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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday 27 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.

RURAL FIRES AMENDMENT (BUSH FIRE PREVENTION) BILL 2015

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

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Notices of Motions

General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) given.

Pursuant to sessional order General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) proceeded with.

JOHN HUNTER HOSPITAL CYSTIC FIBROSIS CLINIC

Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend) [10.13 a.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that the adult cystic fibrosis clinic at John Hunter Hospital undertakes amazing work.
- (2) Notes the understaffing, as 10 staff are shared across three clinics in New South Wales.
- (3) Notes that at the last election the Opposition committed to easing the pressure on these clinics by increasing funding to employ more staff.
- (4) Calls on the Minister for Health to match this promise to assist cystic fibrosis sufferers by increasing funding to the three adult cystic fibrosis clinics.

Imagine breathing through a straw for more than 60 seconds. A powerful advertising statement from the Cystic Fibrosis Federation describes cystic fibrosis as follows:

After a while, your lungs strain, your head aches and your palms get sweaty. It's an unpleasant sensation. We can stop whenever we like. People with cystic fibrosis can't.

The John Hunter Hospital adult cystic fibrosis clinic is understaffed. People suffering from cystic fibrosis are living longer than before and previous child-focused plans for treatment are no longer enough. Thirty years ago the life expectancy of a patient with cystic fibrosis was 10 years. With recent medical advances, cystic fibrosis patients can expect to live into their forties and beyond, but it is a chronic illness that requires lifelong treatment which is limited to the prevention of illness and the management of symptoms. It is a gruelling regime. Cystic fibrosis is the most common genetic disease in people of Caucasian descent. Every year in Australia approximately 90 babies are born with cystic fibrosis.

As part of their care requirement, people with cystic fibrosis attend specific clinics that monitor their healthcare needs. Proper management of the illness allows them to function normally. They can gain employment and go to school to study. Nevertheless, it is an incredibly serious health condition that causes a great deal of suffering for patients and their families. Newcastle musician Mark Wells was not expected to live past his teenage years, but the 33-year-old cystic fibrosis sufferer is thriving. He is involved in a clinical trial at the Hunter Medical Research Institute into cystic fibrosis and told the ABC of his experience. He said:

Being part of that trial took me from being in a position where I wasn't really able to go for a walk around the block without something catastrophic happening, to being able to run five kilometres with no dramas. I still do two to three hours of treatment a day—physio, nebuliser treatments and exercise. I probably take 80 pills a day ...

This can be a gruelling regime. Mark is indomitable, but to maintain this level of activity and quality of life he, and people like him, need extensive medical support. In December last year, Michele Adair, the chief executive officer of Cystic Fibrosis NSW, wrote to the Minister for Health calling for an immediate threefold increase in the funding of adult cystic fibrosis clinics. She wrote:

Severe staff shortages have been acknowledged for some years and the Clinic Directors have all made representations to their hospitals about the need for more staff because of the significant increase in the number of adults with CF. Very little, if anything, has happened.

There have been some improvements. In New South Wales there are three cystic fibrosis clinics; one is at the John Hunter Hospital in my electorate. The care load is between 473 to 550 patients per year. The clinic at Westmead was in danger of not being able to take more referrals because of staff shortages. However, since February 2015 there have been some improvements and that clinic is still operating. The Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand has developed standards of care for cystic fibrosis patients from diagnosis through to treatment. According to these guidelines, the facilities I mentioned have been employing at least 63 professionals, including doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, social workers and dieticians. I am pleased to note that since last year that number has increased from 10 to 18, which is an improvement. The biggest and most immediate problem for Cystic Fibrosis NSW is providing specialist social worker services.

The organisation links the hospital with the community and it undertakes outsourcing, but it is under-resourced—they get 2.2 staff when they need six. If we are going to do anything, we should be looking at specific social workers to help the cystic fibrosis clinics and their patients. According to Cystic Fibrosis Australia, as of December 2014 there were about 520 adults and 491 children living with cystic fibrosis in New South Wales. That is a lot. With more people suffering with cystic fibrosis into adulthood—and with the life expectancy of those living with the disease getting longer—adult-focused support services and clinics will only become more important to everyone. In the lead-up to the last election Labor committed an additional \$8 million in funding, over four years, to employ extra staff at those clinics. We were not elected, but it was a great model. I ask the Government to do the right thing and match that commitment.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) [10.20 a.m.]: I thank the member for Wallsend for moving this motion and giving members an opportunity to talk about cystic fibrosis. Today, I acknowledge the New South Wales Government's investment in health, specifically in the treatment of cystic fibrosis. This Government has repeatedly increased funding commitments to NSW Health to ensure that critical treatments are not left underfunded. For example, recurrent spending in Health in 2015-16 will be \$19.6 billion—up \$976 million or 5.2 per cent on the previous year. That funding will enable NSW Health to meet increased demand. It is an increase, not a decrease. Record Health funding allocated in the State budget will allow an extra 90,000 people to be treated in emergency departments, 40,000 extra hospital admissions and 3,100 additional elective surgeries. Members will agree those numbers are impressive. Indeed, I note that the member for Newcastle is nodding his head in agreement.

In the lead-up to the last election we also committed to abolish co-payments for section 100 highly specialised drugs for all public patients treated in New South Wales hospitals and for prescriptions dispensed through public hospital pharmacies or community pharmacies. This commitment will benefit patients with cancer and other chronic diseases such as HIV, Alzheimer's disease and cystic fibrosis. In the past two decades, thanks to considerable improvements in treatment, there has been a significant increase in the survival of people with cystic fibrosis. When I was growing up a friend of mine had cystic fibrosis. I can remember my mother explaining to me that he would not live to his twenties, and as a 10-year-old I realised how horrifying that was. The average life expectancy for a person with cystic fibrosis is now 37 years. Whilst that is still too young, it would have been unimaginable in the not-so-distant past.

Cystic fibrosis is a debilitating, life-threatening, congenital disease that causes a build-up of thick sticky mucus in the lungs. Patients invariably confront serious health issues, including major respiratory and digestive problems, and need to be examined by a qualified health professional every two months. Pleasingly, as I said earlier, significant advances in medical treatment have greatly extended the life expectancy of children born with the disease—an increase of 27 years over the past three decades. Currently more than 1,000 people in New South Wales have cystic fibrosis and, for the first time, the majority are adults. In response to data showing the success of cystic fibrosis treatments, late last year the New South Wales Government met with Cystic Fibrosis NSW to discuss the effect that increase in life expectancy has had on adult cystic fibrosis services.

Following that meeting the Minister for Health ordered a review into resourcing of public adult cystic fibrosis services in the State. As a result, in February this year the Government provided an additional \$1.38 million per annum to increase staffing across the three adult cystic fibrosis services in New South Wales at John Hunter, Royal Prince Alfred and Westmead hospitals. This increased funding was immediate and the three centres began recruiting an additional 12 to 13 full-time equivalent positions—the number of additional staff needed was identified by clinicians from the three clinics who were involved in the review. John Hunter Hospital has now recruited an additional clinical nurse specialist; physiotherapist and dietitian, and interviews for an additional pharmacist are being finalised. This enhanced funding has been welcomed by the clinicians and will ultimately benefit those who will access cystic fibrosis treatment now and in the future. In a letter to the Hunter New England Local Health District, head of the John Hunter clinic, Professor Peter Wark, said:

The additional allocation of resources has been welcomed by myself and the team.

He added that the clinic was "very appreciative" of the support provided by the local health district. Similarly, the head of the Royal Prince Alfred unit, Peter Bye, wrote to the hospital's general manager and said:

I am extremely happy with the current offer for increased staff.

At Royal Prince Alfred Hospital a new staff specialist and registered nurse have begun, recruitment for a physiotherapist, dietitian and registrar are underway, and the position of clinical nurse consultant is being re-advertised. This recruitment is of specialist staff, so it will take some time to fill those positions. At the Westmead clinic—which, despite Labor's scaremongering lies, has never closed to new referrals—recruitment is also going strongly. A new administrative officer and dietitian have begun, a new physiotherapist is about to start, the position of a new clinical nurse specialist has had to be re-advertised, and the recruitment of a new psychologist and pharmacist is underway. The clinical team at the Westmead clinic are very happy with the enhancement. Indeed, Cystic Fibrosis NSW wrote to the Minister for Health and said it was "delighted with the Government's announcement".

In addition to extra staff, the Agency for Clinical Innovation is working with consumers and all cystic fibrosis services to develop a cystic fibrosis model of care. The new model of care aims to improve

the way healthcare services are provided for people with cystic fibrosis. Cystic fibrosis is an awful disease, but thanks to advances in treatments many children live well into adulthood and their quality of life has been improved dramatically. I thank the incredible health professionals who work to improve the lives of those with cystic fibrosis in Australia. Those opposite continue to claim that we are cutting services and funding to our most vulnerable. In truth, we are doing the exact opposite. Health funding continues to increase each year and we have more doctors, nurses and specialist departments operating all the time. We are doing the right thing by the patients and staff at John Hunter Hospital and the people of New South Wales. The Government will continue to deliver on its promises.

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) [10.27 a.m.]: I support the motion of the member for Wallsend about the cystic fibrosis clinic at John Hunter Hospital. Only a week ago I spoke in this Chamber about the outrage I felt about another health emergency in the Hunter concerning ambulances and paramedics. When will the Government realise that when it makes cuts to health services it is cutting the lifeline of support for those who rely on the health system to stay alive? I call on the Minister for Health to match the commitment Labor made in the lead-up to the last election and increase funding to the three adult cystic fibrosis clinics.

Cystic fibrosis is a genetically acquired condition that affects the lungs and digestive system. People with this disease develop an abnormal amount of thick and sticky mucus in the lungs, airways and digestive system, which results in recurrent infections and irreversible damage. Approximately 90 babies are born with this genetic disease every year and, unfortunately, there is no cure. Lung failure is the leading cause of death. Because of worldwide medical advances, for the first time in New South Wales we now have more patients over the age of 18 with cystic fibrosis than the number of children with this disease. Currently, more than 1,000 people in New South Wales have cystic fibrosis. It is fantastic news for cystic fibrosis patients and their families that the average age of cystic fibrosis sufferers is increasing, but resources are not increasing with them. Those people are crying out for more staff and resources. The Government must help them.

Currently, there are three adult cystic fibrosis services in New South Wales. The clinics are located at Westmead Hospital, John Hunter Hospital, which services the city of Newcastle, and Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. Each year more than 500 patients are treated, yet fewer than 10 staff members are employed across the three clinics. For one of the most common genetic diseases, this is appalling. But it gets worse. According to the guidelines of the Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand, which developed the standards of care for sufferers of cystic fibrosis, those three facilities should be employing 68 professionals, including doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, social workers and dieticians. A comparison shows that the facilities are resourced by less than 15 per cent of the recommended number. I emphasise "less than 15 per cent". That is disgraceful.

As I mentioned, the John Hunter clinic has 10 staff, which means there are only 10 people to assist patients. How can the Premier care about having a record surplus and a booming infrastructure schedule when the sufferers of this disease and their carers have substandard health care and support? Cystic fibrosis [CF] is the most common fatal genetic disease in Australia. Why is yet another critical life-sustaining service so grossly underfunded? The saddest part of this situation is that these medical crises will continue due to Liberal governments slashing budgets. Recently the Abbott Government cut \$80 billion from the State's budget, which followed the \$3 billion cut to NSW Health in the last term of Parliament. With that cash grab the State has maintained its triple-A credit rating but our health system receives a big F. One of the longest surviving CF patients in New South Wales, Peter Oxford, who is 44 years old, said:

I have worked all my life to stay alive. Now I am being faced with the fact that I don't have medical staff to keep me alive.

Labor committed to an additional \$8 million over four years to employ extra staff at the clinics. Those people would have supported existing staff and made staffing levels safe and acceptable. I ask the

Government to do the right thing now and match that commitment.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) [10.31 a.m.]: There is no question that the work done at the John Hunter Hospital in relation to cystic fibrosis is truly amazing. I commend the member for Wallsend for her advocacy for cystic fibrosis sufferers. I support the Government in relation to health. The Premier's election promise to remove the co-payment for public hospital patients is proof that this Government's priorities are to protect those who are vulnerable and to maintain a safe and strong community. Let us not forget there is no cure for cystic fibrosis. As we heard today, the average life expectancy of cystic fibrosis sufferers is 37 years. This Government is focused on ensuring that the best treatment programs are available in New South Wales.

Unfortunately, the member for Newcastle obviously was not listening when the fantastic member for Holsworthy mentioned that the Government had increased spending by an additional \$1.38 million a year to increase staffing across the three adult cystic fibrosis services in New South Wales at John Hunter, Royal Prince Alfred and Westmead hospitals. As a result of improvements in medical science the average life expectancy for a person with cystic fibrosis is increasing. As the member for Holsworthy also mentioned, the New South Wales Government has been actively engaging with Cystic Fibrosis New South Wales and that engagement has resulted in increased staffing at the John Hunter Hospital, the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and the Westmead Hospital.

In addition, the Agency for Clinical Innovation has been working with consumers and all cystic fibrosis services to develop a cystic fibrosis model of care that aims to improve the way that healthcare services are provided for people who have cystic fibrosis. It is so important that those with cystic fibrosis receive intensive daily physiotherapy to clear their lungs, enzyme replacement capsules, antibiotic therapy to treat lung infections, aerosol mist inhalations through a nebuliser and salt and vitamin supplements, as well as exercise and follow a nutritious, high-calorie, high-salt, high-fat diet—and that is all before they even start the normal daily activities that we take for granted, such as going to school or to work. The model of care aims to ensure that the healthcare needs of adults with cystic fibrosis can be better met now and into the future.

As my colleagues mentioned, John Hunter Hospital has now recruited an additional clinical nurse specialist, a physiotherapist and a dietitian, and interviews for an additional pharmacist are being finalised. Despite the statements of Opposition members, this Government has delivered increases to the Health budget every year it has been in government. The total is \$19.6 billion, which represents an increase of \$976 million. This will allow for an extra 90,000 people to be treated in our emergency departments, 40,000 extra hospital admissions and 3,100 additional elective surgeries. It is clear that this Government and the Minister for Health take this issue very seriously. The Government has made a long-term commitment to the people of New South Wales to grow our health system by continued responsible investment. A new administration officer and hours of service for a dietician also have begun. For the reasons I have stated, I support the Government's spending in relation to cystic fibrosis facilities and treatment.

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) [10.35 a.m.]: I support the motion and I share the concern of the member for Wallsend about staffing levels. The 10 staff members of the John Hunter Hospital cystic fibrosis clinic are shared across the State's three clinics, including the clinic at the Westmead Hospital, which services my electorate. Approximately 100 patients use the Westmead Hospital's cystic fibrosis clinic. The clinic is supported by great staff but its services are being stretched. Recently, consideration was given to restricting new patients due to capacity constraints. I am glad that decision was not taken and temporary funding was provided for an additional part-time nurse at Westmead. However, it reflects that the service is stretched and needs more permanent support.

In recent years staff shortages have been a major problem. At the last election Labor committed to providing more resources for the State's three cystic fibrosis clinics. I join the member for Wallsend in calling on the Government to provide more resources for adult cystic fibrosis centres. Approximately 90

children are born with cystic fibrosis every year in Australia. For many years cystic fibrosis was considered to be a childhood disease, with sufferers having a life expectancy of 10 years and very few sufferers surviving to adulthood. Thankfully, that has changed significantly in recent decades, although there still is no cure. So many cystic fibrosis sufferers are now surviving until adulthood that adults now outnumber children with the disease in New South Wales.

While we have three adult cystic fibrosis centres, their capacity to meet the demands of a growing number of adult patients means that more resources need to be provided to the centres to ensure they can provide for existing and additional patients. Cystic fibrosis is a chronic and debilitating disease that requires constant support and monitoring. Management and treatment of cystic fibrosis is lifelong, ongoing and relentless. Those with cystic fibrosis may take up to 40 capsules daily to help them digest food and they may need to do up to three hours of airway clearance each day.

Treatment generally involves intensive daily physiotherapy to clear the lungs; enzyme replacement capsules with food to aid digestion; antibiotic therapy to treat lung infections; aerosol mist inhalations through a nebuliser to help to open the airways; salt and vitamin supplements; a nutritious, high-calorie, high-salt and high-fat diet; and exercise, which is important to help to clear the airways and build core strength. As the member for Wallsend mentioned, the standards of care for sufferers of cystic fibrosis published by the Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand would require 68 full-time staff across the three New South Wales centres, whereas there were fewer than 10 as at December last year.

As more and more cystic fibrosis sufferers survive into adulthood and the life expectancy of sufferers gets longer, adult-focused support services and clinics will become more important. Clearly, more needs to be done. I call on the Minister for Health to increase funding and resources to assist people living with cystic fibrosis. Sufferers of cystic fibrosis, like everyone who uses the Westmead Hospital, are under constant stress from a lack of sufficient staffing and resources. Given that the projections indicate we will have increasing numbers of cystic fibrosis sufferers using the clinic, the resources provided to it must be drastically increased.

The Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend) [10.38 a.m.], in reply: I thank the member for Holsworthy, the member for Newcastle, the member for Terrigal and the member for Granville for their contributions to the debate. We are all in furious agreement that cystic fibrosis is an important health issue that needs to be addressed. We are all in agreement that, thankfully, the life expectancy of cystic fibrosis sufferers has much increased due to increased technology and improved health care. Of course, future governments, of whatever political persuasion, will be required to provide funding for more staff and for greater support to assist cystic fibrosis sufferers as time goes by and their life expectancy increases.

