounts for more than

\$100 billion in economic activity in New South Wales each year.

The people of Miranda take great pride in their homes; they see them as an extension of themselves and of the idyllic shire community. For the vast majority of people living in Miranda, the most substantial expense that will be made in their lifetimes is purchasing their own homes. This is in no way unique or endemic to Miranda but, rather, is very much the case for the bulk of people across New South Wales. Thus it is incumbent upon all members in this House and in the other place to identify weaknesses in the current conveyancing system, deliberate on alternative methods that may be set in place, and undertake meaningful reform to enhance and streamline the way that conveyancing operates.

As I noted earlier, conveyancing can be accomplished either via paper conveyancing, involving the physical exchange and lodgement of documents and cheques, or the new electronic conveyancing system, where conveyancing is executed via the electronic submission of information. Since the initiation of national electronic conveyancing on 8 October 2013, New South Wales has witnessed more than 13,000 dealings being successfully lodged electronically. Electronic conveyancing offers considerable cost and efficiency benefits to parties involved in land transactions, which is the overarching rationale of the Baird Government's response to creating a more flexible, dynamic system of conveyancing. Arguably, in an increasingly digitised age, governments have an obligation continually to examine alternative approaches that foster competitive, reliable practices that, in the process, reduce costs and the burden of red tape.

Unsurprisingly, the use of electronic conveyancing is expected to increase significantly in the near future as the national electronic conveyancing system expands. However, it is probable that a sizable percentage of conveyancing transactions will still be completed through paper conveyancing for the foreseeable future. As it now stands, different requirements and procedures exist for electronic and paper conveyancing. Even from a very basic standpoint in understanding conveyancing, such an approach can be conceived only as archaic and a relic of a bygone era, which profoundly ignores developments in the digital realm. This is precisely why the Baird Government is getting on with the job of ushering in these reforms. By establishing aligned requirements for paper and electronic conveyancing transactions, the bill will forge a single conveyancing process, thereby avoiding the complications and costs to the conveyancing industry of dealing with two separate processes and requirements.

To enable an alignment of electronic and paper conveyancing, the bill amends the Real Property Act to give the Registrar General the power to set verification of identity, client authorisation and certification requirements that conveyancers, financial institutions and lawyers must follow when engaged in paper conveyancing. The requirements the Registrar General will set for paper conveyancing will be based on those already in place nationally for electronic conveyancing. As such, this will achieve a substantial alignment between the regulatory requirements for electronic and paper conveyancing, rectifying inefficiencies that I have identified.

It is an important consideration to recognise that the requirements for electronic conveyancing are nationally consistent. This is the case as each Australian State, along with the Northern Territory, has agreed to implement identical standards for electronic conveyancing, as determined by the Australian Registrars' National Electronic Conveyancing Council. The council, established to oversee the formation of national electronic conveyancing, safeguards against the permeation of inconsistencies between the various jurisdictions—something that New South Wales has sought as an integral component in the harmonisation of procedural areas of governance.

By aligning the procedures for paper conveyancing with those for electronic conveyancing, a substantial degree of national consistency will be achieved, fostering security in conveyancing, as well as furnishing coherency and certainty in the industry. With the introduction of formal verification of identity requirements in paper conveyancing, the bill seeks to enhance risk mitigation in a prudent manner. While such standards already apply to electronic conveyancing and mortgages, all other types of conveyancing still lack this additional layer of security. For as long as these other forms of conveyancing, especially

paper conveyancing methods, still persist, there ought to be a standardisation of security methodologies. The introduction of the same formal verification of identity requirements across all types of conveyancing closes the gap that currently exists for paper conveyancing, strengthening fraud mitigation practices, therefore reducing the potential risk of individuals being exposed to acts of property fraud.

In addition, the implementation of client authorisations in both paper and electronic conveyancing will create a synthesis between each form of lodgement. Currently, should there be a need for a solicitor or conveyancer to alter the method of a transaction from an electronic format to paper, for whatever reason, the practitioner is forced to begin the process once more, from the very start. Under this bill, practitioners will be allowed to rely on existing client authorisations, instead of having to ask the client to go back to the practitioner's office and sign an additional set of documents. It may seem like a minor issue; however, the people of Miranda and New South Wales more broadly should not be subject to nonsensical bureaucratic delineations, which invariably impede and weigh down the productivity of solicitors and conveyance practitioners for no logical reason whatsoever.

The bill also amends the Real Property Act to facilitate the eventual phasing out of paper certificates of title. Currently under the Act, for a typical conveyancing transaction to proceed, the relevant paper certificate of title must be produced. Paper certificates of title cannot be used in electronic conveyancing. Phasing out paper certificates of title also offers industry considerable cost savings. These savings relate to storage, insurance and the costs associated with replacing lost certificates of title. It is proposed to allow time for the new safeguards to be fully implemented prior to paper certificates of title being phased out, and the bill provides that the Registrar General must give three months' notice of the day when the issue of certificates of title will be discontinued.

Finally, the bill provides for the introduction of priority notices in New South Wales. Importantly, a priority notice serves the purpose of protecting the interests of those individuals who have expressed interest in acquiring land or property. In doing so, priority notices will augment increased certainty, bringing to the attention of potential parties who search the register that there is a pending transaction, along with aiding in fraud detection and prevention. That means, by implementing priority notices, the Baird Government is proactively preparing for the inevitability of embracing an entirely digital, electronic form of conveyancing, as these priority notices will play an essential role in safeguarding parties' interests once paper certificates of title are fully removed from the system.

Throughout the entire transition process, key stakeholders in the conveyancing industry will be fully engaged in an ongoing consultation to bring about a smooth shift towards a more efficient, modern and productive system. In concluding my remarks, I reiterate the importance of this bill in adapting current practices to contemporary realities. In responding to changing societal needs, the reforms contained within this bill will forge a more effective system for the creation, transfer and removal of estates and interests in land. In doing so, the people of Miranda, the shire and New South Wales will reap manifold benefits that will come from having a coordinated, streamlined and synthesised system pertaining to property transactions. I commend this bill to the House.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) [5.00 p.m.]: I support the Real Property Amendment (Electronic Conveyancing) Bill 2015. While some of the content of the bill has been in the pipeline for quite some time, I believe that initiatives of this type have been promoted proactively by the current Minister for Finance, Services and Property, who is demonstrating a real commitment to making government simpler, more efficient and streamlined to better serve the needs of the people of this State, to allow people to get on with their lives, and to keep government intrusion to a minimum. I congratulate the Minister on his approach. He has adopted a broad-minded approach to a number of issues associated with his portfolio that arise from emerging technologies. He is a man of vision and energy. He confronts those issues head-on and clearly has been thinking about the best way to make use of available technology for the benefit of the people of New South Wales.