I agree with the member for Holsworthy: the increase in staff is wonderful. There has been an increase in staff since December, when dramatic staff shortages were first reported. I acknowledge that the Government has taken steps to improve the situation, and that is wonderful. It is distressing that I have had to take this issue to the New South Wales community in order to get even more action, but that is what it takes. I remind the Minister for Health that there is still a particular shortage in social worker services, and I ask her to address this issue. I acknowledge that the Government has tried to increase support for cystic fibrosis sufferers and Cystic Fibrosis NSW. I simply ask the Government to keep in mind that people with this terrible disease are living longer and we must ensure that their lives are happier and healthier, such as the young musician I referred to earlier in my speech.

I thank all the speakers today for informing the House about cystic fibrosis. Many people in the community are aware of cystic fibrosis, but obviously there are some who are not. I do not envy anyone who has cystic fibrosis or a family member with cystic fibrosis. To take up to 80 tablets a day would be challenging and the sickness they suffer on a daily basis must be horrific. I note that Labor made a commitment—which was funded had we been elected—to increase funding for cystic fibrosis by \$8 million, which is a sizeable amount. I ask the Government to keep in mind the commitment made by Labor, which shows our desire to work through the issues with this disease.

It goes without saying that the hospitals and their staff would welcome any increase in funding, but in the future they will need more. This is an important motion. I have previously raised this issue with the Minister and some issues have been addressed. I am thankful for her assistance on behalf of Cystic Fibrosis NSW and those who suffer with this horrible disease and their families. I urge the Government to increase funding to assist these people, and I urge members to support the motion.

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

Motion agreed to.

UNANDERRA RAILWAY STATION EAST ACCESS LIFTS

Ms NOREEN HAY (Wollongong) [10.42 a.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) Calls on the Government and the Minister for Transport to commit to the installation of much-needed easy access lifts at Unanderra railway station.
- (2) Congratulates the member for Kiama and Parliamentary Secretary on acknowledging that access to public transport for the disabled is a problem.
- (3) Notes that this problem can be rectified through much greater investment by the Government.
- (4) Recognises that the 10,000 signature petition tabled and debated in the Parliament clearly demonstrates the community's unified demand for the installation of the lifts at Unanderra railway station.
- (5) Requests that the Unanderra railway station be upgraded as a matter of urgency.

Most members would know how often I have called for a resolution to the lack of lift facilities at Unanderra railway station. An easy access lift would allow the elderly, people with young children and strollers and people with disability to catch a train, as other members of the community do. On previous occasions in the House I have gone through the time line. Since 2007, when Unanderra became part of my electorate, I have lobbied for the installation of a lift. The Unanderra station upgrade was announced in June 2009. It was estimated to cost \$11.4 million over two years; \$2.2 million was allocated in the 2009-10 budget and stage one was completed. In 2010 and 2011, the Labor Government gave a commitment and budgeted the funds. I am not ashamed to say that I lobbied vigorously. I harassed my Government and the transport Minister at the time to obtain funding for an easy access upgrade at Unanderra station.

Mr Ray Williams: That would be second nature.

Ms NOREEN HAY: The members opposite may find it funny that disabled people cannot get on a train. Why do they hate disabled people?

Mr Gareth Ward: Point of order: As someone with a disability, I take great offence at that remark. That is not a relevant contribution to the debate.

Ms NOREEN HAY: That is not a point of order. He's just using up my time.

Mr Gareth Ward: I ask the member for Wollongong to withdraw the comment.

Ms NOREEN HAY: You're a disgrace.

Mr Gareth Ward: You are a disgrace. I ask the member to withdraw the comment that the Government is not interested in helping people with disabilities. It is a disgrace.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! I have heard the member's point of order.

Mr Gareth Ward: If she does that again I will move that she not be further heard.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Kiama will resume his seat. There is no point of order.

Ms NOREEN HAY: To the point of order: Out of a sense of decency I was prepared to withdraw my comment. However, Mr Deputy-Speaker, I ask you to tell the member for Kiama that it is not his place to bully or threaten me across the table.

Mr Gareth Ward: You won't be bullied or threatened by anyone.

Ms NOREEN HAY: I will not be bullied or threatened by you. The member cannot take spurious points of order. He should sit down.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Kiama will resume his seat.

Mr Gareth Ward: I am taking a point of order.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Kiama must seek the call.

Ms NOREEN HAY: I have not concluded my contribution.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! I have not ruled on the point of order.

Mr Gareth Ward: I haven't made it.

Ms NOREEN HAY: Why is the member for Kiama talking again?

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Wollongong and the member for Kiama will resume their seats. The member for Kiama asked for the comment to be withdrawn. In fairness to the member for Wollongong, she has withdrawn the comment. However, she also pointed out that she will not be bullied across the table. Both members will direct their comments through the Chair.

Mr Gareth Ward: Point of order: I ask the member for Wollongong to withdraw her comment that I am bullying her. I am not bullying her. That is inappropriate. I am sure anyone who views this debate will see that I am not bullying her.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Kiama has asked the member for Wollongong to withdraw the comment. Is the member for Wollongong prepared to do so?

Ms NOREEN HAY: The member for Kiama approached the table and said, "Don't do that again, or I will move that you no longer be heard". What is that if it is not an attempt to bully me?

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! I have ruled on the point of order.

Mr Gareth Ward: No. It was based on what you said about people with disabilities.

Ms NOREEN HAY: I had withdrawn that before the member for Kiama spoke further.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! I remind members of my previous ruling.

Ms NOREEN HAY: If the member for Kiama behaves himself I will withdraw. I seek an extension of time because these spurious points of order have used up my time and I have not been able to address my motion. This is a move by the member for Kiama to gag me.

Extension of time not granted.

I place on record that the member for Kiama has used my time by taking points of order and then refused me leave for an extension of time so that I could continue to speak to my motion about the need for easy access to Unanderra station. I am aware of engineering problems that have arisen in relation to Unanderra railway station. I am happy to accept an alternative option, if it is deemed necessary, so that those with disabilities, those with young children and trolleys, the elderly and frail can get to the platform and catch a train. I do not care whether the easy access is provided under a Coalition or Labor government, I do not care who takes the credit for it. Just let the people have access to the trains. I have been pleading for this since 2007 with a Labor Government, and since 2011 when those opposite promised it but did not deliver. Those opposite promised easy access before the election and then they reneged on the promise. People deserve to be able to access the trains. The department has said people cannot have access and that is wrong. [*Time expired.*]

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Parliamentary Secretary) [10.49 a.m.]: I move:

That the motion be amended by leaving out all words after "That" with a view to inserting instead:

- (1) Notes the concerns of the Unanderra Access Group with respect to transport access at Unanderra railway station.
- (2) Acknowledges that this matter has been raised directly with the Minister for Transport.
- (3) Recognises that a petition of 10,000 or more signatures was tabled on this issue.
- (4) Requests that the Government continue to review transport access options at Unanderra.

I thank the member for Wollongong for moving this motion because it gives me the opportunity to outline the facts. It is a great shame that none of the other Illawarra Labor members are in the Chamber to support the member for Wollongong because she should be supported. I suggest the member for Shellharbour and the member for Keira stop playing games with preselection and start addressing the real issues facing local communities as well as members like the member for Wollongong when they genuinely take up issues on behalf of their communities. Those opposite should stop stacking branches and using electorate offices to play political games and start addressing real issues in the communities.

Mr Guy Zangari: Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 76. The member for Kiama is straying from the leave of the motion and the proposed amendment. Mr Deputy-Speaker, I ask that you draw the member back to the leave of the motion, that is, an easy access program for Unanderra railway station.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! I uphold the point of order. The member for Kiama will return to the leave of the motion and his amendment.

Mr GARETH WARD: The proposed amendment to the motion is about easy access. That is something the constituents of Shellharbour do not have with their member: they do not have any easy access to her at all. An article in the *Illawarra Mercury* in 2009 by Matthew Jones quoted the member for Wollongong saying that funding for accessibility upgrades at Unanderra was "definitely" in the 2009 budget. I have to ask: What happened to the money that was allocated in 2009 when those opposite were in government? Money was allocated and now there is a campaign in relation to accessibility. What did those opposite do for the electorate when they were in office? Nothing, absolutely nothing—the money vanished.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Kiama will direct his comments through the Chair.

Mr GARETH WARD: I apologise if I gave that impression; it certainly was not my intent. The money was allocated by the Labor Government and then it disappeared. We need to reflect on that. I believe that accessibility access—

Ms Noreen Hay: You spent it elsewhere.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Wollongong will come to order. She has had an opportunity to contribute to the debate and she will have the right of reply.

Mr GARETH WARD: The member for Wollongong said that we spent it elsewhere. We did not spend \$500 million on a metro project without laying a single sleeper. We did not spend \$127 million on the Tcard without selling a single ticket. Those opposite have no record when it comes to public transport.

Mr Mark Coure: Speaking about sleepers.

Ms Noreen Hay: Who opened your cage, Oatley? Just behave yourself.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Wollongong will resume her seat.

Ms Noreen Hay: What about my point of order?

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Wollongong will follow the proper processes of the House.

Mr GARETH WARD: Those opposite are appalled by their own record: 10 transport plans but none delivered; 12 rail lines promised, none delivered. It is wonderful to see the member for Wollongong up so early as I love her work.

Ms Noreen Hay: Point of order—

Mr Mark Coure: The Hurstville to Strathfield rail link.

Ms Noreen Hay: Sit.

Mr GARETH WARD: I am not one of those great danes listed on your electoral roll. You can't talk to me like that.

Ms Noreen Hay: You leave my great danes alone.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! I will not hear the point of order while

members continue to interject.

Ms Noreen Hay: I apologise.

Mr Greg Aplin: Repeatedly apologise. Why don't you learn?

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! Members will cease interjecting. What is the member's point of order?

Ms Noreen Hay: The member for Kiama is not referring in any way to the amendment he moved to the motion.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! There is no point of order.

Mr GARETH WARD: If the member for Wollongong reads the amendment she will see I am talking about the portfolio of the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. I am responding to attacks from the member for Wollongong. Members argue in this place on behalf of their communities. It would be a dream if every station in New South Wales had easy access. I have made representations to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure on this issue and I know the member for Wollongong has made representations. That is appropriate because we all want our electorates to get the services they deserve.

That is one reason that this Government has allocated a record budget for transport access. If ever there is a future Labor government—we hope there is not—it would need to do the greatest good for the greatest number. That is why this Government is methodically working to improve access at stations with the greatest need. As the member for Wollongong acknowledged in her contribution, she argued for funds for this project with her own government, despite the fact it had allocated the money for this project but the money disappeared. In allocating funds, this Government looks at proximity of stations that already have access and the number of passengers moving through the station.

The Minister is keen to review the Transport Access Program, as we would expect, and the Government will continue to look at options for this station. I have met with the Minister in relation to this issue and he is aware of it. I am pleased that the Government has allocated \$770 million to the Transport Access Program, which will deliver access to modern services. I encourage all members, including the member for Wollongong, to continue to raise these issues. I will join the member in doing so because I believe in providing access. We need to do that as best we can across the region.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [10.56 a.m.]: I support the motion moved by the member for Wollongong regarding upgrading Unanderra railway station. I begin my contribution by reading from *Hansard* a part of a member's speech in this Chamber on 5 August 2015:

... we are here to support those who need help, who are vulnerable, who are in disadvantaged positions.

Who said that?

Mr Jihad Dib: It was the Premier.

Mr GUY ZANGARI: The member for Lakemba is correct that Premier Mike Baird said that. In light of that comment, it is our responsibility to look after those who are vulnerable, who have been left out on the margins and who are suffering. Premier Mike Baird said that on 5 August 2015.

Mr Gareth Ward: I would like to be over there doing nothing.

Mr GUY ZANGARI: I note the silly interjection by the member for Kiama. This is a serious debate

about the Unanderra railway station. In 2015, if you are mobility impaired, if you are a parent with a pram, if you are elderly or a traveller or someone going about your daily activities, such as going shopping, you should be able to get onto the platform or to the other side of the railway station.

Mr Gareth Ward: Is that a commitment?

Mr GUY ZANGARI: I note the interjection of the member for Kiama, who says that he supports the member for Wollongong but during my address makes silly and insensitive interjections.

Mr Gareth Ward: Point of order: My point of order goes to standing orders 59 and 76 and relates to the fact that I was not making silly interjections. I was simply asking whether the member will make a commitment. He has not done so.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! There is no point of order.

Mr GUY ZANGARI: We all know how difficult it is to get onto some railway platforms, but it is particularly difficult at Unanderra railway station. In my electorate four railway stations do not have full easy access. I have highlighted in this Chamber that Canley Vale train station has ramps on either side of the railway line, which I acknowledged a couple of weeks ago were installed by this Government. However, as with Unanderra railway station, constituents in the Wollongong electorate as well as those in Fairfield cannot get from one side of the railway station to the other.

Mr Jihad Dib: Also at Lakemba and Bankstown.

Mr GUY ZANGARI: At Lakemba, Bankstown, Yagoona—wherever it might be—there are railway stations that do not have easy access.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The motion is about Unanderra railway station.

Mr Gareth Ward: Point of order—

Mr GUY ZANGARI: The point of order about to be taken by the member for Kiama will be absolutely ridiculous.

Mr Gareth Ward: He has got out his crystal ball; he can see into the future.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Kiama will resume his seat.

Mr GUY ZANGARI: I read the tea leaves and knew what the member was going to say. We support the member for Wollongong—and I note that the member for Oatley is clearing his throat—in her call to ensure that the people of Unanderra are not left on the margins and disadvantaged. [*Time expired.*]

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) [11.00 a.m.]: Another Thursday morning and another motion on Unanderra railway station.

Ms Noreen Hay: So?

Mr MARK COURE: I am just pointing out the obvious. The New South Wales Government recognises the importance of upgrading our local railway stations. That is why in 2012 we announced a \$770 million Transport Access Program to deliver accessible, modern, secure and integrated transport infrastructure where it is needed most. I note the member for Lakemba is in the Chamber.

Mr Jihad Dib: Pork-barrelling.

Mr MARK COURE: Is it?

Mr Jihad Dib: You would never do that?

Mr MARK COURE: You, of course, would not do that! We take upgrading our local railway stations seriously—unlike those opposite. That is why we are getting on with the job of upgrading railway stations, such as Oatley railway station.

Ms Noreen Hay: Point of order: The member for Oatley is being extremely aggressive and is inciting interjections. He is shouting and banging the podium. He is a very angry man.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! There is no point of order.

Mr MARK COURE: Mr Deputy-Speaker, I am not inciting anything. I ask you to protect me from the member for Wollongong.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! At this point it is the Chair who needs protecting.

Mr MARK COURE: We are taking the upgrading of our local railway stations very seriously. That is why, in my electorate, we are getting on with the job of upgrading Oatley railway station and Narwee railway station. I note the member for Lakemba is in the Chamber; hopefully, you will speak to the motion.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Oatley will direct his comments through the Chair.

Mr MARK COURE: Through you, Mr Deputy-Speaker, I hope the member for Lakemba speaks in this debate. We take upgrading our local railway stations seriously. That is why in June this year the Government announced a significant boost to its Transport Access Program, with \$890 million to be invested in this program over the next four years. This Government is planning for the future of not just the Sydney basin but also the Illawarra region as well. The Illawarra region is benefiting from a great program, the Transport Access Program, with two completed easy access upgrades now open to the public, at Albion Park and Gerringong stations. I, unlike the member for Fairfield, have visited those two railway stations. We are also upgrading two interchange projects, at Albion Park and Dapto stations, which include ramp upgrades and improved lighting. We are getting on with the job of building, investing in and improving our local railway stations for the benefit of parents with prams and strollers, the elderly and people with disabilities.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) [11.04 a.m.]: I take the opportunity to speak whenever a motion about easy access upgrades comes before the House and Labor members champion the cause for their electorates. I congratulate the member for Wollongong on bringing on this motion. She has tried many times to convince the member for Kiama and former and current transport ministers that the Unanderra railway station needs an easy access lift. I, like many others, have watched on YouTube that very sad footage of the young man who was unable to access the train station. It might be comical for those opposite, but I am sure it was not for that young gentleman and his family.

Mr Gareth Ward: Point of order—

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! What is the member's point of order?

Mr Gareth Ward: The point of order relates to relevance and the inaccurate comment that those on this side find this debate funny. We are not amused; there is no laughing or cackling. That comment by

the member was simply for the benefit of the *Hansard*, to try to make the Government look less concerned. We have a record budget for transport access.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! There is no point of order.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK: I appreciate that the member for Kiama is passionate about this issue. I am not claiming that the member for Kiama has no concerns. I am sure he has—in fact, he is probably concerned about Unanderra railway station. But clearly the responsible Minister is not listening to the concerns of the community about that train station. In fact, the Government is not listening to concerns about a whole range of train stations across Western Sydney. The member for Fairfield has articulated concerns about stations in his electorate and the member for Lakemba has raised concerns about some suburbs in his electorate that do not have easy access lifts at stations for those who need them.

Mr Mark Coure: Which train stations?

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK: Punchbowl is one, for the benefit of the member for Oatley, but there are quite a few others. Birrong, in my electorate, Chester Hill and Yagoona are three train stations that I can think of about which I have written many times to both the former Minister, Gladys Berejikian, and the current Minister, Andrew Constance. And on every occasion I received the same response. I receive an identical response when I put a question on notice.

Mr Guy Zangari: Cut and paste.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK: Exactly, it is a cut-and-paste job, effectively saying that the Government has allocated a certain amount of money to the easy access program and is reviewing the program as we speak. That review is taking a hell of a long time, I must say. It is certainly taking a long time to get anywhere near Western Sydney and it is clearly not relieving the stress on the people of Unanderra who are waiting for their lift. I again congratulate the member for Wollongong on fighting for her constituents and reminding the Government of this issue—as painful as that may be for the member for Kiama and the member for Oatley, who every Thursday are trotted out to defend the Government over its poor handling of the easy access program. I appreciate that it gets on their nerves, but it also gets on our nerves and on the nerves of our constituents and commuters who cannot access a train station to get to work or to their medical appointments. This Government knows that not enough money is allocated to the easy access program and that it is certainly not being directed to the train stations that need it most.

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) [11.08 a.m.]: I support the motion moved by the member for Wollongong. On several occasions members of all political persuasions have spoken about the easy access requirements of stations in their electorates. As the member for Lakemba, I completely understand where the member for Wollongong is coming from. Unanderra station requires an easy access upgrade, as do many others. My colleague the member for Oatley and I share a station at Narwee. I am pleased to see that Narwee station is being upgraded. The member for Oatley will be pleased to know that I was there the other day in a mobile office and I spoke with the station master. We are looking forward to seeing a few improvements fairly soon—and then of course we will focus our attention on other stations nearby.

Mr Mark Coure: I will even help you with Punchbowl.

Mr JIHAD DIB: I appreciate the assistance of the member for Oatley. I will continue with that campaign. I talked recently about the fact that we need to look after people with disabilities. Easy access schemes enable people with disabilities to access train stations. Access to public transport should not be a luxury; it is a normal fact of life, and we should continue to work towards delivering that access. The tabling of a 10,000-signature petition should carry a fair amount of weight. Given what I have heard in debate, it seems that this has been an ongoing issue for a good number of years—the member for Wollongong has been raising it since 2007.

Regardless of whether we play politics and seek to lay blame, the fact is that the people of Unanderra need access to public transport and at the moment they do not have it. As a result, they must travel either to Dapto station or to Wollongong station, neither of which is in Unanderra. Some people cannot do that, especially those with disabilities or those who cannot afford taxis. One of the great things about our society is that we look after our most vulnerable. I often hear Government members say that. The most vulnerable and the most needy also need access to public transport. People use public transport to get to work or to educational facilities, and those who live in disadvantaged communities need those opportunities.

If we are serious about making things better then we must ensure that as a society we embrace those individuals. I acknowledge that \$316 million has been allocated to the easy access upgrade program, and I look forward to that money being put to use as soon as possible. Any member would like to say to his or her constituents, "We are doing the right thing by you." We do not necessarily need to consider what is best for a particular community; we must look after everybody—whether they live in the bush, or in the suburbs—and work together to ensure that easy access is not just a pipedream but a reality. We must make a serious effort to provide access where it is needed most, based on proper data, including station usage, and the individual circumstances of commuters. [*Time expired.*]

Ms NOREEN HAY (Wollongong) [11.12 a.m.], in reply: I acknowledge the contributions of the member for Kiama, the member for Fairfield, the member for Bankstown, the member for Lakemba and the member for Oatley. Members representing the electorates of Kiama, Fairfield, Bankstown and Lakemba made significant and positive contributions, but who knows what the member for Oatley was talking about? It is important to note that all members mentioned easy access requirements within their electorates, and that is appropriate. But Unanderra is a little different. It became part of my electorate in 2007. I lobbied, argued and fought with my own Government to get money allocated in the budget for easy access upgrades at Unanderra, and that was agreed to in 2009. Stage one was completed—which the member for Kiama continually forgets to point out—and engineering difficulties with the lifts—

Mr Gareth Ward: What happened to the money?

Ms NOREEN HAY: You spent it in Kiama—and I want to know what you did with it. Those opposite come into the Chamber—with Kiama and Oatley, it is dumb and dumber—and waffle on, thinking that people will not know that they do not support the delivery of lifts at Unanderra station.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Wollongong will refer to members by their correct titles.

Mr Gareth Ward: Point of order: I ask the member for Wollongong to withdraw that statement. If I am stupid, her IQ is so low that if it was any lower she would need watering.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Kiama will resume his seat. There is no point of order.

Ms NOREEN HAY: Over the years I had hoped that we would reach agreement and adopt a bipartisan approach to this issue. In the lead-up to the 2011 election, the current Government promised to deliver lifts to Unanderra if it was elected. Only after its election did it renege on delivering those lifts. Government members continue to want to talk about what I did. My Government and I never reneged on our commitments; those opposite did that—they reneged. Furthermore, in an attempt to gag me, the member for Kiama took spurious points of order and wasted four minutes of my time in speaking to the motion.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! I suggest that the member for Wollongong use her speaking time wisely now to get her point across.

Ms NOREEN HAY: I am getting my point across. I have said it time and again and I will continue to say it, but each time I speak in this place about easy access lifts at Unanderra my time is taken up by spurious arguments. Everybody knows that Unanderra railway station needs access lifts and I do not need to produce a video to prove it. I argued that the lifts be provided and my Government budgeted for them. This Government promised to deliver them and it has reneged on that promise. We could have used this opportunity today to support easy access lifts at Unanderra railway station. My point is that the people who are most vulnerable and most in need cannot access the platform to board trains so they cannot be included in the number of commuters who use the station. We should be working together on this issue.

Question—That the amendment be agreed to—put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 47

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

Noes, 36

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

Pairs

Mr Baird
Mr Hazzard

Mr Foley
Ms McKay

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Amendment agreed to.

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

Motion as amended agreed to.

ST GEORGE HOSPITAL

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) [11.30 a.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that work to rebuild St George Hospital has begun after 16 years of inaction by the former Labor Government.
- (2) Congratulates the Government on committing to a \$307 million upgrade of St George Hospital, stage two of which has commenced.
- (3) Thanks the Premier and the Minister for Health for their support of St George Hospital.
- (4) Commends the staff of the Medical Staff Council, and the medical staff and nurses at St George Hospital, for their work and dedication to improving healthcare standards in the region.

This Government is getting on with the job of rebuilding St George Hospital. Since coming to office 2011 we have re-opened the hydrotherapy pool at the hospital, and built and opened a brand new emergency department. We are also honouring a \$307 million election commitment to deliver a major redevelopment of St George Hospital, stage two. The upgraded \$41 million emergency department at St George Hospital, which included demolition of the old emergency department and construction of a new on-street car park and public entrance to the hospital, was opened only four weeks ago. The upgrade also included improvements to the fire protection system in the existing tower ward block and clinical services building.

The new 55-space car park at the hospital includes paid casual parking and staff parking, and a new drop-off zone for people attending the hospital. The \$307 million hospital redevelopment will include a new seven-level acute services building to be constructed over the new emergency department that was opened only last year. When we were in Opposition we promised that we would deliver an emergency department in our first term of Government, and we did. We have delivered a new emergency department and stage two of a hospital upgrade, which will benefit not only the residents of my electorate but also the residents of Kogarah, Rockdale and the southern parts of Sydney. The new acute services building will include intensive care, high dependency, cardiac intensive care, theatre expansion, including intraoperative theatres, plant and a central sterilising services department and additional acute inpatient beds.

Mr Stephen Kamper: Lucky we dragged you to the table.

Mr MARK COURE: I note the interjection of the member for Rockdale. I put on record that the member for Rockdale supported the Government in its upgrade of St George Hospital. Early works for this major redevelopment have already begun. As I said earlier, the new car park in Kensington Street opened to the public a couple of weeks ago. Only New South Wales Liberal-Nationals governments can be trusted to deliver for St George Hospital. After 16 years of inaction by the previous Government we have reopened the hydrotherapy pool, built a brand new emergency department and are getting on with the job of building stage two at St George Hospital.

In June the Government announced that stage two is a step closer, with Health Infrastructure NSW awarding contracts to Brookfield Multiplex for construction of a new acute services building at the hospital. They had been engaged under an earlier contract involvement procurement method to develop and finalise the design documentation and undertake enabling works to prepare the site for main works. This is a great win for residents living in my electorate, as well as those who live in the electorates of Kogarah, Rockdale and the southern parts of New South Wales. But the good news does not end there. The New South Wales recurrent Health budget has increased by more than \$4 billion or 27 per cent compared to Labor's last Health budget delivered in 2010-11.

The budget for ambulance services has also increased by 26 per cent compared to Labor's last budget. We are rebuilding more hospitals than Labor did in the last four years it was in office. In this term of government sixty capital health projects are to be delivered, including \$200 million for the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Hospital, \$170 million for Wagga Wagga Base Hospital, \$150 million for Dubbo Base Hospital, upgrades to Mudgee and Macksville hospitals, \$48 million for Tweed Hospital and \$30 million for Broken Hill Hospital, and the list continues to go on. We are getting on with the job of rebuilding all hospitals—not just St George Hospital—in this great State.

Mr Geoff Provest: Do not forget the Tweed.

Mr MARK COURE: I mentioned the \$48 million in funding allocated to rebuild the Tweed Hospital. The Government is getting on with the job of putting much-needed funding into health infrastructure. Since 2011 we have employed an additional 4,200 full-time equivalent nurses, we have put money towards 1,800 full-time equivalent doctors and 270 full-time equivalent paramedics. We are getting on with the job of allocating much-needed funding, backed up by more doctors, more nurses and more paramedics in our health system to ensure that hospitals like St George will be forgotten no longer. The Government is getting on with the job of stage two, but it does not end there. I have already spoken to the Minister for Health—I mentioned this in my recent newsletter—and to the Premier about funding for stage three, so we can get on with rebuilding the much-needed infrastructure at St George Hospital which was forgotten during the 16 years of the former Labor Government.

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) [11.36 a.m.]: I move the following amendment to the motion:

That the motion be amended by leaving out all words after "That" with a view to inserting instead:

- (1) Notes Labor committed to the \$300 million redevelopment of St George Hospital eight months before the Government.
- (2) Calls on the Government to complete the redevelopment of St George Hospital in this term of Parliament.

Those who have been following closely the travails of St George Hospital and the funding allocation debate well know that the only reason the Government has agreed to this \$300 million stage two redevelopment of St George Hospital is due to something Labor did eight months ago. I am happy to table the competing press releases from the Opposition and Government during the recent election campaign. On 14 June 2014, Labor pledged \$300 million to rebuild St George Hospital; the Government's press release is dated 5 February 2015. The Government never would have given the people of St

George the desperately needed health services they fundamentally deserve if it had not been under pressure in the St George and Sutherland electorates in the March 2015 election.

The Government was brought kicking and screaming to the table. That is why we have had this latter-day conversion to commit \$300 million for the redevelopment of St George Hospital. It never would have happened if the Liberal Party were not in danger of losing electorates in St George and the Sutherland shire. In fact, we should thank the Liberal Party polling company for the redevelopment of St George Hospital because without that polling it would not have happened. The member for Oatley is a decent bloke, but I need to point that out. The second deeply troubling thing about the St George Hospital redevelopment is that in the Government's press release of 5 February 2015 it states—

Mr Mark Coure: You guys forgot it for 16 years.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: The member for Oatley is forgetting it right now. That is the big problem here. During the election campaign the Liberal-Nationals Government said it would be done in 2017. The latest budget papers suggest that it will not be completed until the next term of Parliament.

Mr Mark Coure: It has started already.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Will the member for Oatley guarantee during his reply that the redevelopment will be completed in the current term of Parliament? I think we would be all ears for that. If the member for Oatley stated in his reply, "I guarantee stage two of the development will be completed in this term of Parliament", I think we would just about give him a round of applause. But I strongly suspect that is not going to happen. In the budget papers released just months ago the Government belled the cat on the true funding arrangements for the St George Hospital. The fact is that the redevelopment will not be completed in this term of Parliament. It is unlikely, and potentially speculatively, to be completed in the next term of Parliament.

I hope this is not a pipedream. I sincerely hope that the Government abides by promises that were made to the people of St George at the last election that the redevelopment would be completed during this term of Parliament. The easiest way for the Government to keep faith with the people of St George is to simply support the Opposition's amendment. It is an easy amendment to support. The second part of that amendment simply calls on the Government to complete redevelopment works in this term of Parliament. That is very simple. The amendment is not derogatory of the member for Oatley. It does not slam the Minister for Health. The amendment is a simple proposition. One of the troubling things about health funding in New South Wales is something that I noticed during yesterday's question time. I note for the information of the Minister for Local Government that Opposition members sometimes listen to Government answers. I thought it was very interesting when the Treasurer responded to a question asked by the member for Ku-ring-gai about the GST. The Treasurer stated:

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.

The Treasurer went on to state in a separate paragraph:

Given this, I highlighted that the overall tax reform package proposed by New South Wales would allow for other income tax cuts as well.

That is particularly interesting because I could have sworn that the Premier of this State said we need a broad-based goods and services tax to put that revenue into health spending.

Mr David Harris: That is right.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Yes. Yet yesterday the Treasurer spoke for three minutes in this House about

the goods and services tax—a regressive tax that hits every resident of New South Wales whether they can pay it or not—with not a single mention of Health spending.

Mr Mark Coure: Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance. Mr Assistant-Speaker, I ask that the member for Kogarah be directed to confine his remarks to the leave of the motion.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! The member for Kogarah will confine his remarks to the leave of the motion or his amendment.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: To the point of order: My remarks relate to health funding. This debate is about health funding for St George Hospital and I am talking about the GST in relation to health. I believe that my remarks are in order. However, I would say that yesterday the Treasurer said that the GST should be increased to 15 per cent. She lauded the Premier for launching a courageous campaign in relation to taxation reform.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! I remind the member for Kogarah that I have previously ruled out of order references to the GST and matters relating to the Federal Parliament.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I will conclude. Mr Assistant-Speaker, with your brief indulgence, I was about to say that the GST was meant to be applied to health, yet the Treasurer's remarks to the Parliament yesterday did not include any mention of the word "health". I think that directly relates to St George Hospital and the funding arrangements around St George Hospital.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! I warn the member for Kogarah not to canvass my ruling. I direct the member to confine his remarks to the leave of the motion or his amendment.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: If we are not talking about health funding, it is very difficult to talk about the funding of health funding.

Mr Mark Coure: You have got to learn.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I will not canvass Mr Assistant-Speaker's ruling. I would love to speak for seven minutes about what a good bloke the member for Oatley is and what a top sort he is, but the bottom line is that, unfortunately, we have to talk about revenue measures as they relate to the St George Hospital.

Mr Mark Coure: You can say thank you. Just say thank you for the good work we are doing.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I know that the member for Oatley does not want the Opposition to talk about the GST and its increase to 15 per cent, but the truth of the matter is that that will impact on poor people and it will flow on to income tax cuts, not to health funding for the people of St George.

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) [11.43 a.m.]: I support the motion in relation to the St George Hospital moved by the member for Oatley. However, after listening to the member for Kogarah, I feel as though I am just meant to speak about what a good bloke someone is.

Mr Mark Coure: I do not mind!

Ms ELENI PETINOS: This is such an important motion, given the work that has been done by the Baird Government to rebuild the St George Hospital after 16 years of neglect by the former Labor Government. But in returning to the motion before the House, Mr Assistant-Speaker, you might wonder why I have such an interest in this hospital. This is the largest hospital in southern Sydney; it services residents all across the shire and indeed my electorate of Miranda. That is why I am proud to be part of

the Liberal Government's \$307 million election commitment to deliver a major redevelopment of the St George Hospital. New South Wales Labor's paltry record at St George Hospital is embarrassing and well known. Not one major upgrade occurred under the former Labor Government.

Mr Paul Toole: Shame on them!

Ms ELENI PETINOS: Not one. Only piecemeal or patchwork upgrades occurred. To top that off, the former Labor Government did not deliver anything while in government. I pause to note that Labor members who represent southern Sydney areas are not present while I speak about their hospital.

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order: Imputations and personal reflections are not required in this debate. I ask that the member for Miranda be directed to confine her remarks to the leave of the motion and speak about the important aspects of health funding.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! There is no point of order.

Ms ELENI PETINOS: Former Labor Government members not only failed to deliver anything while in government but had the gall to distribute newsletters in Labor electorates one day after the budget. The newsletters were printed, ready and hitting the letterboxes to criticise this Government's record on health and the Government's ability to deliver. This Government is delivering.

Mr Greg Warren: Tell the truth.

Ms ELENI PETINOS: How on earth can Labor members possibly mislead the public in their electorates by paying absolutely no attention to what this Government is doing and pre-empting the Government's responses? Labor members are completely neglectful and their actions are completely inappropriate. They should know better. In contrast to that, this Government has delivered an upgraded \$41 million emergency department for the St George Hospital already, which included demolition of the old emergency department and construction of a new on-street car park and public entrance to the hospital.

The upgrade included improvements to the fire protection system in the existing tower ward block and clinical services building. The new 55-space car park provides for both paid casual parking and staff parking—which is more than Labor ever did. The \$307 million hospital redevelopment will include a new seven-level acute services building that will be constructed over the new emergency department. The new acute services building will include intensive care, high dependency, cardiac intensive care, theatre expansion including intraoperative theatres, plant and a central sterilising services department and additional acute inpatient beds.

It is abominable that any Opposition member would say this Government is not delivering on health care. Clearly this Government is delivering for the residents not only of St George but also of the Sutherland shire. This Government puts our communities first. Early works on this major St George Hospital redevelopment are anticipated to commence very soon—in the next few months. Only this Government, the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government, can be trusted to deliver for the St George Hospital and the local community. It is a great windfall for local residents of my electorate, as is the \$60 million redevelopment of the Sutherland Hospital.