New South Wales has been at the forefront of the development of national electronic

conveyancing. In 2010 New South Wales collaborated with Victoria and Queensland to form National E-Conveyancing Development Limited, which is now known as Property Exchange Australia, or PEXA, to build the online platform to deliver a national electronic conveyancing solution to the Australian property industry. PEXA began limited operations in New South Wales in October 2013 by processing mortgage-only transactions. It is now operating successfully in Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia processing mortgage transactions for a number of financial institutions, including the four largest banks.

A major expansion of the capacity of PEXA occurred on 10 November 2014 when New South Wales became the first State with the capacity to process and lodge transfers electronically. This expansion allows legal practitioners, licensed conveyancers as well as financial institutions to utilise the benefits of PEXA and opens the way for processing property transfers in New South Wales by real-time settlement of transactions being undertaken through the Reserve Bank. Just as the Australian Securities Exchange [ASX] modernised the exchange of shares, PEXA removes the manual processes and paperwork associated with the exchange of property by allowing for the first time land registries, financial institutions and conveyancing practitioners to transact together online. This is the most significant change in conveyancing since the introduction of the Torrens system 150 years ago.

The Real Property Further Amendment (Electronic Conveyancing) Bill 2015 will facilitate the next stage in the implementation of those exciting reforms to the conveyancing industry. The bill will facilitate the development of nationally consistent conveyancing processes that will reduce costs and streamline conveyancing. This will be achieved by allowing new practices to be established for electronic conveyancing under the Electronic Conveyancing National Law and in the participation rules made by the Registrar General pursuant to that law that will be adopted as standard practice for conveyancing. That will avoid complexity and reduce costs for the conveyancing industry by allowing the wider adoption of electronic conveyancing practices and by avoiding the costs that would otherwise arise from running two parallel conveyancing processes.

The development of national electronic conveyancing also has highlighted some of the legislative and practice differences in conveyancing between the Australian jurisdictions that participate in electronic conveyancing. Only the Australian Capital Territory is not participating in national electronic conveyancing at this time. However, it is expected that the Australian Capital Territory will participate in the future. The bill will amend the Real Property Act 1900 to allow one set of regulatory and business requirements covering both electronic and paper conveyancing transactions to provide certainty to the conveyancing industry about the requirements they must meet for their conveyancing transactions to be registered in the Torrens title register. Under those changes, uniform national requirements will be adopted wherever possible to minimise inconsistencies between the Australian jurisdictions and to encourage the take-up of electronic conveyancing.

The streamlining of paper and electronic conveyancing processes will facilitate a smooth transition between the paper and electronic mediums, reduce the complexity of practices in a concurrent paper and electronic conveyancing environment and deliver efficiency savings to the conveyancing industry. One of the most significant reforms included in the bill relates to the introduction of a national verification of identity framework. At present there are a number of different verification of identity regimes across Australia and different rules currently apply to New South Wales depending on whether someone is acting in an electronic conveyancing transaction, or is a mortgagee, or is an attesting witness. Informal due diligence requirements currently apply to conveyancing professionals, solicitors and licensed conveyancers.

The bill allows the Registrar General to apply the verification of identity standard, which was the subject of national consultation and nationally agreed to, whether the transaction is in paper or conducted electronically. All transactions will be required to meet the same standard, thereby providing certainty to those who have to conduct a verification of identity and all the other parties in a transaction who rely upon that. The adoption of the formal verification of identity standard also will benefit the community generally

by strengthening arrangements to militate against identity fraud in conveyancing transactions generally. The verification of identity framework requires a person who must identify another party to take reasonable steps to do so.

This allows sufficient flexibility for less stringent arrangements to be put in place—for example, when the person needing to be identified is a longstanding client. Alternatively, however, if certainty is required there is a standard process that may be followed to be deemed to have taken reasonable steps. These arrangements have been widely negotiated with key stakeholders in the conveyancing industry and are generally accepted as providing both flexibility and certainty for all participants. This bill is a sensible move forward and is yet another step taken by a sensible and progressive Minister for Finance, Services and Property. I commend the work of the Minister. I also commend the bill to the House.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.06 p.m.]: I support the Real Property Amendment (Electronic Conveyancing) Bill 2015. I make the observation that, while on the face of it property law may not be the most interesting topic to all and has confounded law students and lawyers for many years, it is part of the Priestley 11. It has changed significantly from the passing of a knife or a small sword on the site to property under the old system title—which is fun for everyone who has traced the good root of title to its original issuance—and then through to the Torrens system, which was intended to make property transactions much more efficient and easier. Over the years many extraordinary reforms have taken place in property law that have confounded many people. Even this Parliament has had to keep up with common law changes to trust arrangements, such as equitable trusts, constructive trusts and resulting trusts, and deal with matters such as the partitioning caveats of property.

It always interests me when technology changes and Parliament can take the opportunity to adopt a new approach or a new principle to embrace positive change. Technological change can take what is inherently an old system and make it easier for practitioners, in particular, to deal with it. As someone who deeply respects and understands the needs of those who have property rights, I realise the importance of protecting them while we make transitions and transactions as painless and as efficient as possible. The Real Property Amendment (Electronic Conveyancing) Bill 2015 will facilitate improvements in electronic conveyancing by aligning paper and electronic conveyancing processes. The alignment of paper and electronic conveyancing processes will facilitate a smooth transition between the two mediums to deliver efficiency savings and avoid complexity and costs to the conveyancing industry.

The national electronic conveyancing system commenced in New South Wales on 8 October 2013 and conducted mortgage-only transactions. A major expansion of the system began on 10 November 2014 with release No. 2 which introduced transfers, caveats and withdrawals of caveats. It opened electronic conveyancing to solicitors, conveyancers and additional financial institutions. National electronic conveyancing introduces a number of new national practices that are different to those that currently apply in paper conveyancing. These include that those differences may impede adoption of electronic conveyancing due to the costs and efficiencies inherent in operating with two different processes.

The key reforms in this bill allow a single conveyancing process regardless of whether a transaction proceeds electronically or on paper by introducing two new paper conveyancing practices such as the verification of identity, client authorisation and standardised certifications to align with the new requirements for electronic conveyancing. These reforms, together with the introduction of priority notices, provide an enhanced risk mitigation framework necessary to allow the phasing out of paper certificates of title, which is necessary for the adoption of electronic conveyancing.