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) [11.47 a.m.]: I am very pleased to participate in debate on the motion. I commend the member for Kogarah for his amendment, which puts the facts on the table and some truth into the story about a Government that is happy to say one thing before an election and do something entirely different afterwards. Wherever we care to look across New South Wales—St George, Campbelltown or Maitland—we hear the same story. Local families live in hope of their communities receiving a share of revenue. Government members have referred to a lack of funding over 16 years of Labor government. I am delighted to know that members of the Liberal Party can count past 10.

Mr Paul Toole: You are glad we are in government. That is why.

Mr GREG WARREN: To the credit of The Nationals members, they can count past 10. I am very pleased to note the ability of the Minister for Local Government and member for Bathurst to count to 16. The facts of the matter are that during 16 years of Labor Government, there was funding. I draw attention to my electorate of Campbelltown.

Mr Mark Coure: Point of order: It is relevance. The motion is about St George Hospital.

Mr GREG WARREN: What is the standing order?

Mr Mark Coure: It is Standing Order 129.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! It is not Standing Order 129.

Mr Mark Coure: Standing Order 76. I have read the standing orders. I ask the member for Campbelltown to speak to the motion in the 2½ minutes remaining.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! The member for Campbelltown was responding to comments made during the debate. However, I remind him to be relevant to the motion before the House.

Mr GREG WARREN: I thank the member for Oatley for his reminder. I am comparing health services across the State. The Government has not fulfilled its commitments to St George Hospital. That relates specifically to St George Hospital. Whether it is the Government or the Opposition, we cannot ignore the importance of fulfilling a commitment made before an election. Why? It is because health matters. Here is a news flash for the Government and members opposite: The reality is that this issue affects local families. During my time here I have learned that a leaf can be taken out of many books. I note the credibility of members opposite. Some members opposite acknowledge the health issues throughout the State. The Government cannot fix a problem if it does not acknowledge that there is a problem.

In the Campbelltown electorate I draw a comparison because the motion is about health services—four out of 10 people wait beyond four hours in an emergency department. Indeed, I know people in my electorate who have waited for 10 hours. Why? It is because members opposite, who could not get elected quickly enough in 2011, cut the Health budget by \$3 billion. The Government cut \$3 billion out of the health system, which has affected paediatric units, aged care and cancer care units. And we see one result of that with ambulance waiting times. Members opposite have totally ignored this problem. They will not acknowledge the facts and that is why they cannot fix the problem. They cannot be fair dinkum. They cannot tell the truth before an election. They simply say whatever they can to hold their rightful power—something that they take for granted. They take families for granted.

Mr Mark Coure: Point of order: It is standing Order 76, relevance. The member for Campbelltown is not speaking about St George Hospital, which is what this motion is all about.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! I draw the member for Campbelltown back to the leave of the motion.

Mr GREG WARREN: My point is that a commitment made before an election must be acted on by a Government after the election, and this Government has not done that.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) [11.51 a.m.]: I support my colleague the member for Oatley and his great motion about rebuilding St George Hospital. For 16 years nothing was done to St George

Hospital until we came to power. It is an absolute shame. Coming from the Sutherland shire and working close to St George Hospital, I have seen the neglect of the hospital over a lengthy period. I congratulate the Minister for Health and the Government on committing \$307 million to upgrading St George Hospital. Members opposite referred to eight weeks between various commitments. As with any health commitment, the Government had to fully budget the figures, whereas members opposite were throwing figures around willy-nilly. There is no way for members opposite to back up their figures or prove them. That is the case across the State.

It is important to continue supporting St George Hospital. I commend the hospital staff. The Opposition's amendment to this motion is a slap in the face for the hardworking hospital staff, the doctors and nurses who turn up day in, day out to perform their roles. The Government is deeply respectful about not only creating the capital advancement but also its ongoing commitment to the hospital staff. The Minister takes particular care of looking after the staff—the doctors, nurses, cleaners and others involved in providing health services. We deeply appreciate what they do. It is a slap in the face that Labor has moved an amendment to such a great motion about health services for the good people of St George and the surrounding area. We should all be doing everything in our power to support the health system in the St George area because, after all, the hospital is looking after the sick and the vulnerable.

St George Hospitals is a great hospital, it has a great reputation, and it continues to grow. As has been said, St George is the largest hospital in the southern part of the city. I am concerned that members opposite continue to drag politics into the provision of services. Labor neglected the sick people of the St George area, and the hardworking doctors and nurses at St George Hospital. They seem to have forgotten that during their 16 years in Government they neglected the health system so significantly that the hospital was run down and failing to provide good services. It took our great health Minister to come on board and to provide those services and support the staff. Too often the staff are forgotten in this debate.

I commend the Government for supporting the hardworking doctors, clinical staff, administrative staff and others who provide such a great service. Sixty major capital health projects are taking place across the State, and a record amount of money is being spent in Health. Labor neglected the health system for 16 years, but this Government has returned it to the forefront. I commend the health Minister. I commend everyone involved in health provision in St George. I am sure the good people of New South Wales can see through the fear and misinformation of members opposite. I commend the member for Oatley for bringing this great motion to the House.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) [11.55 a.m.]: It is a pleasure to have the opportunity to speak about the redevelopment of St George Hospital. It is a matter close to my heart, and one I am sure many of my fellow members have heard me raise time and again in this place and outside it. I feel relieved for the member for Rockdale.

Mr Mark Coure: Oatley.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I apologise, Oatley. The member for Oatley is a nice guy and I understand the pressure he feels in the community in terms of having made a solid promise after being dragged to the table—

Mr Mark Coure: Actions speak louder than words.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: We have met at numerous events and he is the first person to get out of the place because people want to ask him about St George Hospital. But I feel relief for the member for Oatley. The urgent need for redevelopment of St George Hospital should be obvious to anyone who has visited the hospital and seen the facilities in which our hardworking local healthcare professionals are forced to work. Forty years ago, as a young boy of 10, I spent three weeks in a demountable unit at St George Hospital when I was ill. While the standard of care was excellent, it was clear even then that the

infrastructure needed improvement. Upon returning to the hospital more recently during the election campaign I was shocked to see that the same demountable unit in which children were being treated exists today.

That is why I am pleased that the New South Wales Labor Party committed to deliver the full redevelopment of St George Hospital within this term of government. We did not commit to half a redevelopment, we did not commit to superficial change, and we did not provide some vague and illusory timeframe. We provided a real commitment to change the face of health service delivery across our region, and we committed to get it done now. We heard a lot of bluff and bluster from the member for Oatley. However, as for progress on the hospital redevelopment, the only thing we have seen progress is the completion date promised by the Baird-Grant Government, which is progressing further and further away from us.

It must have been a kick in the guts for the member for Oatley when he saw the completion date for St George Hospital pushed out beyond 2017, given his frequent promises to the people in our community in the lead-up to the State election. But it is not his fault. For the sake of the member for Oatley, I implore the Government to stand by its promise and get construction underway. Then my colleague the member from Oatley will no longer have to shy away from local functions in our area. Indeed, I welcome that the Baird-Grant Government has matched the Labor commitment to deliver the St George Hospital redevelopment. Our community does not need more empty words or parliamentary debates. The people of St George need a hospital to be built by the date originally promised in the months leading up to the election. Hundreds of thousands of people across the St George electorate depend on the promises made just prior to the March election by the Baird-Grant Government to match Labor's commitment.

Mr Geoff Provest: It wasn't budgeted.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It was budgeted. These local residents deserve more than weasel words thrown around in an attempt to justify the Government's back pedalling from the promised 2017 completion.

Ms Eleni Petinos: Sixteen years.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Let us work on the future. If the member for Oatley is genuine in his commitment to his area, if he cares about service delivery for our local residents more than superficial politicking, he will provide an ironclad commitment today that the St George Hospital redevelopment will be completed within this term of Parliament. The people of St George will not be fooled by empty promises. [*Time expired.*]

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) [11.59 p.m.], in reply: I thank the member for Rockdale for his contribution. I also thank the member for Miranda and the member for Kogarah for their contributions. This Government is getting on with the job of rebuilding St George Hospital after 16 years of inaction by the Labor Government. During the 16 years of the Labor Government it was as if St George Hospital was in the Bermuda Triangle because the Labor Government delivered nothing for the hospital. This Government got on with the job of rebuilding the minute it was elected. We built a brand new emergency department and reopened the hydrotherapy pool. The pool was closed in 2010 under Labor and we opened it in February 2012. We promised, delivered and opened the brand new emergency department—

Mr Chris Minns: That was Labor.

Mr MARK COURE: It was not Labor. It is a \$41 million emergency department for which Labor promised only \$20 million. This new emergency department is 40 per cent bigger than the previous department. It has eight, not four, ambulance bays. The good news does not stop there. We are delivering stage two of the St George Hospital redevelopment with the construction of an acute services

building to be completed by the end of 2017 and open for patients in early 2018. We on this side of the House are getting on with the job of rebuilding the hospital. We on this side of the House are the true friends of St George Hospital. Those opposite sat on their hands and did nothing for 16 years. They failed to deliver one new building for St George Hospital. We are playing catch-up because of the Labor Party. On 25 June we announced that Brookfield Multiplex would be awarded the contract—

Mr Chris Minns: Should we go and ask them when they're going to finish it?

Mr MARK COURE: For sure. It was awarded the contract for construction of a new acute services building. On 19 August, last week, we delivered \$1.5 million for the St George Cancer Care Centre expansion. We on this side of the House understand the importance of St George Hospital and of upgrading local hospitals all over New South Wales. That is why we are getting on with the job of rebuilding—something the Labor Party did not do in 16 years.

Mr Chris Minns: You've got my community survey.

Mr MARK COURE: Yes, I have your report and I might get to it. While Labor copies us when it comes to St George Hospital, we make promises and we deliver on those promises. Unlike the member for Rockdale, the member for Kogarah and previous Labor members, we are getting on with the job of rebuilding St George Hospital, which was forgotten by Labor in its 16 years in government.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! I thank the staff of St George Hospital for the great service they provided for my daughter when she was in hospital for six weeks. The care given by the dedicated staff of St George Hospital is second to none.

Question—That the words stand—put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 46

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

Noes, 38

Ms Aitchison	Mr Harris	Mr Minns
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Mr Atalla
Mr Barr
Ms Burney
Ms Car
Ms Catley
Mr Chanthivong
Mr Crakanthorp
Mr Daley
Mr Dib
Ms Doyle
Ms Finn
Mr Greenwich

Ms Harrison
Ms Hay
Ms Haylen
Mr Hoenig
Ms Hornery
Mr Kamper
Ms Leong
Mr Lynch
Dr McDermott
Ms McKay
Mr Mehan
Ms Mihailuk

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

Pair

Mr Baird

Mr Foley

Question resolved in the affirmative.

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

Motion agreed to.

BAYS PRECINCT PLAN

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [12.13 p.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes the Bays Precinct consists of 80 hectares of government-owned land including many significant heritage sites.
- (2) Acknowledges the 2013 Bays Precinct Taskforce Plan that was developed with community and local government input.
- (3) Calls on the Government to undertake best practice community consultation worthy of the world's biggest urban renewal project.
- (4) Calls on the Government to prioritise social and affordable housing, active and passive open space, environmental sustainability, community facilities, and public transport links.

This motion is about how we plan for the future of the Bays Precinct, to recognise this important opportunity, and to promote the need for proper planning.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

Mr JAMIE PARKER: The Bays Precinct is located two kilometres from Sydney's central business district, and includes Blackwattle Bay, Sydney Fish Markets, Rozelle Bay, Rozelle rail yards, Glebe Island, White Bay, White Bay Power Station and surrounds. It has a 5.5 kilometre length of waterfront. The precinct contains 80 hectares of land that is government owned and 94 hectares of Sydney Harbour.

The precinct site is incredible. It is a beautiful site; it is a site that we can do so much with; and it is a site that deserves world's best planning. In July 2013 the Premier and the Minister for Planning announced that this was the biggest urban renewal project in the world; it is in fact four times the size of Barangaroo. Whilst that is very exciting, one of the concerns raised in my community is the make-up of the board of UrbanGrowth NSW.

I have raised before my concern that the board of UrbanGrowth NSW includes a whole range of development experts, including the former managing director of the Mirvac Group and the former managing director of Stockland. Every one of the 11 corporate management team members has either a real estate or a development background. We are asking for some balance. There is concern that the board of management team does not have the diversity or the breadth of experience to deliver more than just residential apartments and development. We need social and environmental experts within UrbanGrowth NSW. We do not want social and environmental factors being left behind.

The House might recall that the Treasurer announced 16,000 new dwellings for this site, then quickly withdrew that claim. The Premier and others had said it was a blank sheet of paper that all of us could write on and that no-one had any preconceived ideas. The community was very concerned about that announcement of 16,000 dwellings because it undermined confidence in the system, which has not enjoyed a lot of confidence. In the days when Labor was in government, the planning process was shambolic and lacking in strategy. I stood in Balmain Town Hall when former Premier lemma promised our community there would be a master plan for White Bay. Of course, that was never delivered. One can understand the concern in the community about this new body that has been established, stacked with developers and their friends. It is a body that we want to respond to the community, not just relate to an arbitrary number of 16,000 dwellings.

I have referred in the motion to the Bays Precinct Taskforce report of 2012-13. The task force had consulted a huge range of people in the community, through its interactive website and its submissions process which attracted submissions from industry and community organisations, and it came up with fantastic recommendations. Those recommendations, which came out of the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority, provided the strategic framework which was given to the New South Wales Government. Those recommendations were strongly supported by the community—particularly the public ownership aspects and the planning framework. It looked in great detail at each of the individual destinations. Unfortunately, after all of that 18 months of work the report was thrown out and UrbanGrowth NSW said it would start all over again. So one can understand the community's concern; that is, when it comes to UrbanGrowth NSW, its focus on development leads to an imbalanced arrangement. That imbalance in the arrangement can be seen clearly by looking at something as simple as affordable housing.

The planning proposal, even though the precinct covers 80 hectares, and even though there is a crying need for affordable housing and social housing, does not provide for one dwelling in the entire location that is public or social housing. Let us look at big developments like this around the world that include affordable housing: Hunters Point, New York, 60 per cent affordable housing; Legislative Assembly Confluence, Lyon, 48 per cent; Stratford City, London, 35 per cent; Kop van Zuid, Rotterdam, 30 per cent; Hudson Yards, New York, 25 per cent; Nordhavn, Copenhagen, 20 per cent; and the list goes on. In Sydney, how much affordable housing will we get in the Bays Precinct? It is zero. UrbanGrowth NSW has already said it is not proposing any affordable or social housing. We think that is a real problem. Another concern that we have is about places for our kids to play sport. We know it is important to have urban renewal, but we need to ensure we have spaces for kids to play sport.

Mr John Sidoti: Callan Park.

Mr JAMIE PARKER: The member for Drummoyne mentions Callan Park. I supported the more than \$1 million invested by the local council in that space for more sporting fields. But the Sporting Alliance, which is a coalition of sporting clubs in our local community and the broader inner west, expressed concern that during this Bays Precinct process neither State nor district sporting associations

were consulted. The alliance is concerned that there has not been proper focus on new sporting infrastructure, pointing out in particular that the growth in children between zero and 14 years of age is above the national average; and even if only 5,000 dwellings are proposed, that means seven new sporting fields need to be developed.

That is indicative of the shortfall in the Leichhardt and City of Sydney west area over the next 20 years. The motion I have moved today re-emphasises the need for us to focus on community infrastructure and environmental sustainability, as well as assets like open space and heritage. Those matters need to be assessed and prioritised in the financial assessment model. On behalf of the owners of this land, the public, I call on UrbanGrowth to reveal the model that it is using to determine the return on the investment. It is important to develop clear and measurable development objectives for the best environmental outcomes, the best development outcomes and the best economic outcomes for this State. This means moving beyond motherhood principles and focusing on detailed approaches.

We do not only need infill development. We need schools and community centres, and we need the matching investment that comes with any type of urban renewal. We want the type of economic development that can be shared by all of Sydney, that it is not just million-dollar apartments for those who live on the waterfront but also housing for working people—police officers, nurses and others in the broader community—and, of course, schools and childcare facilities. In Ultimo in particular, which is right next to the fish markets in the Bays Precinct, there is huge demand for new school infrastructure. We need to be planning in an integrated way, because this development is four times bigger than Barangaroo. It is the largest urban renewal project in the world, according to the Government. We need to get it right in this electorate, in our community, for the benefit of the people not only of Balmain but of Sydney and all of Australia.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.20 p.m.]: I assure the member for Balmain that his concerns will all be dealt with. The Coalition Government has a habit of delivering and will continue to deliver. A number of years ago I distinctly remember discussions about more schools, more hospitals and more infrastructure. They all talked the talk but they did not walk the walk. We are starting to see, particularly in my area in the inner west, more schools, great infrastructure projects, better public transport and in our hospitals more nurses and doctors. The list goes on and on.

In relation to this important motion from the member for Balmain, the Government is transforming the Bays Precinct into a world-class harbour destination that reinforces Sydney's status as the number one global city. It represents the highest potential transformation opportunity in the world today, which will offer something for every Sydneysider, and there will be plenty of opportunity for Sydneysiders and residents to contribute. The Bays Precinct consists of approximately 80 hectares of government-owned land and 94 hectares of waterways and sits within two kilometres of the Sydney central business district [CBD]. It includes sites such as the heritage-listed White Bay Power Station, Glebe Island, Glebe Island Bridge, White Bay, Rozelle Bay, Rozelle rail yards and Blackwattle Bay. This collection of bays, waterways and land presents possibly the most exciting and ambitious urban transformation and city building opportunity in the world today.

The vision is to transform this underutilised, government-owned land in inner-western Sydney into a world-class harbour destination that reinforces Sydney's status as a global city. UrbanGrowth NSW is leading the transformation of the Bays Precinct and recently hosted the successful Sydneysiders Summit. It is important to acknowledge the valuable work undertaken before UrbanGrowth was appointed to lead the project. The Bays Precinct Taskforce, established in 2011, provided strategic advice on the land use issues within the precinct. It reviewed earlier engagement processes and drafted a number of principles to guide the future planning. After the task force reported to the New South Wales Government in mid-2012, UrbanGrowth NSW was appointed to lead the Bays Precinct urban transformation program and has used much of the work of the task force as its base.

The Bays Precinct, Sydney, International Summit held last year generated wonderful discussion

and helped build 20 principles to guide the transformation of the Bays Precinct. These principles included generating optimal housing supply outcomes based on a model of diverse housing options, the highest design principles and activated public spaces. A number of the principles were about public access and spaces, including unlocking public access to the harbour's edge and waterways along the coastline. UrbanGrowth has invested \$1.9 million in genuine and meaningful community engagement.

The New South Wales Government recognises the importance of community involvement in the transformation of areas such as the Bays Precinct. The summit was an example of best practice community engagement. It was an opportunity to build public knowledge, understanding and participation in the transformation process. Around 1,300 people attended the summit and leadership forums held in mid-May. The summit was an outstanding example of public participation. It was held over four days and included more than 30 talks and briefings.

At the end of the summit we had over 2,000 hours of participation, with the average stay being around 1½ hours. We collected great feedback, including 2,200 individual post-it note comments, 82 metres of comments on butchers' paper and 45 one-on-one video interviews with participants. I am pleased to advise the House that UrbanGrowth NSW received very positive feedback from the event. From the onsite evaluation, 91 per cent of participants rated the summit as good or very good and 93 per cent felt that they had the opportunity to have their say. Also, 55 per cent of participants indicated that they intend to provide further feedback online.

We have now entered the next phase of engagement. The Transforming City Living: The Bays Precinct discussion paper was released at the Sydneysiders Summit along with the Call for Great Ideas. UrbanGrowth NSW received thoughtful and detailed submissions to both the discussion paper and the Call for Great Ideas. The Call for Great Ideas covers the Bays Waterfront Promenade, Bays Market District, White Bay Power Station and White Bay Cruise Terminal to allow us to capture the best thinking from global and local communities and industry on how the precinct's future should unfold. The Call for Great Ideas was an opportunity for anyone with a great idea for the Bays Precinct to put it forward for consideration. The Call for Great Ideas closed on 20 July and submissions are currently being assessed. The feedback from the discussion paper and the Call for Great Ideas will inform the Bays Precinct Transformation Plan.

The member for Balmain can be assured that this Government takes into consideration best practice, community-wide consultation and looks at affordable housing as a very serious principle. Since being elected in 2001, it is something I have been passionate about. I have had numerous discussions with Ministers past and present on the way we have to be smart with ideas on affordable housing. We have great opportunities to revolutionise that space and not only provide greater diversity in public housing but also incentives and ambitions, such as a service to promote people to get out of public housing. Public housing is not simply about people living somewhere for the rest of their lives; it is about giving people the independence, incentive and opportunities to move on into private residences.

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) [12.27 p.m.]: I support the motion of the member for Balmain relating to the New South Wales Government's plans for the Bays Precinct. The Government is planning the largest urban renewal project in the world on a site less than five kilometres from the central business district [CBD]. The Bays Precinct is a massive opportunity to redefine the western side of Sydney Harbour. Along with the recent opening of the headland at Barangaroo, the Bays Precinct will shift the focus of the entire city from the east to the west, so this is a really exciting opportunity.

At the same time, of course, we have to get the planning right for it to be a success. The Baird Government talks big on planning and master planning, but today David Pitchford, the boss of the development agency UrbanGrowth NSW, rightly stated that the mammoth development planned for Rozelle and the Glebe foreshore will be a "disaster" without major new transport infrastructure. After they came to government in 2011 there was a lot of crowing about getting planning right and integrated planning across government. What we got was the release of the Transport Master Plan in December

2012, which has no plans for any investment in public transport around the Bays Precinct. It promised massive changes to the planning laws but the Government could not even get these laws through the Parliament, and we are yet to see any rewrite of these bills.

Infrastructure NSW released its revised plan for the State's 20-year infrastructure strategy, which largely ignores the Bays Precinct. It then announced plans last year for the Greater Sydney Commission, which is supposed to be tasked with writing a Sydney-wide plan for housing and transport targets. All other government agencies would then be able to implement the plan. But we have not even seen any legislation to establish the Greater Sydney Commission. In December last year the Government released Sydney's Metro Strategy. It includes plans for a massive urban renewal of the Bays Precinct, with thousands of new dwellings but, again, there is no mention of public transport. We have to get this right. It is fundamental that this massive opportunity on the western side of our harbour—Sydney's jewel—is serviced properly by integrated public transport.

The Government should implement Labor's plan for the Bays Precinct. First, we must ensure high-frequency, high-capacity public transport services to the precinct. Second, we must keep the foreshore lands and harbour waters in public hands. Third, we must have a strong commitment to increase open public space. Fourth, the Bays Precinct must be a world-leading carbon neutral precinct. These are real opportunities. Fifth, we must subject all unsolicited development proposals to a competitive tender and to proper scrutiny. We do not want to have in the Bays Precinct the same concerns we have about other areas. Transparency is critical. Sixth, we must have excellence in planning and design principles that are endorsed by Sydneysiders. These buildings will be on our foreshore for the next 50 to 60 years so we must ensure they have architectural and design excellence.

Seventh, we must have genuine community engagement at every stage of the project. Eighth, we must make the precinct accessible, walkable and liveable. This is our foreshore; let us get it right. Ninth, it is critical that public and affordable housing is an absolute priority. Tenth, we must ensure that there is green open space and sporting facilities. The Spaces to Play campaign has highlighted that the inner west is in desperate need of green open space. Eleventh, we must creatively adapt reuse of the heritage Glebe Island Bridge and the White Bay Power Station. There are huge opportunities, but we must get it right. I commend the motion of the member for Balmain to the House.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.31 p.m.]: I endorse the motion that is before the House and entirely support every word that has been said in debate. The Government should be saying, "Let us get this right." The Bays Precinct could be the jewel in the crown. I speak as a representative the Government but I am wearing my planning cap from a previous life. This could be one of the most unique precincts in the global city of Sydney, because it has everything. In May last year the Government took the initiative and went straight to the community to embrace its input. I believe that was a first in any development process. At that time I had the privilege of serving on an expert panel. I am not patting myself on the back, but I was lucky to be working with some great people, in particular, the chief executive officer of the Sydney Fish Market and a retired mayor from the City of Seattle. Seattle has a similar precinct that encompasses a fish market, a residential development, employment zones, retail and fine dining. It has embraced the tourism opportunities that the precinct offers.

I agree with my colleagues that UrbanGrowth must get it right. In fact, my comment to UrbanGrowth was, "Get this right." We have only one chance. This site has it all; it is planning utopia. Water is its great attraction. It is close to the city and it has beautiful heritage buildings, such as those at the old Eveleigh rail yards. Those buildings have been refurbished, displaying all their heritage aspects. We have the ability to develop the Bays Precinct in the same way as Honeysuckle in Newcastle. We should embrace the wonderful old industrial buildings, embellish them and bring them back to life so they can be used for myriad community facilities, whether it be restaurants or community recreation areas. This site has everything.

I am blessed also to live in a shire that does urban development and design better than anywhere

else. I often say that I served my apprenticeship through living in the Hills shire. It encompasses the best principles of design, planning and sustainability. I have watched the Rouse Hill town centre blossom from its preliminary development application to its current status. It is where my office is located. The Rouse Hill town centre has received worldwide acclaim, winning sustainability and environmental awards, because it has been done right. It has embraced excellent planning principles, including residential, retail and employment components. It has educational and health facilities. Those development and planning principles must be applied to the Bays Precinct because it is a lovely precinct. Major transport must be an important aspect. It would be great for people to use ferries to travel along the foreshore and experience the Bays Precinct. It is a wonderful motion and I commend it to the House.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) [12.35 p.m.]: I speak in support of the motion moved by the member for Balmain. I congratulate him on obtaining unanimous support from members in the House. His motion goes to the heart of what the local community has been calling for: the prioritisation of social and affordable housing, active and passive open space, environmental sustainability, community facilities and public transport links. The Bays Precinct expands 80 hectares of government-owned land from Blackwattle Bay to the White Bay Power Station, with five kilometres of harbour foreshore that is two kilometres from the central business district. It includes heritage items such as the Glebe Island Bridge and offers a significant opportunity to provide new infrastructure, housing and open space.

Since 2009 the Bays Precinct has been the subject of ongoing assessment to develop a long-term planning framework with community and stakeholder involvement. Stage one was conducted by the Bays Precinct Community Reference Group comprising community action groups, residents, businesses, maritime industries and unions, property owners, local government, State Government and the former member for Balmain. The community reference group met nine times and held working parties and a workshop. Its final report identified 11 objectives, with strategic planning principles to support each of them. The objectives supported integrated planning, public good, public open space, heritage adaptation, reducing impacts on neighbours, sustainable transport, diverse housing, design excellence, community and culture, a working harbour and environmental sustainability.

The Bays Precinct Taskforce was formed for stage two to advise on land use and a framework for moving forward, building on stage one consultation. The task force included representatives from the Department of Premier and Cabinet, NSW Treasury, the Department of Planning, Transport for NSW, Sydney Ports Corporation, Roads and Maritime Services, Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority, the City of Sydney, Leichhardt Municipal Council, and the community. The 2012 report of the task force had broad community support and reflected the community reference group's principles for ongoing port and maritime uses, with residential development being secondary. Indeed, the task force stressed that residential development must not compromise port and maritime operations and that land should remain in public ownership.

In my electorate the task force identified continued use of Blackwattle Bay for maritime, commercial, recreational, boating and tourism purposes. There is massive community support for passive boating to remain on Bank Street and to have the site opened up with grass and trees for public recreation in line with its current zoning and government commitments. An upgrade to the Sydney Fish Market in its current location is supported. There is widespread concern that the community-supported vision is being ignored and will be replaced with an entirely new process that will put private gain and profit ahead of public outcomes. Last year the Government held an international summit out of the blue and invited unsolicited proposals from across the globe. The community was excluded. In response to my request—which was also a request of the member for Balmain and the City of Sydney—a discovery day and people's summit were held, but it is unclear how community input will be used outside of delivering a few key necessities such as public transport.

Ultimately, people are worried about overdevelopment. Residential and commercial development now seems to be the planning focus. UrbanGrowth has been engaged. Its principal role is to allocate land for commercial and residential development. Government Ministers have referred to the potential for

16,000 new homes. High-rise apartments over the redeveloped fish market have been flagged as well as a "floating" foreshore walk, which indicates that the foreshore will be developed. The community does not want another Barangaroo, where long-term strategic vision has been overridden to increase private profits at the expense of public outcomes. The community must be involved from the outset and at every stage to establish a long-term vision for the site, with past work incorporated. Impacts on residents must be minimised. Pyrmont is Australia's most densely populated area and already suffers from congestion and insufficient infrastructure. We need a long-term vision that has, at its heart, public interest. I will work with the community and UrbanGrowth on this outcome. I commend the motion to the House.

Mr ANDREW FRASER (Coffs Harbour—The Assistant-Speaker) [12.39 p.m.]: It gives me great pleasure to speak to the motion moved by the member for Balmain. I visited the Sydney Fish Market yesterday morning and talked to Mr Bryan Skepper about his plans for the market. I have been a member of Parliament for almost 25 years and I do not know how many plans I have seen for the fish market in that time. At one stage I think the Government offered the fish market \$20 million but that was knocked back because a group of people wanted to commercialise the whole Bays Precinct site.

Thankfully, the fish market has acted in such a way that I believe control will be returned to it. I saw some concept designs yesterday by the Sydney Fish Market, which I believe will be fantastic. They included a promenade and space for restaurants. In fact, it will make the fish market a people's precinct. I know that several developers have had their eyes on the Bays Precinct for a number of years. The Government has given assurances that there will be no untoward development there. It is too valuable a site—too magnificent a site—not to be planned and developed properly. I realised, upon looking at it yesterday, that the fish market is horribly tired.

Mr Jamie Parker: That is being diplomatic.

Mr ANDREW FRASER: Yes, I am being diplomatic. The fish market has not changed in the 30-odd years that I have been going there. The proper development of the fish market, and value adding by having restaurants there, will increase the income of the fishermen of Coffs Harbour, who currently provide about 5 per cent of the fish sold at the market. Forty per cent of the high-quality snapper that people in Sydney love comes from the fishing grounds off Coffs Harbour. I believe an upgrade of the fish market could increase the price of fish for the cooperatives in regional areas and increase their profit margin, which would be fantastic. I commend the Sydney Fish Market, Bryan Skepper and the board, with Grahame Turk and his fellow directors, for making sure they get it right—that it is still a working fish market and a working port.

The redevelopment will give the residents of Sydney, including younger people, an opportunity to see the market in its full glory and understand how it works—how the fish come from regional areas of New South Wales to the market and then onto plates in restaurants and homes. The whole area is glorious. I am trying to get a port authority up and running in Coffs Harbour so that we can have a similar development there. Unfortunately, when Bob Carr was planning Minister prior to 1988 all the Labor Government wanted to do was to stick 500, 600 or 700 units in the area. That is not what the port and the foreshore are all about; the facilities should be people friendly. I implore the Government to have a good look at this plan. I have spoken to Ministers about putting a port authority into Coffs Harbour so that we can have a development that comprises commercial properties and, at the same time, provides amenity and access to the foreshore to all the people all the time. People could then enjoy the amenity of Coffs Harbour, as I hope Sydneysiders will be able to enjoy the Bays Precinct.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [12.43 p.m.], in reply: I thank the member for Drummoyne, the member for Summer Hill, the member for Castle Hill, the member for Sydney and the member for Coffs Harbour for their contributions to the debate on this motion. I do not think it is an overestimation to say that this site, the Bays Precinct, will transform Sydney. If it is done properly, it has the opportunity to make this city a very different place. I welcome the comments from members on both sides of this Parliament advocating for a strategic, well-planned, community focused, positive outcome. At Barangaroo and other

developments we have seen the big end of town get the good deals—we even saw a casino licence awarded without a tender. In this location we want to see development that benefits our economy, our environment and the social aspects of our community.

To advance this discussion, we could augment and improve the 20 principles of the Bays Precinct. For example, we could make sure that we focus on what the housing targets should be, and that those targets are solid. UrbanGrowth has talked about "affordable housing". By that it means micro apartments—but the apartments will have to be pretty small to be affordable. We believe we should use the Government's affordable housing legislation to offer below-market rent in exchange for bonuses for developers and so on. Let us use the instruments we already have rather than building micro apartments. We need those types of targets and approaches to put some meat on the bones with respect to housing targets. When it comes to sport and recreation we should have a principle of committing to having open space for active recreation. I do not think that would be unreasonable.

It would ensure that active open space for young and not-so-young sportspeople is in the plan. The Greens ask that UrbanGrowth undertake a recreational needs analysis that links the level of any proposed population increase to the active and passive space required in the area. These are just a few small steps that we ask the Government to consider seriously. There is concern about the make-up of the board and the potential for group-think. I urge UrbanGrowth to consider the contributions from all the members in this House. There is a unanimous view that we need to seriously examine and prioritise the issues of affordable housing, active and massive open space, sustainability, community facilities and public transport links, which are so important. Renewal will be taking place within the parameters of the 80 hectares but if we do not get it right we will have failures, as occurred in Melbourne.

Melbourne missed a huge opportunity with the Docklands development, which has not really fired. It has not delivered what was promised at the beginning of the process. I commend all the speakers in this debate, and other members who have taken an interest in this issue. Members from Sydney and also from rural and regional areas want to make sure that this development proceeds in the right way. I commit myself to working with this Government and this Parliament, with the community and with the people who have been working on this project for many years to ensure that we get development that prioritises the public interest and that the priorities raised in this debate are delivered for the people of Sydney.

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

Motion agreed to.

SHOALHAVEN HOSPITAL

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.47 p.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Government on its commitment of a second linear accelerator at Shoalhaven Hospital.
- (2) Congratulates the Government on its commitment to an \$8 million upgrade of the car park at Shoalhaven Hospital.
- (3) Notes that the Opposition failed to match the current Government's commitment to upgrade the car park.

I am pleased to put this motion before the House today because it relates to a commitment made by my side of politics at the last election. While there is a partisan aspect to the motion, regarding the car park, I

thank the Opposition for matching the commitment in relation to the linear accelerator at Shoalhaven Hospital. There has been an enormous community campaign to obtain improvements in the provision of cancer treatment and facilities throughout the Illawarra region. I know that members on both sides of this House stand united in that campaign. I pay particular tribute to my friend and colleague the member for South Coast for the campaign she fought to obtain a linear accelerator, alongside other Illawarra communities represented by other members in opposition and in government.