The proposals were the subject of public consultation, with a paper released on 22 May 2014. Responses were received from major stakeholders in the conveyancing industry, including the Law Society of NSW, the Australian Institute of Conveyancers, the Australian Bankers Association, the Mortgage and Finance Association of Australia and the Australian Finance Conference. All stakeholders supported the proposals and no respondent to the consultation objected to the proposals. I acknowledge

the Minister in the Chamber. I point out that the Minister has been at the forefront of embracing technological change, be it in the way the Government interfaces with customers through Service NSW or with the property industry in a manner that embraces sensible technological progress.

New South Wales is at the forefront of changing the law and keeping pace with technology. I commend the Minister for doing so, and I commend more Ministers to follow in his footsteps. The bill will facilitate the adoption of electronic conveyancing and the realisation of efficiency savings for the conveyancing industry. The bill will amend the Real Property Act 1900 to enable the Registrar General to make rules, called conveyancing rules—and paralleling the participation rules for electronic conveyancing—for or with respect to the preparation and lodgement of paper documents to give effect to conveyancing transactions under the Act.

The bill will enable a person who is involved in a conveyancing transaction under the Act to give an authorised representative a client authorisation to enable the representative to do things on the person's behalf in connection with the transaction. It will consolidate and standardise the provisions of the Act concerning the certification of the correctness of certain conveyancing transactions, whether conducted in paper or electronic form. Indeed, that was one reason the Torrens system was so significant. The three principles—the curtain principle, the mirror principle and the insurance principle—ensure that some of the confusion that used to happen with old systems titles was resolved. Certainly, this will assist even further in that respect.

The proposals provide that certain paper conveyancing documents that are required under the Act to be executed or witnessed can be certified or authenticated by such other means as may be provided by the conveyancing rules. The proposal enables a person, who intends to lodge a dealing to give effect to a legal or equitable interest in land claimed by the person, to lodge a priority notice to prevent the Registrar General from recording certain other dealings concerning the land for a limited period pending the lodgement of the proposed dealing for registration.

It is important that we distinguish between equitable and legal interests, and that is clear in this amendment. The bill will enable the Registrar General to cease to issue certificates of title on and from a day to confirm that before that day the Registrar General may cease to issue certificates of title on a staged basis. The amendments provide that after certificates of title are no longer issued the Registrar General may rely on either paper or electronic consents for certain conveyancing transactions given by the person who is recorded in the register as having control of the right to deal in the land concerned. That follows the principle that the Torrens system is about a mirrored title system.

The bill will enable the Registrar General to designate certain persons employed in the public service to be deputy registrars general and to provide for their functions and will enable an Australian address to be specified as an address for service in a caveat lodged under the Act. The bill also makes consequential amendments to the Interpretation Act 1987 and the Real Property Regulation 2014. I thank the Minister for bringing forward this legislation. It will make the lives of so many practitioners much easier. It embraces modern technology that is sensible. This is the type of thinking that shows that this Parliament is at the cutting edge of dealing with what is a very old system, one that is rooted in history, and bringing it up to date with some of the most sensible principles. In so doing, we are leading the world in the way we deal with property law in this State. I commend the Minister, I commend his staff for their hard work, and I commend the bill to the House.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Hawkesbury—Minister for Finance, Services and Property) [5.14 p.m.], in reply: I thank the members representing the electorates of Cessnock, Epping, Miranda, Riverstone and Kiama for their contributions to debate on the Real Property Amendment (Electronic Conveyancing) Bill 2015. The bill will amend the Real Property Act 1900 to allow conveyancing processes to be streamlined during the implementation and expansion of electronic conveyancing. It does this by allowing new, more efficient and more secure processes developed for electronic conveyancing to be used regardless of whether a transaction proceeds on paper or is processed electronically. The reforms

in the bill will facilitate the adoption of electronic conveyancing and the realisation of efficiency savings for the conveyancing industry. All key stakeholders support these proposals, including the New South Wales Law Society. The Law Society's Property Law Committee commented:

The Committee supports the proposal to align paper and electronic conveyancing requirements. In the Committee's view this will assist solicitors and conveyancers in moving to electronic conveyancing and provide a single approach to client engagement in conveyancing which should result in efficiencies.

I thank the members of the House for their consideration of the bill, and I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Motion by Mr Dominic Perrottet agreed to:

That this bill be now read a third time.

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

HEALTH SERVICES AMENDMENT (PARAMEDICS) BILL 2015

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

Pursuant to resolution private members' statements proceeded with.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

JORDAN SPRINGS COMMUNITY MEETING

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) [5.16 p.m.]: Tonight I thank the residents of the suburb of Jordan Springs for attending my recent Jordan Springs community meeting, which I hosted on 20 August at Jordan Springs Community Corner. Despite it being a very cold night and being in the middle of the week, I was encouraged by the many residents who made time to come and discuss local issues in this burgeoning community in my electorate. On the panel I was pleased to have Detective Inspector Grant Healey from Penrith Local Area Command, Judith Field from Lend Lease, Ahmad Ali, the development manager at Lend Lease, May Fontimayor, the community coordinator at Lend Lease, and Erick Weller and Allison Kyriakakis from Penrith City Council. It was great to see so many residents on the night, including the unstoppable David Benthem, OAM, who is a proud advocate of this new community.

Jordan Springs is one of the newest communities in the Londonderry electorate. As well as being one of the many new release areas and a new estate, it is one of the fastest selling suburbs in the entire State. It is estimated that when construction of every dwelling is complete this suburb will be home to an estimated 6,500 residents, who will be living in this beautiful community. It is a place where many people in Western Sydney are choosing to raise their families and call their home. From the early days of my campaign back in 2013 to my current job as the local member, I have had the pleasure of coming to know the Jordan Springs community very well through regular doorknocking. I look forward to continuing to

represent them in this place.

Like every community in my electorate, the local community faces many challenges that fit within the purview of the State Government. As many members would know, one of the biggest campaigns I was a part of during the recent election was ensuring that the promised Jordan Springs public school is delivered on time and ahead of the Government's current schedule. This issue was one of many raised with me and other panellists at the community meeting. Residents also raised antisocial behaviour—a matter that Penrith police took very seriously and on which they indicated they will report back to me and community members—and received updates on the construction of local parks and playgrounds.