For the information of members who may not be aware, the Shoalhaven is a local government area that covers the entirety of the South Coast electorate and more than 50 per cent of the Kiama electorate, stretching to Berry, Kangaroo Valley, Shoalhaven Heads, North Nowra, Bomaderry, Tapitallee, et cetera. As members may appreciate, facilities are often shared by a number of electorates, and the Shoalhaven Hospital certainly is a major regional facility. For many years people had to travel from their homes in the Shoalhaven all the way to Wollongong to receive cancer treatment. I recall that when my mother suffered her first bout of breast cancer, seeing a family member having to traverse the highway backwards and forwards, not just throughout periods of chemotherapy but also throughout radiotherapy treatment, was simply heartbreaking.

I know that many people in my region have had to face that in the past. What is wonderful about having a cancer facility in our region is that people like my mother and those who are going through breast cancer treatment for a second time are able to have the treatment much closer to home. I know that makes a huge difference to those who are affected by this terrible disease. When the cancer centre was opened—as a result of joint funding by the Federal and State governments as well as community contributions—one linear accelerator was provided, with a second bunker ready to serve the community should it be required.

Earlier in the year I was advised that the linear accelerator was at approximately 93 per cent capacity, so we required a second one. During the recent election campaign the member for South Coast, Shelley Hancock, and I obtained a commitment from the Minister for Health, Jillian Skinner, for the provision of a second linear accelerator. To the great credit of the Opposition, it also came on board. I thank Labor members for ensuring that this matter and similar matters remain totally bipartisan—as they should be. I commend and thank the Minister for Health for her support of the request made by the member for South Coast and me for equipment and resources needed by our electorates to support our local people. There is no doubt that that cancer centre, together with improvements at the Wollongong Hospital, will make a huge difference to cancer treatment in the Illawarra region.

The second part of the motion congratulates the Government on its commitment to an \$8 million upgrade of car parking at the Shoalhaven Hospital. It is always interesting on Thursdays to listen to debate on private members' motions because a number of them usually concern the provision of car parking at hospitals. There can be no doubt that demand is constant across the State. I am very pleased that the Minister for Health is attempting to address that need at a number of hospitals throughout New South Wales. The Government committed in its first term to the provision of more than 100 additional spaces, which were delivered as part of the upgrades at Shoalhaven, but this excluded the new cancer care centre and the provision of car parking at that centre. However, through changes to the existing car park, we were able to find the required spaces. Additional car parking spaces were important because when nurses and doctors changed shifts they had to walk in the dark to their cars, which was not safe. Moreover, patients and their loved ones could not find a car parking space.

The provision of additional car parking spaces was critical and crucial. The Government has committed to allocating \$8 million to provide approximately 200 car parking spaces over and above the parking spaces for which the member for South Coast and I fought. I could not be prouder to see those car parking arrangements going forward because everyone—nurses, doctors, staff and patients—recognised the shortage of parking. Whenever people talk about the Shoalhaven Hospital, they rave about the service and the staff and the great job they are doing, but they always make the point that sometimes access to the hospital is difficult. When it comes to car parking in the region, I was pleased to

see the doubling of car parking spaces at the Wollongong Hospital. There are now more than the 700 additional car parking spaces at that hospital.

Having seen what my mother went through the first time she underwent cancer treatment and having experienced the frustration of trying to find a car parking space, I can state firsthand how frustrating it is to try to find a car parking space when you have a sick loved one with you. It is important to listen to our communities. Part of the reason I moved this motion is to ensure that the community is aware that this matter has not gone off the boil and that the member for South Coast and I are pursuing the Government in relation to the commitment that was made during the election campaign. Even though the member for South Coast and I are part of the Government, it is important to continue to remind the Government of its commitments to ensure that election promises are delivered. In that vein, I reiterate my thanks to the Minister for Health, who has delivered on all the commitments she made during the recent State election campaign.

I know that she will continue to be a great Minister for Health and will continue to deliver on the commitments made by the Government at the recent State election as we move forward into this term. I take this opportunity to commend Professor Denis King, the Chair of the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District, with whom I had dinner in Parliament House earlier this week. He and his staff do a great job. I think the Opposition would agree that Margot Mains, who is the new chief executive officer of the district and who replaced Sue Browbank, has done a very good job in the short time she has been with the local health district. Sue also did a great job. Margot Mains brings enormous experience from both New Zealand and South Australia, and she is making a real difference in our health system.

There is no doubt that health is one area of public administration that will continue to confront governments in the future. In a few short years for every taxpayer there will be three people reliant on support from the Government. Regardless of which political party constitutes the Government, the provision of adequate health services and facilities will be a challenge for communities and for governments in the future. While it is important to build infrastructure and provide jobs and investment, it is also important to do so in a sustainable manner. In that vein, I thank the Government for making those issues in my community a priority.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) [12.54 p.m.]: I am pleased to contribute to debate on a motion that draws attention to the very important issue of health care in the Illawarra. The area represented by the member for Kiama in the southern part of the Illawarra, particularly the Shoalhaven, is the focus of attention of members in this House. We know that in the Illawarra, and in the broader community, significant challenges are being faced right across the board in relation to the provision of health services. I refer not only to the provision of direct primary healthcare services but also to associated services, such as car parks. In the broader Illawarra community, the Wollongong Hospital, the Shellharbour Hospital, and the Bulli Hospital in the Keira electorate have faced challenges in relation to infrastructure development and the provision of parking.

We know that those facilities will only get busier. They will attract more demand and will require more investment. As the member for Kiama rightly said, it is a challenge confronting us all. Regardless of which political party occupies the Treasury bench, healthcare services will have to be delivered in a sensible but transparent manner. Health costs, particularly in relation to health infrastructure and health technology, only ever increase. We are keeping people alive longer and, obviously, they are demanding more from healthcare providers. Healthcare services are important and so is the provision of associated infrastructure services, such as quality car parks. It is important for this Government to realise the necessity of ensuring that investment is timely. I take this opportunity to make the point that we are still awaiting substantial development as part of the investment to which the Government committed in relation to redevelopment.

The member for Kiama is right to hold the Government to account. It is an important role of all members of Parliament, irrespective of which political party they represent, to hold Executive Government

to account. I appreciate that that is what the member for Kiama is doing. I am doing something similar in relation to the Bulli Hospital because it is a facility that is near and dear to the hearts of people in my electorate and to our Acting-Speaker and member for Heathcote.

Mr Gareth Ward: Why didn't you promise it during the election? Where was the commitment? We promised it.

Mr RYAN PARK: I am being very polite and very respectful. I do not want to get into a slanging match about the Bulli Hospital because that might hurt the feelings of some members in this Chamber. Labor members understand better than most the critical need to invest heavily in health services as well as associated infrastructure. The member for Kiama is correct in saying that accessing the largest hospital in the Illawarra region, the Wollongong Hospital, is extremely difficult. Essentially, the hospital area has become landlocked and we have all experienced difficulties accessing it. The member for Kiama articulated his personal story. I had a similar experience. It becomes extremely difficult, particularly for a sick person or a young child, which adds a complication, to get in and move around the hospital precinct. Unfortunately governments of all persuasions will have to deal with these things as part of the infrastructure spend going forward.

It is no longer good enough simply to build a health facility; we need to ensure that the associated infrastructure is also built. Labor will continue to ensure that health services across the board are a priority. For as long as I am the shadow Minister for the Illawarra I will ensure—I would like to think, in bipartisan with my colleague the Parliamentary Secretary for the Illawarra—that this becomes a priority because our region requires access to good quality health services, as do all people in New South Wales. Our region has a growing but ageing population, which means that the pressure on our health services is increasing across the board. I will never miss an opportunity to discuss in our oldest Parliament health services in the Illawarra.

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

Pursuant to sessional order committee reports proceeded with.

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 4/56

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

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) [1.00 p.m.]: This is the fourth Legislation Review Digest for the Fifty-sixth Parliament, tabled on 25 August 2015. The committee reviewed three bills this week: the Biosecurity Bill 2015, the Rural Fires Amendment (Bush Fire Prevention) Bill 2015 and the State Senate Bill 2015. The committee commented on one of the bills. The committee also reviewed 26 regulations and commented on one of them. I will focus on some key issues identified by the committee in the digest. In relation to the Biosecurity Bill 2015, the committee identified seven issues under section 8A (1) of the Legislation Review Act 1987. This Biosecurity Bill provides a framework for the prevention, elimination and minimisation of biosecurity risks, and promotes biosecurity as a shared responsibility between government, industry and communities.

It also provides for the effective and timely management of pests and diseases which pose a threat to the economic production of primary industries and which would have an adverse impact on community infrastructure and activities, as well as threats to aquatic environments and public health and safety risks. The bill's amendments also address risk-based decision-making in relation to biosecurity, and give effect to biosecurity agreements to which the State is a party. The committee commented that the bill could trespass on personal rights and liberties in three instances. First, it could be seen to infringe

on personal physical integrity. The bill permits authorised officers to clean or disinfect external parts of an individual's body in emergency biosecurity situations. The committee commented that requiring individuals to undergo treatment in the form of cleaning or disinfecting their bodies may impact on their personal physical integrity.

However, the committee also noted that authorised officers are not allowed to carry out invasive treatment such as taking blood or other bodily samples. Importantly, the provisions only apply in emergency situations; as such, the treatment is considered to be necessary to safeguard a person's health or prevent the further spread of disease. The committee noted that it does not consider that the proposed provisions will unduly impact on personal rights and liberties. Secondly, the bill may trespass against a person's right to protect himself or herself against self-incrimination. Certain information that individuals provide could be used against them in criminal proceedings. Despite limitations on these provisions in the bill, the committee nevertheless referred the issue to Parliament for further consideration.

Thirdly, the bill may allow for a search without warrant where an owner or occupier of residential premises has not complied with certain orders or directions. Such orders or directions given under the bill are intended to prevent, eliminate or manage biosecurity risks. The committee noted that entry is only authorised where a person has failed to comply with the orders, directions or undertakings as specified in the bill. Therefore, the committee made no further comments. The committee also commented that the bill may inappropriately delegate legislative powers in three instances. First, it commences by proclamation. The committee prefers legislation which may impact on personal rights and liberties to commence on a fixed date or on assent. Secondly, the bill allows for extraterritorial application. Certain provisions of the bill, including its criminal provisions, may impact on individuals who are not within the territorial reach of New South Wales.

However, the committee noted that biosecurity threats do not necessarily recognise lines on maps and, if not managed properly, may result in significant consequences for the people of New South Wales. On balance, therefore, the committee did not consider the extraterritorial application of the bill to be an inappropriate delegation of powers in the circumstances, so made no further comment. Thirdly, the committee commented that the bill introduces a Henry VIII clause allowing for regulations to amend certain schedules to the bill. The committee referred this to Parliament, given that it generally prefers for an Act of Parliament, rather than a regulation, to amend provisions of principal legislation. The committee notes, however, that in this instance the amendment provision relates only to a change of date.

I now turn to the Government Sector Employment Amendment (Transitional Staff Arrangements) Regulation 2015. The purpose of this regulation is to extend the transitional arrangements for staff of the Internal Audit Bureau and the SAS Trustee Corporation. The regulation is made under the Government Sector Employment Act 2013. The committee noted that the object of the regulation could have been achieved by alternative and more effective means as it amends the Government Sector Employment Act 2013. The committee noted that it generally prefers for an Act of Parliament rather than a regulation to amend principal legislation. The committee, however, made no further comment. I commend the digest to the House.

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) [1.06 p.m.]: I speak on behalf of Labor members on the Legislation Review Committee. First, I acknowledge the work done by the committee staff, overseen by Emma Wood. They do a fantastic job of putting together many documents for the committee to review and work on whenever Parliament sits. The chairman has given a fine report on the digest. On the Biosecurity Bill 2015, I simply note that clauses 148 and 150 have been referred back to Parliament. This legislation is contentious, and I encourage the Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water to re-examine the provisions in the bill on which the committee has commented. Although we have let them through, the bill is contentious because several provisions infringe on the rights and liberties of individuals. If the bill is to make it through Parliament, the Minister needs to have another look at it with a view to making amendments before it reaches the House and conferring with the Opposition before he

does so. I commend the digest to the House.

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

Report noted.

[Acting-Speaker (Mr Lee Evans) left the chair at 1.08 p.m. The House resumed at 2.15 p.m.]

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I welcome to the gallery today members of the Mt Colah Men's Probus group, guests of the Parliamentary Secretary for Treasury and member for Hornsby. I also acknowledge George Maamary, guest of the Parliamentary Secretary for the Illawarra and South Coast and member for Kiama. I also extend a very warm welcome to members of Probus Ashfield, including President Gwen Burkford, in the gallery today as guests of the Parliamentary Secretary for Planning and member for Drummoyne.

QUESTION TIME

[Question time commenced at 2.18 p.m.]

FOSTER CARER SCREENING

Mr LUKE FOLEY: My question is directed to the Minister for Family and Community Services. How is it that foster parents who were found by the Ombudsman in 2013 to be caring for children in an extremely dangerous manner are still allowed to have children under their care?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. Obviously every aspect of children being exposed to risk of serious harm is a challenge, whether it is the process by which those children are assessed or the placements made. This particular case has been covered in the media and obviously the Leader of the Opposition read the paper. I am really pleased that the Leader of the Opposition has read the paper because sometimes I think those opposite do not.

Ms Linda Burney: We've known about it for over a year.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I also am aware of the issue. If the member for Canterbury makes too much noise, I will throw in some quotes. I have a whole lot of quotes from her on this so the member should be very careful.

Mr Greg Piper: Speak up.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Does the member want to hear the quotes from the member for Canterbury? I am going to be polite because this is a particularly sensitive issue. I have called for a full report on the children we are talking about. Following the media reports today, and whenever there are media reports or an issue is raised with regard to any one of the 20,000 children in out-of-home care, of course I call for a close examination. I was just reading some of the medical reports in regard to these children. The issues are extremely complex and are not ones for making political mileage from. The children have very challenging issues and the carers subject to these assertions have been caring for these children for more than a decade. It is a complex case, but obviously this Government is committed to ensuring that children in out-of-home care are kept as safe as is humanly possible. We will do all we can to ensure that Family and Community Services [FACS] looks into all the details.

Whilst the Ombudsman has looked at this case, the Office of the Senior Practitioner has also looked at it. The Office of the Senior Practitioner, who is tasked to work with caseworkers, has indicated that there are some complexities that it would not be appropriate for me to raise in this forum—in fact, it

would not be appropriate for a Minister to raise them in any forum. I will be looking at those issues with the Senior Practitioner and I will ask the department to consider each of the issues the Ombudsman has raised as a result of those investigations. I think it is fair to say that many of the children who come into care are very damaged. No-one treats removing these children from their parents lightly.

The factual background to why these children were removed is very challenging; therefore, the children have issues which are very, very challenging. In regard to the outcomes for these children, I and the Government, and I am sure members of the Opposition, want the very best for them. But we have to tread very carefully in how we achieve that. The fact that I have already asked the department to give me a complete report on what has gone on in the management of these children, and the fact that the Office of the Senior Practitioner has already looked into these matters in detail but is doing more now, will indicate, perhaps always, the opportunity for improvements in work practice.

Having said that, it is a challenge for all of us to have enough foster carers to address all the issues that need to be addressed in looking after children, and to get more foster carers and to support those foster carers. Also, I want to acknowledge the work done by caseworkers, because generally the caseworkers in Family and Community Services do an extraordinary job. It is a very challenging area of public policy—as at least one member sitting next to the Leader of the Opposition would be very much aware. She has made observations in this place from time to time that to provide a system that always ensures the absolute protection of children is, of course, the ambition; but, sometimes, issues arise that perhaps do not get the level of attention that we would like as a Parliament and as a government. I believe, in this case, if we can analyse the facts of the situation by further investigation with the Office of the Senior Practitioner, and if I can get all those facts as well as the medical reports and look carefully at them, and not make any kneejerk responses, I think that will inform the best response.

Mr Luke Foley: The report came down in 2013.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will cease interjecting.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I counsel the Leader of the Opposition to be very careful before embarking on this exercise, because there are a lot of facts that he does not know and will never know.

Mr Michael Daley: You wrote the book, Brad.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: The member will recall that when I was shadow Minister I did a very good job; but you people, unfortunately, failed during that period. [*Time expired.*]

OUTSIDE SCHOOL HOURS CARE

Mr MARK TAYLOR: My question is addressed to the Premier. How is the Government listening and responding to the needs of the community?

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for The Entrance will cease shouting across the Chamber.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I thank the member for his question and for his incredible work in his community. I was pleased this morning to join the Minister for Early Childhood Education, together with the member for Seven Hills and the member for Parramatta, at Mother Theresa Catholic Primary School, Westmead, to look at a centre that makes a big difference to people's lives—the before and after school care centre. We made a commitment in the election to provide additional places—there are close to 80,000 places and we want to provide an additional 45,000 places—and that is exactly what we are going to do. We are doing that because we know that makes people's lives easier. That is what this Government is about—making life easier for our community.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: We understand that if we can make it easier for families to go about their daily lives all the better. Obviously, where both partners in a family are working, that provides a challenge in obtaining before and after school care. If those care centres are next to schools what a difference that makes. That is what we are proud to deliver. So the good news for the community of New South Wales is that the grants will be distributed as early as October this year. They are open now; applications have already started coming in. Additional places will be made available as soon as possible. That is good news for the people of this State. I was speaking with a mum, Deb, at the centre at Westmead. She was there with her two children, and she made it very clear that if she did not have this before and after school care facility she would not be able to work; the centre was making a huge difference. She was raving about the staff, who are incredible.

I note that the member for Seven Hills reflected on a student, but I think he had the same position, who never wanted to go home from school. He wanted to stay at school all day, and that is what he did. I recall being quite happy to leave school, to be honest, when it got to 6 o'clock. But that showed that the children love this centre. So that is what we are trying to do—provide a centre that is safe, secure, accessible and enjoyable. That is what we saw at the Westmead centre. I congratulate the Minister on her work in bringing this vision to reality. A great amount of work has been going on across the State, and many of these centres will be rolled out. The Minister will be there all the way. I note that this is about listening and responding to all our community needs. That is what this Government does—it listens and responds to and supports our community.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: But I was intrigued to see in Newcastle an instance where I do not think the member for Newcastle was necessarily representing his community—not the member sitting on the Opposition frontbench, but the member for Newcastle at the back of the Chamber. For some reason, he has decided to support Newcastle City Council, which made a decision to shift its investment portfolio away from banks and divest from fossil fuel projects. I do not want to be telling the member for Newcastle what is in the centre of his city, but it is a coal port, and that port provides jobs and makes a large contribution to the economy. Indeed, the coal economy across the Hunter is critical. The member for Newcastle is no longer for the revitalisation of his city; so we can put the stop to that.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: My point is taken under Standing Order 129. Unless I am mistaken, the member for Seven Hills asked the Premier how the Government is listening and responding to the needs of the community. The question has nothing whatsoever to do with the member for Newcastle, and it has nothing to do with the Newcastle council or its investment decisions.

The SPEAKER: Order! The question was general in nature and as such may elicit any response the Premier chooses to give. There is no point of order.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I think we have waited long enough. It is time the member for Maroubra stood up and took the seat that he wants. He has the numbers to do that if he ever wants to go for it. For some reason, the member for Newcastle is against 20,000 jobs, 1,000 businesses and 26 per cent of the total economy. He does not care. The good news is that we continue to support jobs in the Hunter and in the mining sector.

Ms Linda Burney: Point of order: I raise the same point of order under Standing Order 129. As the Premier is babbling on, he might want to explain why he is charging full rent to after school care. Explain that and how that is helping people.

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

FOSTER CARER SCREENING

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK: My question is directed to the Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Social Housing. Given that a risk assessment in 2013 determined that the carers in question should have their carers authorisation revoked, on becoming a Minister, was the Minister briefed on the case or was knowledge of this shocking case confined to his ministerial predecessor?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: What is relevant here, and I am surprised that you would ask a question about the process rather than about the child's welfare—

Ms Tania Mihailuk: That is coming.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Well, hopefully it is, because if you want to ask some questions I am quite happy to indicate that there are a whole lot of safeguards in place. Those safeguards particularly include the Office of the Children's Guardian, which oversees all of what goes on in regard to foster care and of course from time to time makes regular investigations in regard to each of our foster carers who generously come forward to look after the children in out-of-home care. On top of that there are a number of other independent processes. Obviously the—

Ms Tania Mihailuk: The Ombudsman.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: No, I just referred to the Ombudsman, if you were listening to what I said. There is the Office of the Children's Guardian, there is obviously the Ombudsman, and there is also the Office of the Senior Practitioner. Each of those people has been put in place and has the power to ensure that what is being done in a very difficult area is done in the best possible way. In regard to these children, as indicated earlier, there are some challenging issues which it is not appropriate that this Parliament—

Ms Tania Mihailuk: A risk assessment determined that those carers—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Bankstown will come to order. She has asked her question.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I am more than happy to hear the level of ignorance coming from the member for Bankstown.

The SPEAKER: Order! I am not.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: It is a level of ignorance.

The SPEAKER: Order! It is an interjection and it is out of order.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: Standing Order 129. The Minister is doing contortions so as not to answer a simple question. Were you briefed by your predecessor or were you not briefed, Brad? It is a very simple question.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra will resume his seat. There is no point of order.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Michael, one of the great things about this place is that you can bluster and carry on, but I will answer the question the way I want to answer it. The way I want to answer it is in the interests of the children.

The SPEAKER: Order! So long as the Minister remains relevant to the question he may answer it any way he chooses.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I have been here too long—hair on the back of the neck, fluster, it makes no difference.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra will cease interjecting and arguing. I call the member for Maroubra to order for the first time.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: I note that in the response the Minister has given he has not directed his comments through the Chair but has directed them across the Chamber. I ask that you direct the Minister to give his answers through you.

The SPEAKER: Order! I uphold the point of order. The Minister will direct his comments through the Chair.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I only wanted to get one sheet of paper out, Madam Speaker, because I have made the point. These children are of course deserving of every ounce of protection this Government and indeed this Opposition can give them, but we also have to—

Mr Michael Daley: Were you briefed or not?

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

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: You would not know if you were briefed most of the time on anything, so I do not think you should be carrying on about that. I think these are very profound words and when we are dealing with vulnerable children we should—

Ms Linda Burney: Point of order—

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Yes, they were actually your words, member for Canterbury, so let us hear your words now.

Ms Linda Burney: We understand that this is a very difficult and sensitive issue. I refer to Standing Order 129. There was a clear question—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister's answer remains relevant to the question.

Ms Linda Burney: He has not answered the question.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is being relevant to the question. The member for Canterbury knows the standing orders in relation to relevance. There is no point of order. The Minister may answer the question as he sees fit so long as he remains relevant to it.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: As I said, and I say this to all the Parliament and indeed all those in the gallery, it is a very challenging task by Family and Community Services [FACS] caseworkers to ensure that every one of 20,000 children receives the care that we would love them to have if they were in our homes. But, I agree, the challenge is sometimes not met. My challenge at the moment is to ensure that I go through the advice from the senior practitioners, those who are expert in case work—not the political people in here who want to carry on like mad rabbits that have just eaten some—

Mr Michael Daley: What, for asking a question?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I just note these final words, and they are profound—they came from the *Hansard* of 11 March 2009. The member for Canterbury said:

To use vulnerable children for political gain says much about the Opposition's values and priorities.

COMMUNITY SAFETY FUND

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD: My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier. What is the New South Wales Government doing to provide our community with the services they need to combat crime and feel safe in their communities?

Mr TROY GRANT: I thank the member for Myall Lakes for his question—a member who before entering Parliament was both a nurse and a police officer; a man who, like the rest of this side of Government, is focused on the safety of everyone in the communities that he represents in his electorate. Like the rest of his colleagues in this Government, he is focused on supporting all those local groups across our electorates and making the investment to improve safety across communities at a grassroots level. That is why this Government was very proud to announce during the campaign, and it is delivering, a \$10 million Community Safety Fund to provide effective solutions to achieve this safety.

This fund addresses local crime hotspots and antisocial behaviour; it is there to promote and invest in safe and inclusive public space; and it is there to promote collaborative approaches to crime reduction. Our crime statistics at the moment are good. They are going well, but we do not want to rest on our laurels. We understand that all major crime categories have fallen or remained stable statewide, but they can go up if we do not continue to make the investment. We know we can always do more and that is why we are not stopping our effort. I want everyone in New South Wales to feel safe in their communities. If they have any ideas on how we can help them achieve that outcome, we are here listening and we want them to tell us how we can help. People living in the community know what they need to make—

Mr Ryan Park: Keep the gate locked.

Mr TROY GRANT: I acknowledge the interjection of the member for Keira—if you are not the rudest person I have met, you are in the grand final. People living in the community know what will help in their local area to make them feel and be safe, and we want to hear directly from them. My parliamentary secretary, the member for Orange, will be consulting with communities across the State and listening to their proposals. Consultation will occur throughout our towns and our suburbs with local community and business groups. We are there to discuss crime-fighting projects best suited for local needs and this work will be reported back to me and the hardworking Attorney General. We want localised solutions and investment.

Our Government is proud to invest up to \$250,000 in grants to enhance safety through a number of measures. These can include things like closed-circuit television, campaigns to reduce stealing from motor vehicles, funding for improvements such as better fencing or lighting around problem areas, and initiatives to reduce antisocial behaviour. We want the community to tell us how we can achieve these results and we are there ready and listening. We are proud of our Community Safety Fund and how it will complement the work that is already being done by the wonderful partnerships police have with their communities across this State. We are determined to stamp out antisocial behaviour and continue to fight crime.

We want communities to be proud of their streets and their suburbs—their neighbourhoods—and we will continue to work with them to achieve this in increasing services and this investment. For example, today, alongside our hardworking Attorney General we launched graffiti removal week, which will be held on 18 October. We put this initiative in place because we are fed up with graffiti staining our

communities. That is why we have joined with Rotary Down Under to encourage everyone to get involved in the annual clean-up day, which is getting bigger and better every year. Last year's volunteers removed more than 20,000 square metres of graffiti.

Last week I was pleased to announce the appointment of a new chairman to the board of the Police Citizens Youth Clubs NSW. Alex Harvey will lead the association with distinction. It is a wonderful appointment for the Police Citizens Youth Club [PCYC]. The PCYC is supported by the Government because it offers invaluable services to our youth. Its programs are aimed at reducing juvenile crime and ensuring that our young people are equipped with the skills to navigate daily challenges. The New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government is building a safer and more harmonious community across this State. We are working with the community to make a difference and we will continue in that endeavour. This Government is focused on delivering important crime and justice reforms and services to make this State a safer place. We have the vision and the investment. [*Time expired.*]

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES FUNDING

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK: My question is directed to the Minister for Family and Community Services. Given the \$3 million cut to the Minister's department's budget, including 82 jobs being slashed from statutory child protection, are children in care across New South Wales receiving adequate oversight?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: The budget has increased substantially and it will continue to increase substantially. In answer to the substantive aspect of the question, forgetting the fact that you are totally wrong on the budget issue, of course there is always more that can be done to ensure that all the necessary care and support is given to children in out-of-home care. This issue, regarding the children who are the subject of your interest today, was identified by the Ombudsman. Let us take those children as an example. I am pleased that you are showing an interest in those children. Anything that requires us to have additional opportunities to vet what is going on in that care process is excellent. The challenge—the member for Canterbury knows this; I am not sure whether the member for Bankstown does—is that these children were placed with these carers during the Opposition's time in government and those children spent 12 years with their carers.

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

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Those children have extremely challenging issues and I do not wish to diminish them or their families by going into them. They are the most complex of cases. The challenge is not only to make sure that the carers get the support that is necessary but also to make sure that the children have their needs, including their disability and medical issues, addressed. The Ombudsman said he would like to see greater focus on some of those issues.

Ms Tania Mihailuk: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, relevance.

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

Ms Tania Mihailuk: The Ombudsman said—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Bankstown will resume her seat. I call the member for Bankstown to order for the first time. The Minister has the call.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: You are a lightweight, absolutely.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: The Minister is again directing comments across the table. I ask that the Minister direct his comments through the Chair.

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the Minister to direct his comments through the Chair.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: We missed the member for Strathfield when she was not here. We are glad that the Labor Party has finally shown some decency and taken the knives out of her back.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will return to the leave of the question. He will direct his comments through the Chair.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: This Government is doing far more than the Opposition did in its 16 years in government. Be assured that the caseworkers are doing everything possible, but work is also being done with the carers. We will continue to work with them. Some of those issues were raised, understandably, by the biological mother of the children. There are inherent tensions when a child is taken from his or her biological parent.

Ms Linda Burney: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister remains relevant to the question. Does the member have another point of order?

Ms Linda Burney: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister's answer is relevant to the question. There is no point of order. I call the member for Canterbury to order for the third time.

Mr Anthony Roberts: Madam Speaker, if this behaviour continues, I respectfully refer to a decision by the Hon. John Aquilina. He placed members on three calls to order for interrupting an answer under the guise of a point of order and using the point of order to make debating points. I merely raise that as a decision of a former Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Order! I am not likely to follow in the footsteps of the Hon. John Aquilina.

Mr Michael Daley: To the point of order: I can say with some genuineness—

The SPEAKER: Order! Government members will come to order. I cannot hear the member for Maroubra.

Mr Michael Daley: I am sure I am one of the people to whom the Leader of the House was referring when he spoke of purported interruptions. We are not interrupting to shift the Minister off cue or to waste his time. We want the Minister to answer the simple question that he has been asked. The Minister is doing somersaults—

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The member for Maroubra will resume his seat.

Mr Michael Daley: He is acting like Nadia Comaneci so as not to answer the question.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra has been in this place long enough to know the standing orders. That was a stunt, and he knows it.

Mr Michael Daley: No, it was not.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra will not canvass my ruling; there are consequences for doing so. I call the member for Maroubra to order for the third time. I direct the member to remove himself from the Chamber until the conclusion of question time.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Maroubra left the Chamber at 2.47 p.m.]

Mr Anthony Roberts: As usual, Madam Speaker is correct. I refer instead to a decision by the Hon. Kevin Rozzoli.

The SPEAKER: Order! Is the Leader of the House about to quote from the ruling of another old fogey former Speaker to suggest what I do?

Mr Anthony Roberts: I refer to Speaker Rozzoli, who said, "A member raising a totally spurious point of order is deemed to be on three calls to order immediately."

The SPEAKER: Order! I am much more tolerant than former Speakers.

Mr Anthony Roberts: I have taken that on board.

The SPEAKER: Order! I am sure that Opposition members have not done so.

SOCIAL BENEFIT BONDS

Mr ADAM CROUCH: My question is addressed to the Treasurer. How is the Government providing long-term social and economic benefits for New South Wales while protecting the vulnerable?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I thank the member for Terrigal for the timeliness of his important question. I pay tribute to him for his passion for supporting the most vulnerable in his community on the Central Coast. I appreciate the member raising this matter today. We are committed to helping those most vulnerable in our community and making sure that we help as many families as possible with the resources that we have. I am pleased to update the House that the Government has pursued an innovative funding model of social impact investment bonds. Social benefit bonds allow and involve private investors to provide up-front funding to help community organisations deliver social outcomes. This is collaboration between government, non-government operators or providers but also financial investors who receive returns on the investment they make. Australia's first social benefit bond was established by our Government. It is now in its second year and producing promising results.

We are grateful for this result but we are proud also that we were the first Government to venture into this innovative area. Today I want to talk about the \$7 million bond which is funding UnitingCare Burnside's New Parent and Infant Network program, referred to as Newpin. This program, appropriately and importantly, aims to reunite vulnerable children with their families—children who, unfortunately, were taken out of their homes, which should have been their safest places but were not. I pay tribute to the great team at Newpin, which works with parents to support them in reuniting with their children and also to ensure that children have safe home environments so that they can be returned to their parents. This program is about supporting parents, children and families. This method of funding allows the Government to ensure that the taxpayer dollar goes as far as it can to help as many families as it can.

The Newpin program has returned 66 children to their families and kept 35 families safely together since it started. Last week I was very pleased to join my colleague the Minister for Family and Community Services on a visit to the Newpin centre at Doonside. We were able to see first-hand how this wonderful program works. We were able to speak to many parents who have gone through the program and who, even though they had many challenges, were able to be reunited with their children. This great work inspired us to talk to one father in particular whose baby daughter has now been returned to him in a safe home environment. He is now doing a Diploma in Community Services and supporting other fathers going through what he went through. This type of program maintains that support throughout the community.

This is a great win, not just for people who invest in these bonds or for the Government in ensuring that the taxpayer dollar goes further; it demonstrates how, by working collaboratively with the non-government sector, we can do what governments have struggled to do for many decades—that is, to tackle these areas of need which have been enormous challenges. I turn now to focus on some of the financial returns which the private investors have received. These results have come about because the program has exceeded expectations. It has done better than what was expected. The Newpin bond has delivered an 8.9 per cent return to investors in its second year, building on a 7.5 per cent return in the first year. That is an extremely promising result.

It gives us the confidence to look at other areas of social policy where we can apply these bonds. We have seen the success in relation to children in out-of-home care but we can equally apply this to other areas of social need. This is a win-win for all concerned. Of course it is giving a great return to private investors but it is also ensuring that the taxpayer dollar goes further. Whilst the return to investors and this efficiency to government are great, the positive outcomes for the most vulnerable people in our community are even greater. This process will ensure that we can support those people in the present but also in the future, and we will work hard to ensure that we apply this individual approach to other areas of important social policy.

MEL GIBSON AND GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Ms JODIE HARRISON: My question is directed to the Minister for Women and the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. What is the Minister's response to community concerns about Mel Gibson, in the wake of his most recent public behaviour, receiving taxpayer money for the making of his next movie?

Ms PRU GOWARD: I am advised that the NSW Police Force has received a formal complaint and I trust that it will thoroughly investigate the matter. The New South Wales Government, of course, does not condone violence of any kind, especially violence against women, and is behind our police force as it carries out its duties. On the subject of the investment made by this Government in the film production, the New South Wales Liberal and Nationals parties secured our State as the primary filming location for the screen production of *Hacksaw Ridge*. This film will generate around 720 jobs and \$26 million in production expenditure across the State. Our Government is committed to driving economic growth and job creation by attracting businesses to establish and expand in our great State. This decision was a no-brainer. We want a thriving, creative industry for our State. This film will put New South Wales on the map as the country's premier destination for screen production. Mr Gibson will have to live with his own demons.