This new estate has many parks and playgrounds and will include an amazing all-abilities playground near the new sporting oval. It is to be developed in partnership with Lend Lease and the fantastic Touched by Olivia Foundation. It will be one of the best playgrounds in the western suburbs of Sydney. Special thanks go to my good friend Cassandra Ratcliffe, from local café Cassandra's on Queen in St Marys, for providing delicious refreshments for our meeting, and to Judith Field and May Fontimayor from Lend Lease for assisting with the venue and the preparations on the night. I thank each and every person who made time to come along on the night to inform me, other panellists and State government agencies about what is happening in the community and providing advice on how we can help. I look forward to working with the Jordan Springs community over the next four years and beyond.

OXLEY ELECTORATE COMMUNITY EVENTS

TRIBUTE TO MAURICE EDNIE CONNELL

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley) [5.21 p.m.]: I acknowledge three significant events in the magnificent electorate of Oxley that I was honoured to be a part of in recent weeks. The first is the Dorriggo Heritage Hotel's ninetieth birthday. I have celebrated a lot of people's birthdays at hotels but I have never been to a hotel to celebrate the pub's birthday. It was 90 years young. The celebration gave the community an opportunity to be part of a special event, which was hosted by the Feros family. The hotel has an amazing history. It was completed in 1925, the brainchild of Greek immigrant Michael Feros.

Michael Feros arrived in Australia from the island of Kythira in the early 1900s at the age of 15, not speaking a word of English. From a stony outcrop in the Mediterranean, Michael Feros fell in love with the magnificent Dorriggo Plateau—and I can understand why. The Tooth Brewery approached him in 1918 to buy his block of land to build a hotel to service the burgeoning population that was expected with the anticipated train line to Guyra. Being of Greek origin Michael said, "No, you can't buy my land but you can bankroll me to build a hotel." Tooth Brewery agreed and the hotel took five years to build at a cost of £19,000—an astounding \$9 million in today's money. Michael was just 29 years old but he showed passion and commitment to build this stunning hotel.

The good news is it worked, even though the railway line did not eventuate. Dorriggo has a history of primary production, with timber and farming industries, and a tourist industry. Within about 30 years Michael had paid off the hotel, and it is still owned by the family today. It has stood the test of time and is a valued part of the heritage of the town, offering popular tourist accommodation and a watering hole. I thank Peter and Lois Feros for hosting the event and extend a special acknowledgement to Lynn Burke, president of the Dorriggo and Guy Fawkes Historical Society, for his engaging and passionate presentation on the history of Dorriggo.

Last week I had the honour of laying a wreath at the Nambucca Valley Vietnam Veterans Day Service, which was hosted by Macksville RSL Sub Branch. I particularly acknowledge Gary McKay, the president, and Wendy Lichfield, the secretary, for a beautifully organised event to lay wreaths at the new Macksville Cenotaph. This event coincided with the reunion of Pioneer Platoon 9 RAR, and those members attended the service. It was a beautiful service and the senior choir of St Patrick's Primary School sung their hearts out to make it a real community event. After, there was a magnificent lunch at

the Macksville RSL Club. I was privileged to meet the mum of one of the Vietnam servicemen who did not return home. That was a poignant moment and a reminder of the cost of war.

Last Monday I attended the magnificent funeral of Maurice Ednie Connell, known as Maurie, who was 95 years young and a much-loved member of the Bellingen community. This was evident in the overflowing church at his funeral service, with many people standing outside. At least 600 members of the Anglican Church in Bellingen attended the service, conducted by Zoe Everingham. Maurie led a charmed but hard life. He was born in Grafton in 1920 and survived the Kokoda Track. He put up his hand to get water for his team, but when he returned with the water he found a bomb had taken out all his mates. From that moment on he felt he had been given a new life and he made every moment count.

Maurie loved nothing more than his country, family and community. He dedicated his life to the Rural Fire Service and The Nationals. As a former member for Cowper, Garry Nehl pointed out that Maurie was a very good man and a wonderful family man. I was proud to have this special person as a friend. Maurie was blessed to be married to his beautiful wife, Heather, who was surrounded by her family when celebrating Maurie's life. Maurie was special to the Bellingen Valley community.

FESTIVAL OF SMALL HALLS

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) [5.26 p.m.]: We can be lulled into thinking that remote farming communities are quiet, almost lifeless places. As one drives down a long country road flanked by fields of grain or with livestock dotted over huge pasturelands, it might all seem distant, silent and inactive. The reality can be very different. There are many small rural communities in my electorate of Albury. While it is true that facilities such as banks and post offices are often sold off and services centralised, large numbers of people still work the land or choose these places to make their homes and their lives are active and engaged.

Earlier this year I enjoyed a special event at Rand Hall, which was a remarkable venue for a magical night of music as part of the Festival of Small Halls. This is a real farming community and there was at least one of every type of character one might expect to find in the farmlands. It was a beautiful evening, more like the tail end of summer than the coolness of true autumn. A brief, light shower passed over, turning to steam rising from the hot paving outside the front of the hall. There was the old farmer with his white shirt sleeves rolled up and his pants supported by his faithful braces. There was the younger person who had fled the city to find affordable housing and a place to raise his children. There was the ute crowd and the retirees, the young mums and lots of little children, who ran around the hall with increasing speed as the music took off. Old couches and armchairs had been donated for the night, forming an impromptu outdoor lounge room under the stars.

The Festival of Small Halls is hosted by each local community, and the good folk of Rand put on a great show. Of course, the cricket and football teams ran the food and bar service. A team of artistically inclined folk decorated the hall, with artefacts suspended above our heads as well as across the stage. The Festival of Small Halls is a series of tours that connects the regions to touring artists on the national folk music festival circuit. This ambitious program is produced by the Woodford Folk Festival in partnership with a number of other Australian festivals and with the support of organisations and individuals who love folk and contemporary acoustic music. The walls and stages of small halls across Australia have become the hidden gems along the rough and ready trails of our cultural history, according to Jamie McKew, Director of Port Fairy Folk Festival. Those halls could tell some tales. Walk into a lovely small old hall up some quiet road and imagine the nights of dazzling dance moves, singing choirs, emotion and beer-infused speeches. The Festival of Small Halls keeps that tradition alive.

This year the festival has been held in small halls in towns like Toormina, Grenfell and Coramba in New South Wales and Glenorchy, Barwon Heads and Bonegilla in Victoria. At each concert one of the acts is Australian and the other comes from overseas. The Rand show was opened by Australian duo Siskin River. The two sisters who form Siskin River made a great impression on the crowd with their

skilful musicianship and strong original songs. Hailing from Prince Edward Island off the east coast of Canada, Gordie MacKeeman and His Rhythm Boys were the international act on the bill. They have made a reputation with their energetic performances at leading festivals around the world, including Glastonbury and the World of Music, Arts and Dance [WOMAD]. Their style is a blend of Celtic and bluegrass, using violin, guitar, double bass, banjo, pedal steel guitar, mandolin and drums. They were certainly an eye-catching act, with the singer and front man, Gordie MacKeeman, climbing up the side of the double bass while playing furiously on his violin, or dancing across the stage on his remarkably flexible legs. Meanwhile, over to the side, the crowd chatted over their drinks at the trestle-table bar or picked up pork rolls for a late-night supper. Wherever you looked, people were connecting and having fun.

Surely these small country halls still have a great role to play in their communities. Spaces like these have the architecture and history to bring a special atmosphere to public gatherings. A modern hall just cannot match it. Perhaps, in the harsh light of day and in the glare of financial sensibility, these halls no longer "pay their way" as community assets. But that night in Rand you could see how magical these spaces can be, particularly when great music and the cloak of night-time paper over the cracks. As I left the hall late that night, a sign on the street summed it all up with these headline words: "Music...Food...People. Rand Rocks Tonight". I thank the generous people of Rand who made this night such a success and who showed how important these halls remain, planted deep in regional and rural communities. I also thank the producers of the Festival of Small Halls, particularly the Woodford Folk Festival, the Port Fairy Folk Festival and the National Folk Festival. I hope to see the festival pass through the Albury electorate again in the very near future.

BANKSTOWN LOCAL AREA COMMAND 100 YEARS OF WOMEN IN POLICING

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) [5.30 p.m.]: I take the opportunity today to acknowledge the 100 years of women in policing, and in particular to acknowledge the wonderful event that we had in Bankstown last Friday to celebrate 100 years of women in policing, specifically of course in the Bankstown region. In 2015 the NSW Police Force is celebrating this wonderful milestone of 100 years of women within the police force. Like many commands throughout New South Wales, the Bankstown Local Area Command is proudly celebrating this impressive milestone. The statewide celebrations of 100 years of women in policing commenced earlier this year, on 1 March, at the Women in Policing Expo in Darling Harbour. Since that date, a baton relay has been hosted by various local area commands throughout New South Wales.

On Friday 21 August I was delighted to attend the Bankstown Local Area Command baton relay at Bankstown Memorial Oval, along with many local police officers from the Bankstown Local Area Command, including of course its commander, Superintendent Dave Eardley. Also present were many representatives of the Bankstown Girls High School who came to enjoy the festivities. The event was well supported by a strong contingent of both female and male police officers from the local area command, as well as many members of the public and the local media who also came along to participate in a game of touch football against some of the female officers. Superintendent Dave Eardley began the relay after receiving the baton from a PolAir helicopter, which landed in the middle of the wicket at Memorial Oval. The event also featured Highway Patrol vehicles, and Mounted Police. I had the honour of cutting a cake with Superintendent Eardley to celebrate the occasion.

On the day, I was particularly fascinated to hear firsthand from some of the Bankstown Local Area Command's female police officers, and from Superintendent Eardley, of the experiences faced by the pioneering early female police officers. In 1915 the New South Wales Police Department first advertised for two positions for female police. Approximately 500 women applied for those positions. The two women who were sworn in as probationary constables were Lillian Armfield and Maude Rhodes. However, the conditions and the roles of those two initial female police officers were much different from the conditions and roles today, in that now there is no distinction between the roles of male and female police officers. For instance, in 1915 the women were required to sign an indemnity releasing the Police Department

from any responsibility for their safety, and they wore civilian clothes rather than a police uniform.

At Memorial Oval original female police uniforms were being worn by some of today's female police officers. The uniform was a long, conservative, pale dress. It is remarkable to think it was in fact worn by a police officer. There are some interesting aspects to the early history of women in policing that many members of the public may not be aware of. For instance, initially female police officers were permitted to work only in the back office of a police station. In fact, the public were not allowed to see female officers at the station. If a female police officer were to become pregnant, she would have no option but to leave the police force. Married women were not allowed to become police officers—a policy which, surprisingly, was only abolished in 1980 following a complaint to the Anti-Discrimination Board by Virginia Carr.

At present, sworn female police officers form approximately 26.9 per cent of the NSW Police Force. I am proud to say that the Bankstown Local Area Command has a ratio of approximately 1:3 female to male police officers, which is above the State average. I commend in particular Superintendent Dave Eardley for his support of local female officers, especially in Bankstown. Female police officers are actively involved in almost all facets of the Bankstown Local Area Command, including in general duties, as well as operating as detectives and as members of the Bankstown Crime Management Unit. The female police officers at the Bankstown Local Area Command come from all walks of life; many live in the Bankstown community with their families. These female officers are of course mothers, daughters and sisters. They are educated, articulate and intelligent women; more importantly, they are contributing to making a real difference in the course of their policing duties in protecting and serving the Bankstown community.

BATHURST ELECTORATE RECYCLING

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Local Government) [5.35 p.m.]: It gives me great pleasure to talk about two initiatives in my electorate that have been promoted through the Minister for the Environment and through the Government's Waste Less, Recycle More initiative. The first initiative that I want to speak about is the new Bathurst Community Recycling Centre. I joined the Mayor of Bathurst and council staff only last week, because the New South Wales Government has provided \$38,000 for the construction of this new shed. Importantly, the new shed enables community members to recycle more waste. In the past, people did not know what to do with much of their waste, such as paints, oils, batteries, gas bottles and other problem waste. A lot of that waste ended up being stored in a garage; and when people wanted to get rid of it they put it in the otto bin, meaning the waste ended up in landfill.

The shed that has been constructed has bays into which people can dispose of problem household items in an orderly manner. The community recycling centre will ensure that these wastes are kept out of landfill, where they may harm the environment, and help to minimise waste and boost recycling. The centre will be open seven days a week and will complement the existing Chemical CleanOut events, which allow residents to dispose of problem wastes freely all year round. I congratulate the Bathurst Regional Council on achieving this grant and encourage all residents to take advantage of this fantastic free service. The centre will accept water-based and oil-based paints, used motor and cooking oils, lead-acid and hand-held batteries, gas cylinders and fire extinguishers, conventional tube and compact fluorescent lamps, smoke detectors, and so on.

I thank the Minister for the Environment for the incredible amount of funding that the Bathurst electorate is receiving. Initiatives such as this are making a huge difference for our community and we are seeing investments in regional communities that had been ignored for a long time. As part of our Waste Less, Recycle More initiative, around \$465.7 million is being provided over the next five years to keep problem waste out of landfill, increase food and garden waste collections, boost business recycling and invest in new infrastructure. This community recycling centre is one of about 86 that have been established in New South Wales communities. I am very pleased to have benefited from that initiative.

The other great program that I want to talk about addresses illegal dumping. Lithgow City Council has received \$20,000 through the Waste Less, Recycle More initiative. This grant will help the council to gather data on illegal dumping throughout the local government area. The grant will greatly assist the council to tackle littering and illegal dumping. It will help the council to install prevention equipment in identified hotspots, fund increased enforcement and surveillance efforts, deliver education campaigns to deter dumping and identify hotspots of illegal dumping activity.

The staff at Lithgow City Council also must be commended, because this data is going to be very useful for them in educating their community about the importance of disposing of materials in a proper, orderly manner. I also point out that dumping causes harm to the environment. It costs hundreds of thousands of dollars in clean-up fees each year and is very unsightly. As part of this initiative the New South Wales Government has dedicated \$58 million over the next five years to combat illegal dumping through a combination of education, prevention methods and enforcement. I thank the Minister for the Environment for the work that he is doing in ensuring that these valuable programs continue to run. The Bathurst electorate is certainly a beneficiary of these important grant funds.

INSPECTOR TOBY AUSTIN, COMMISSIONER'S VALOUR AWARD

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Corrections, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) [5.40 p.m.]: In The Hills shire we are blessed to have a strong, dedicated police presence that gets results. Dramatic decreases in malicious damage and domestic violence, the exposure of drug labs, the arrest of ice dealers and the tracking down of burglars are some of the more notable recent accomplishments. However, today I highlight the actions of one individual whose efforts in going above and beyond the call of duty warrant special praise. I was privileged to attend the presentation of the Commissioner's Valour Award to Inspector Toby Austin. Inspector Austin's citation for conspicuous merit and exceptional bravery in the arrest of an armed offender at Parramatta in March 2012 was a demonstration of the outstanding efforts of our police every day. Inspector Austin's wife, Ricki, and his children, Lachlan and Sophie, can be immensely proud.

Events of such bravery and consequence are incredibly rare, making them worth recounting. Upon committing both an armed robbery and a carjacking with a knife at Penrith, the offender fled and the vehicle pursuit reached dangerous high speeds along the M4 Motorway into the central business district of Parramatta. Inspector Austin engaged in a foot pursuit of the armed offender through the Westfield Shopping Centre, while constantly safeguarding civilians against the lurking threat. Using directions provided by members of the public, Inspector Austin entered a small corridor and located the offender in an adjacent room. The offender ran at Inspector Austin with a knife held out and with the intention to harm the inspector. Inspector Austin was able to neutralise and apprehend the offender, placing himself at significant risk to ensure the safety of civilians.

Actions of valour are often overlooked, as elements of the media seek to sensationalise negative incidents to maximise their sales or ratings or to create clickbait. The genuine courage of police like Inspector Toby Austin and all our emergency services personnel—volunteer and salaried—is often overlooked. By his sustained, conspicuous actions, Inspector Austin displayed outstanding courage and dedication to duty. In so doing, he evinced the highest standards of the NSW Police Force and was thus conferred with the Commissioner's Valour Award. It was the sustained nature of this event that distinguished Inspector Austin. This was not a singular, contained instance of bravery; Inspector Austin engaged in a drawn-out pursuit, the stakes of which intensified as the armed offender attempted to lose himself among innocent citizens and bystanders. Inspector Austin held fast throughout the chase, working with the members of the community he sought to protect, to find and neutralise the danger among them. Winston Churchill once noted:

Success is not final, failure is not fatal. It is the courage to continue that counts.

In this case, the stakes were even higher: Failure may have been fatal to the innocent—for Inspector

Austin or any other shopper. The inspector's actions certainly capture something of what Churchill was suggesting, through his courage to continue at every stage until the imminent danger was resolved. I am confident that Inspector Austin's determination and resilience is characteristic not only of The Hills Local Area Command but also of the entire NSW Police Force. We should take this opportunity to pause and commend them all. I take great pride that as a community we can rest easy at home, walk the streets, browse the shops and meet and greet, knowing we have people such as Inspector Austin dedicated to ensuring our personal protection and safety. I congratulate Inspector Austin and thank him for his wonderful service.

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.44 p.m.]: I too pass on my congratulations at the heroic and brave actions of Inspector Toby Austin. He is a deserving recipient of the Commissioner's Valour Award. On behalf of a very grateful community, I add my thanks for his service—indeed, not only the work of Inspector Austin, but also the work of every officer at The Hills Local Area Command [LAC]. As the member for Hornsby, I see on a daily basis the fine work of the outstanding men and women at The Hills LAC, led by the exceptional Rob Critchlow. He is a dedicated public servant—one of the most dedicated public servants one can find. Again, on behalf of a very grateful community, I thank all the amazing police officers, men and women, at The Hills LAC, led by Rob Critchlow, for their outstanding service to our community.

NEWCASTLE TRANSPORT

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) [5.45 p.m.]: Newcastle received some surprising news this past week. On Friday, without any warning, Paul Broad, the chairman of the Hunter Development Corporation for more than seven years, resigned—effective immediately. For such a high-profile, senior public servant this was indeed a puzzling development. Mr Broad then started to explain why. He said that he had experienced some disappointment with aspects of the Government's city revitalisation plans for Newcastle and, most startlingly, he declared that there had been a "massive shift in power from Newcastle to Macquarie Street". The Government has to explain to the residents of Newcastle the concerns that drove Mr Broad to take such a dramatic step. He warned that the Hunter was losing its voice in discussions about its own fate and that the big bureaucracies in Sydney were dominating the planning of the city. This is particularly concerning as the city is currently undertaking a community engagement program to formulate a plan for the future of the Newcastle city centre.

Mr Broad continued, listing his understandable fears about the Government's underwhelming vision for the Wickham Transport Interchange. I had a meeting last week with Transport for NSW and was astounded that there was no room allocated for cars or buses. We were told that there would be a taxi rank in a small street to the side of the interchange and a bay or two for a drop-off section, but that was all. It seems obvious that for this interchange to move forward the purchase of The Store and its car parking station is essential. If people plan to go to Sydney on the train, they better be able to balance their luggage on their bike, because the bike racks are currently the only long-term parking option in the interchange. During the meeting there was certainly a lot of emphasis on the bike racks and lockers.

We were stunned that the planners had missed some crucial points of a transport interchange—that being various modes of transport. Mr Broad also said that there was a lack of vision for the best mode of transportation to intersect with the heavy rail. He was not wrong about that. Currently in Newcastle we have three projects that are not connecting with each other. They are acting as if they are in silos. We have the Wickham interchange, which links to the light rail project, which links to the revitalised Newcastle central business district process. When we asked Transport for NSW questions about how the light rail would connect with the interchange, the officers were confused. They had been told to design an interchange on the block of land they had been issued, and that was it. No thought had been given to how the transport options would connect and no consideration applied to whether they could buy The Store, which would give them a ready-made car park as well as room for a bus and coach interchange area.

Mr Broad had remained unconvinced about light rail and said the Government would be better to focus on getting the interchange right and then determine the best system once the new law courts had opened and the university's city campus had increased traffic in the city. This was the first time in recent history that Newcastle had heard a government official questioning the best way forward for transport in and around the city, after being told what we were getting by the Government. While the Hunter Development Corporation is seen by some in Newcastle as a forum for those who want to push the property industry's interests, Mr Broad said it would not have sought development on the rail land. In fact, he told the Government to tell UrbanGrowth it cannot develop the rail corridor. The rail corridor is a divisive topic in Newcastle, especially within the Government. In December 2013 the then Minister for Planning, Brad Hazzard, was in Newcastle revealing plans to end the train line at Wickham and build a new transport interchange. He announced then that the Government would not allow developers to move into the city's rail corridor. He said:

I can make it very clear, 100 per cent, that our intent is that it stays in public ownership for the long haul. There's no intent whatsoever to go handing it over to developers. What we're really talking about here is a guarantee, no doubt about it, it stays in public ownership, and must remain as a potential corridor.

In June 2014 Pru Goward, then Minister for Planning, announced that the State Government would allow development along the Newcastle inner-city rail corridor when the line was cut despite those previous assurances. She said that putting up a Berlin Wall of high-rises along the corridor would not happen. In 2014 she also said that work on the new light rail system would be underway by the end of the year. Now in August 2015 UrbanGrowth is running a community consultation process and the impressions of four artists depicting the future look for the rail corridor between Wickham and Newcastle stations have been presented to the people of Newcastle. Three of the four images show significant development along the rail corridor. We have to wonder whether that was the last straw for Mr Broad. The most concerning aspect of the whole story is that the issues he raised are currently in progress. The Government must acknowledge the criticisms that Mr Broad has levelled at it. Who is deciding the future for the city of Newcastle?

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.50 p.m.]: I too acknowledge the significant contribution that Paul Broad has made to public life in this State over many years. I know him personally. He is one of the exceptional public servants in New South Wales who has served both sides of politics with distinction. I note the issues behind his resignation and will take them on board. Paul Broad laments the strong, united voice in the Hunter. At a time when unity and vision is needed, a strong, united voice is lacking from the Labor members of Parliament, particularly those from Newcastle. As a result, good public servants such as Paul Broad feel they cannot achieve an agenda to revitalise Newcastle and improve the amenity and infrastructure for its residents, once and for all. We need a united voice and the member for Newcastle should get on board and provide one.

Private members' statements concluded.

Pursuant to resolution matter of public importance proceeded with.

DAFFODIL DAY

Matter of Public Importance

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) [5.52 p.m.]: It is wonderful to see some members wearing daffodil pins on their lapels two days in advance of Daffodil Day. More than 120,000 Australians will be diagnosed with cancer each year. According to the Cancer Institute NSW, by 2016 it is predicted that 6,505 people in the Hunter New England region alone will be diagnosed with cancer in a year, resulting in 2,129 deaths. Those are fairly significant figures. Cancer continues to penetrate and impact on our communities. Unfortunately, most people have had cancer touch their lives in some way; if not personally,

a friend, family member, neighbour or colleague is likely to have been diagnosed with cancer.

That has to change, which is why it is important to support Cancer Council initiatives such as Daffodil Day. Daffodil Day will take place on Friday 28 August. It represents a national day of hope that provides an opportunity for Australians to contribute to a brighter, cancer-free future. To raise vital funds for cancer research and support programs, Australians are being urged to wear a daffodil pin on Daffodil Day for someone they know. This morning I spoke in this Chamber about Professor John Forbes, who is a constituent of mine, who undertakes important cancer research. Professor Forbes is the Director of Research at the Australia and New Zealand Breast Cancer Trials Group, which is based in Newcastle. He is the Professor of Surgical Oncology at the University of Newcastle and Director of Surgical Oncology at the Calvary Mater Newcastle Hospital. He is a Member of the Order of Australia, a member of the Hunter Medical Research Institute's Cancer Program and a member of the Hunter Cancer Research Alliance.

Professor Forbes was recently recognised for his work by being awarded the New South Wales Premier's Award for Outstanding Cancer Researcher of the Year in recognition of his leadership in the study of breast cancer. It is clear that this man has dedicated his life to fighting this insidious disease. The award for Outstanding Cancer Researcher of the Year is presented to an individual who has made a significant and fundamental contribution to any field of cancer in New South Wales. It is awarded to a researcher who shows leadership and is active in New South Wales cancer research, and who has a record of substantive and noteworthy publications. The winner is selected based on the quality, significance, scientific originality and innovation of their research; their contribution to the acceleration of progress against cancer; and implications for future research. Professor Forbes has been at the forefront of translational cancer research for the past 20 years and his work has focused on clinical trials. These have yielded positive health outcomes in prevention, early detection and treatment.

In the late 1970s Professor Forbes spearheaded the development of the Australia and New Zealand Breast Cancer Trials Group and has been a driving force in its growth from a fledgling group to one of the most prestigious organisations of its type in the world. Collaborations have been forged with other similar international breast cancer study groups to ensure sufficient patient numbers for high-level significance in increasingly niche sub-types of breast cancer. Newcastle researchers Professor Stephen Ackland and Professor Xu Dong Zhang—colleagues of Professor Forbes at the Hunter Medical Research Institute [HMRI]—are also making great advancements in cancer research and this year were awarded a grant of \$125,000 for research equipment. Professor Ackland, head of the HMRI cancer program, will work on a live cell imager that will enhance pre-clinical cancer studies into how a cancer cell behaves so that factors can be identified to prevent cancer progression and stop its growth. This work is taking place in the city of Newcastle. Imagine how much could be done with more funds for research and trials across Australia.

On Friday 10,000 volunteers across Australia will staff 1,200 merchandise stations selling daffodil pins, teddy bears and more to help raise funds for the Cancer Council. These will be positioned in high-traffic areas outside train stations, shopping malls and supermarkets. This is the twenty-ninth year that Daffodil Day has taken place in the Australian market. Over that time the Cancer Council has raised more than \$133 million to fund life-saving cancer research, prevention and advocacy programs and support services for people affected by cancer. This year the Cancer Council is hoping to raise \$8.5 million nationally to help reduce the impact that this disease has in our community. Buy a daffodil pin on Friday and wear it for someone who has been affected by cancer. I know I will.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) [5.57 p.m.]: I thank the member for Newcastle for bringing this matter of public importance to the attention of the House. I was proposing to speak about Millicent Preston-Stanley because it is the ninetieth anniversary of her inaugural speech. However, Daffodil Day is an important topic and it is essential that all members know it will be held this Friday so they can assist in the fundraising efforts. Daffodil Day is in its thirtieth year and falls on the fourth Friday in August each year. This year it is Friday 28 August. The Cancer Council chose the daffodil as a symbol of hope for people affected by cancer. Everyone knows someone who is affected by cancer. On average, one in two

men and one in three women who live to the age of 85 will be diagnosed with one of the many forms of cancer. Cancer kills more than 13,500 people in New South Wales each year. That figure is far greater than it should be. Thankfully, mortality rates are decreasing.

Cancer Council NSW, which is the largest cancer charity in this State, celebrates its sixtieth anniversary this year. It is funded almost entirely by the community through Australia's Greatest Morning Tea, Relay for Life and Daffodil Day. Cancer Council NSW raises approximately \$3 million from Daffodil Day and those funds are used to develop cancer prevention programs. Each year those funds also support 16,000 people with cancer through the Cancer Council helpline, which is 13 11 20. Daffodil Day also supports cancer research. From its beginnings, the Cancer Council has recognised the importance of research into cancer. Each year it invests more than \$14 million into cancer research. It has supported Australian researchers working in global collaborative research projects on cancers that had previously received less attention than others, including brain cancers, pancreatic cancer, oesophageal cancer and the link between hepatitis B and liver cancer.

Staff and volunteers work tirelessly to raise awareness about cancer and to make a difference to the people in our communities who most need support, including Aboriginal peoples who are particularly affected by cancer. Cancer Council NSW is a major partner of the New South Wales Government's control agency, the Cancer Institute NSW. They work together to provide community-focused education services to help people make healthy lifestyle choices—for example, quitting smoking or not taking up smoking in the first place, and preventing skin cancer by choosing sun protection behaviours. I take this opportunity to mention some other ways in which money is raised for the Cancer Council, in particular Relay for Life.

The Liverpool 2015 Relay for Life was held on 23 and 24 May. What a cold time of year for people to be walking around an oval for 24 hours but it shows their commitment to finding a cure for cancer. On that occasion the Liverpool Cancer Therapy Centre was celebrating its twentieth anniversary. Professor Geoff Delaney is director of that centre. It is only a small centre, which looks after 5,000 patients each year with just 180 staff, but we want something bigger and better. Michael Clarke has signed on as patron of the centre. The Liverpool Cancer Therapy Centre does a remarkable job. Mayor Ned Mannoun and I walked a couple of laps that night.

I congratulate all who took part in the event, from the 36 members of CrossFit Chipping Norton to those who participated singularly. It was an impressive effort to commit to 24 hours and raise funds for Relay for Life. I also acknowledge the participants from Curves Casula-Liverpool who walked those few laps with me. Thank you all. I thank the Speaker and member for South Coast, Mrs Shelley Hancock, for always hosting the Biggest Morning Tea in this Parliament. My uncle Stan Reynolds passed away from cancer. His funeral was held on Daffodil Day many years ago. It was lovely to purchase a whole heap of daffodils in remembrance of him. I also thank the member for Hornsby, who will be selling daffodils bright and early on Friday morning.

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) [6.02 p.m.]: I contribute to debate on this matter of public importance—namely, Daffodil Day—and thank the member for Newcastle for bringing this important day to the attention of the House. It gives me an opportunity to speak about two morning teas I am hosting for Daffodil Day. The first morning tea was held last Friday at the West Tradies, and the second one will be held at St Marys RSL club next Friday. The Daffodil Day morning tea at West Tradies was a roaring success. More than 80 members of the community, looking bright and lovely in yellow, came along to enjoy some cupcakes and raise money to fight cancer. I thank Councillors Charlie Lowles and Tony Bleasdale, Ivy Roberson and the Whalan Action Group, and the other members of the community who came along and donated. We raised more than \$900, which was a fantastic effort. Every dollar we raise is crucial. I look forward to matching that effort next Friday at St Marys.

The tragic impact that cancer can have on a person's life is well known. Almost everyone would have a friend or family member who has been touched by cancer. Indeed, in my first speech in this place

I spoke about my mother's father who had died. The facts about cancer are stark. An estimated 128,000 new cases of cancer will be diagnosed in Australia this year, and that number is set to rise to 150,000 by 2020. One in two Australian men and one in three Australian women will be diagnosed with cancer by the age of 85. It is a leading cause of death in Australia. In 2012 more than 43,000 people died of cancer. Cancer accounts for about three in 10 deaths in this country. However, the death rate—the number of deaths per 100,000 people—has fallen by more than 16 per cent over 30 years and 66 per cent of people diagnosed with cancer in Australia are still alive five years after diagnosis. All the money going towards research is really making a difference but we need to do more to cure this insidious disease. It is so important that we give generously on Daffodil Day this Friday. Indeed, I look forward to seeing my friends at St Marys on Friday, as we continue to raise much-needed funds in the fight against cancer.

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) [6.05 p.m.], in reply: I thank the member for Holsworthy and the member for Londonderry for their contributions to this debate. Daffodil Day this Friday will be a very significant day for many in the community. The member for Holsworthy said she has been affected by her uncle's passing. I, too, have been affected. Three of my relatives have passed away through cancer. Cancer affects everyone. We all have had a friend or relative affected by this insidious disease. On Friday I hope everyone will purchase a yellow lapel pin or other item to raise funds for the Cancer Council NSW.

Discussion concluded.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to resolution, at 6.07 p.m. until
Thursday 27 August 2015 at 10.00 a.m.**