GOVERNMENT SERVICE DELIVERY

Mr MATT KEAN: My question is addressed to the Minister for Finance, Services and Property. How is the New South Wales Government revolutionising service delivery in New South Wales? What alternative strategies have been suggested?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I thank the member for Hornsby for his question and the great service that he provides to the people of Hornsby, many of whom are seated in the gallery. He is a great local member. In a truly amazing feat the Government, in such a short period of time, has revolutionised service delivery in this State. After 16 years of barren and backward Labor rule, this Government has been the light on the hill for New South Wales. In a little over one term we have fixed the budget, accelerated housing growth, the economy is moving, thousands of jobs have been created and infrastructure is being delivered. We have also transformed service delivery with Service NSW.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: From tourism to transport, from electricity to education, from health

to housing, we have given New South Wales its mojo back. Service delivery has improved across the board because, fundamentally, the Baird-Grant government is the government of delivery. As the Premier said, when he opened the Princes Highway, "When we say we are going to build something, we build it. When we say we are going to do something, we do it.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Just like the WestConnex, Sydney Metro Northwest, Sydney Metro City and Southwest, CBD light rail, new schools, new hospitals, more teachers, more nurses, more police—more everything. We are also building more things, including the new Darling Harbour convention centre and the Barangaroo Reserve, which the Premier opened last weekend with former Labor Prime Minister Paul Keating—those were the days.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Robbo's mate. Paul Keating is so impressed with us that even he is now voting for the Baird-Grant Government. We have come a long way. The people of New South Wales know who delivers things in this place and who just talks. In response to the second part of the question some alternative questions have been put forward. Whilst this Government is revolutionising service delivery in this State, the Leader of the Opposition is running his own revolution—a revolution against jobs, against surpluses and against progress. His is a revolution against workers, businesses, industry and foreigners. In fact, the Leader of the Opposition is running a revolution against everyone. What Che Guevara was to South America, the Leader of the Opposition is to New South Wales.

But there is one revolution in which those on this side of the House support him. I have said it before, and I will say it again until it is gone, we support the Leader of the Opposition's move to get rid of the socialist objective of the Labor Party constitution. The Leader of the Opposition's objective is to remove the wall that divides the Labor Party from Maroubra to Liverpool, from east to west and from Right to Left. The Leader of the Opposition is outside the Chamber at the moment, but we in this Government say that we are happy to offer support and be his comrades in the revolution. This Government is the government of delivery. Today, as the government of delivery, we deliver for Labor members. We will be with them as comrades in arms and be with them in the revolution. Long live Foley! Long live the revolution!

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order: The obvious point of order is the use by the Minister of a prop. My second point of order relates to Standing Order 59, tedious repetition.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order in relation to tedious repetition.

Pursuant to standing order additional information provided.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will dispense with the prop. The member for Strathfield and the member for Hornsby will cease arguing across the Chamber.

Dr Hugh McDermott: Is that from SuperMax?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: No, it was made in China. There is only one government of this House that delivers—and delivers for our citizens day in and day out—and has a track record to be proud of and that is the Baird-Grant Government.

TORONTO MOTOR REGISTRY

Mr GREG PIPER: With some trepidation, I direct my question to the Minister for Finance,

Services and Property. In the light of significant community opposition, will the Minister agree to have the decision to close the Toronto motor registry reviewed and have the department investigate conversion of the site to a Service NSW centre?

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order. I remind the member for Canterbury that she is on three calls to order.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I thank the member for Lake Macquarie for his question and acknowledge the great work he does for his constituents. I also appreciate that the merger of a motor registry is a change for local communities such as his electorate. However, the bigger picture is that through Service NSW more people will be able to access more services than ever before.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will cease interjecting. Members will come to order.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Service NSW is building an innovative physical network of one-stop shops in key population corridors. Those sites are chosen by an independent team of experts who consider a range of factors when it comes to the location of the site. The factors include population and demographics, traffic flows and the movement of people at different times of the day, closeness to transport links and ease of parking, and the suitability and size of various premises. The decisions are made region by region to maximise access to government services and reduce expenditure on older and unsuitable shopfronts.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Wyong will come to order. The member for Charlestown will come to order. The member for Swansea will cease interjecting.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Service NSW one-stop shops offer far more services than do traditional single-agency shopfronts, such as Birth, Deaths and Marriages, Fair Trading offices and motor registries.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Previously our citizens would visit a motor registry in one location to obtain a licence.

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

Mr Greg Piper: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 52. Could I ask for the Minister to be heard in silence? Members at the back of the Chamber are having difficulty hearing the answer.

The SPEAKER: Order! I uphold the point of order. Opposition members will cease interjecting. All members on one or two calls to order are deemed to be on three calls to order.

[Interruption]

The SPEAKER: Order! I direct the member for Swansea to remove herself from the Chamber until the conclusion of question time.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Swansea left the Chamber at 3.03 p.m.]

The SPEAKER: Order! When I call members to order they will cease interjecting.

[Interruption]

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Rockdale will cease interjecting or be removed from the Chamber. The Minister has the call.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: As I was saying, previously our citizens would visit a motor registry in one location to obtain a licence, a births, deaths and marriages office in another location to obtain a birth certificate, and then a justice of the peace in a third location to obtain a seniors card. Now they will be able to do it all in the one trip at one Service NSW location. The Government must look at the bigger picture, not consider individual locations in isolation. Customers can book appointments and take advantage of wi-fi and a range of other services with a highly trained multilingual team on hand to help. That is not to mention the 24-hour hotline, the website where people can transact online, or the mobile phone app. Through Service NSW, more services can be accessed by more people in one place.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The Government has invested significantly in both the Central Coast and Hunter regions. There are now one-stop shops in Warners Bay, Newcastle, Maitland and Gosford.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Lake Macquarie cannot hear the Minister's answer because members are interjecting. I call the member for Gosford to order for the second time. Members will come to order. I will stop the clock if there are any further interjections.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Those sites all act as regional hubs—serving more customers with more staff and offering more services—and there is less waiting time. Planning also is underway for new one-stop shops in Raymond Terrace, Wallsend, Singleton, Nelson Bay, Toukley and Wyong-Tuggerah. The Government is making sure that service centres are located in the right area to cater for current population needs and future growth.

The SPEAKER: Order! I direct the member for Gosford to remove herself from the Chamber until the conclusion of question time.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Gosford left the Chamber at 3.04 p.m.]

The SPEAKER: Order! I am exercising my discretion. The member for Lake Macquarie took a point of order because he could not hear the Minister. I asked members to cease interjecting.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The Toronto motor registry will relocate to the existing Service NSW Warners Bay service centre in mid-October. Key community stakeholders and community groups are receiving notification of the change, but the Government's first priority always is to inform affected staff first. Compared with just five staff at Toronto, Warners Bay has 23 staff. Warners Bay can accommodate more than 700 customers a day and has capacity to deliver 135 driver tests a week. The site also offers extended trading hours from 7.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m. and extended hours on Saturdays. Customers can book appointments to secure a service. Toronto also will be provided with a mobile driver testing service that will visit the area once a week to cater for those who are on restricted licences.

Service NSW has been a success story of this Government. Its premises are new and modern, its services are delivered quickly and efficiently, and its staff are friendly, helpful and motivated. Each day I receive feedback on just how surprised and delighted people are by the level of service now offered by our Government. That is why Service NSW has a 98 per cent satisfaction rating. The Government cannot and should not consider individual locations in isolation; rather, we must consider and deliver the best customer service network that meets the needs of our citizens.

Pursuant to standing order additional information provided.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The success of Service NSW is built around the customer.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will cease interjecting.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The Government will continue to listen and learn. Already the Government has shown a willingness to listen to customer feedback and to act accordingly. My commitment to the member for Lake Macquarie is to continue to monitor the situation and work with him to ensure the best outcome is achieved for the people of Lake Macquarie.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY: My question is addressed to the Minister for Education. How is the Government using Gonski funding to ensure that students in New South Wales public schools who most need support are receiving assistance?

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: I thank the member for Riverstone for his question and for that terrific visit we made to the Quakers Hill Public School.

The SPEAKER: Order! If the member for Blacktown continues to interject he will be removed from the Chamber.

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: We visited the Quakers Hill Public School to see how the school is using Gonski funding which was delivered through the resource allocation model to benefit its individual students. The first thing I noticed at that great school is that the chain mesh fence it once had, which featured three strands of barbed-wire around the school, was gone.

Mr Brad Hazzard: Shocking!

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: Yes. There were about 35 such schools in south-western and Western Sydney. One of the first things done by this Government was to take down all those barbed-wire fences and replace them with proper and beautiful-looking Diplomat fences.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister does not require assistance from Government backbenchers.

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: That was the first thing I noticed about the Quakers Hill Public School.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will cease interjecting. Those who continue to do so will be removed from the Chamber.

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: The school was absolutely fantastic. We received a great reception from the principal, Bert Lo Campo, and the deputy principal, Helen Davis, who gave us a run-through about how they are using the funding in their school. I know that across every electorate there are a huge number of examples about how individual schools are using additional funding provided by the Government. New South Wales was the first State to sign up to the Gonski agreement. We committed to the six years of funding. The Federal Government has not, but the New South Wales Government will keep arguing the case for extended funding.

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind members that some of them are on three calls to order. The member for Maitland will come to order.

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: The Federal Leader of the Opposition, Bill Shorten, has been noticeably silent about funding for the full six years, but schools are getting on with the job.

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Port Stephens that she is on three calls to order.

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: Two and a half years ago Quakers Hill Public School was receiving about \$200,000 in equity funding. However, as a result of the Government's actions, the school received more than \$660,000 in needs based funding this year. The school has used that funding to employ extra staff and it has used about \$50,000 on professional development in the school. The school executive showed us the great things they are providing, including speech pathology services for students and speech pathology training for teachers. They work with students who have language delays and they hold workshops to engage parents about what is happening at the school.

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

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: These services matter, in particular, because of their impact on individual children. The member for Riverstone and I visited a kindergarten class at Quakers Hill Public School and met a group of parents. We watched Fred, a kindergarten student about six years of age, from a distance in an open-plan classroom. He was sitting next to his teacher doing literacy and numeracy work. Freddie's mother told me his story. Fred had started saying individual words only 18 months ago and last week he said his first sentence to his mother. As one can imagine, his mother wept.

His mother showed me a short video her son had prepared for her a couple of days ago; he sent it to her because she was away for a couple of nights. In the video on her telephone Fred says, "Hi mum. I love you. Good night." That is not exceptional for most children, but it is a life-transforming moment for Fred. Indeed, it is a transformational period for Fred's mother, father and brother, thanks to the additional dollars invested in the school and the great work done by the school staff to support the children. Another student, an Aboriginal boy in year 5, in his National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy [NAPLAN] assessment for writing increased his performance by 229 points this year, and his performance for reading increased from 249 in 2013 to 451 in 2015. These are huge jumps for an individual.

Pursuant to standing order additional information provided.

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: I lay out these statistics about individual children. I repeat: the Aboriginal boy achieved an increase in reading this year, going from a NAPLAN result of 429 in year 3 to 451 in year 5. The school has employed a mentor, Stuart McMimn, to work with Aboriginal students, particularly around dance and performance. I use these examples because as politicians we often talk in the macro. We talk about governments and billions or hundreds of millions of dollars. We talk about schools, but the biggest difference is at the individual level in every child's life. We often deal with large figures but when we heard Fred saying his first sentence to his mother we understood what that meant emotionally for Fred's parents. That is what we do every day as members of Parliament, whether we are in government, in opposition or on the crossbenches. We are here to make a difference in people's lives. We may get involved in the Left and Right argy-bargy, but the reason we are here is to change individual lives. When we see these results in schools in our electorates we understand why we were elected to this place.

Question time concluded at 3.14 p.m.

STANDING ORDERS AND PROCEDURE COMMITTEE

Report

The Speaker tabled report No. 1/56 of the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee entitled "Changes to the Standing and Sessional Orders, and the Citizens' Right of Reply Procedure", dated August 2015.

Ordered to be printed.

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON COMPANION ANIMAL BREEDING PRACTICES IN NEW SOUTH

WALES

Report

Mr Adam Marshall, as chair, tabled the report entitled "Inquiry into Companion Animal Breeding Practices in New South Wales", dated August 2015.

Ordered to be printed on motion by Mr Adam Marshall.

PETITIONS

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

Sydney Electorate Public High School

Petition requesting the establishment of a public high school in the Sydney electorate, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Hunter New England Local Health District

Petition requesting the Government to ensure that the Hunter New England Local Health District continues to provide funding for the Wallsend After Hours Medical Service, received from **Ms Sonia Hornery**.

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**.

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**.

Container Deposit Levy

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

BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS

Financial Year 2015-16

Debate resumed from 13 August 2015.

Mr DARYL MAGUIRE (Wagga Wagga—Parliamentary Secretary) [3.16 p.m.]: I am delighted to make a contribution to this debate because the budget has been good news for New South Wales. I am pleased to be part of a government that is turning around the fortunes of this State and, ultimately, the fortunes of the men, women, boys and girls who inhabit New South Wales. In 2015-16 the Government is forecasting an underlying surplus of \$713 million, increasing every year to reach \$895 million in 2018.

The reforms to transport assets are included, which would give a surplus of \$2.5 billion in 2015-16. I remind members that when the Baird-Grant Government came to office Labor had left us with forecast deficits totalling \$4.4 billion. There has been a wonderful turnaround through sheer hard work and dedication by the entire Government led by the Premier and Cabinet.

When we came to government expenses growth averaged 6.4 per cent while revenue was only 5.2 per cent. Again, we turned that around. The State is now living within its means. In March 2011 the non-financial public sector net debt was forecast to be \$62.4 billion by 2014-15. This would have put the triple-A credit rating at risk, but the Government again took action and today the debt figure in 2014-15 is estimated to be \$38.2 billion—or \$24 billion lower than the forecast. Over Labor's last four budgets it funded an average of only \$6.2 billion a year in infrastructure. We have changed that; the Government will fund an average of \$10.3 billion a year on infrastructure over the forward estimates. State infrastructure expenditure over the next four years, including on Government business, is a record \$68.6 billion.

This Government is focused on jobs creation. In May alone, the Australian Bureau of Statistics figures show we have created 15,300 jobs. In the previous four years this Government well and truly exceeded the modest target for jobs creation. The Jobs Action Plan is having an effect, with the \$5,000 tax rebate being offered to companies hiring new employees. In the Wagga Wagga electorate there were 1,293 applications for this rebate, which is very good news as 1,293 jobs have been created under this policy. This is a most welcome development in regional New South Wales. This Government has put in place a lot of initiatives, with housing marked as a significant contributor to propel further growth in the regions and the cities. Investment in housing has picked up significantly over the last two years, growing by about 7.8 per cent in the March quarter alone. Much of this growth was driven by the first home owners grant, which continues to assist first home owners with \$15,000 to purchase or build new homes. In 2014 the Government provided almost 8,000 grants for new homes, a 25 per cent increase on the previous year.

When this Government came to office, on most measurable key indicators of State economic wellbeing New South Wales was rated last, with even Tasmania beating New South Wales. Today the news is all good, with New South Wales back in the black and on track. Indeed, the New South Wales economy is the envy of all States. Helping to drive the economy is record Government investment of \$21 billion in health in 2015-16. This investment will provide for extra surgeries, additional admissions, more ambulance staff and better infrastructure. In the 2015-16 budget, a record \$1.4 billion is being invested in health infrastructure to ramp up major projects like hospitals in Sydney—Westmead and Blacktown, for example—and in regional areas including Lismore, Armidale, Wagga Wagga, Tamworth, Bega, Parkes, Forbes and Dubbo, and the list goes on. Included in the 2015-16 Health budget is about \$1.7 billion for mental health services across New South Wales, a 6.7 per cent increase on the last year.

With that comes investment in education as well as in Service NSW. During question time there was a question relating to Service NSW. The implementation of Service NSW has been a great success. Service NSW's satisfaction rating is almost 100 per cent. It has transformed the way its business is conducted, the way people are greeted and its professionalism. There has been some debate about where to locate branches of Service NSW and the services on offer. When Wagga Wagga was identified as one of the first places to host Service NSW, I asked questions and any concerns have been answered in the public response. The Wagga Wagga Service Centre has been operating for 12 months and processes an enormous number of transactions with a satisfaction rate that has improved dramatically. I credit the centre's staff, including the front-line staff who greet customers, and management who are rolling out the program across the Riverina and western New South Wales.

This Government has made significant investment in transport, including in roads. The Government is providing a record \$7.5 billion to upgrade roads, many of which have been covered in media reports—for example, the Pacific Highway upgrade and WestConnex. The Wagga Wagga electorate has received funds to continue to upgrade Gocup Road. In the lead-up to the 2011 election,

Gocup Road was a topic of discussion because the upgrade was long promised by the Labor Government but never delivered. It was not until the Tumut Shire Council and I, along with my colleague the member for Cootamundra, worked hard to get this road declared a State road that we were able to attract a small amount of funding. Since then the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, Duncan Gay, has allocated \$10 million and in the 2015-16 budget a further \$70 million for the upgrade.

The Tumut community is ecstatic about the upgrade, with the newspaper headlines saying it all. There were several newspaper articles about the wonderful investment that will complete this project. Gocup Road remains in part a very dangerous road for truck drivers carrying freight for the Tumut timber industry as well as the general public, such as holidaymakers. This investment has been well and truly welcomed. Several roads programs have received funding in the 2015-16 budget. One program that will benefit is the Bridges for the Bush, which is successfully rolling out new bridges across regional and rural New South Wales, including the coastal areas that have identified the need for new infrastructure. One project is the replacement of Kapooka Bridge. As this issue has been long talked about in this Parliament, members would be familiar with the problems with the existing bridge.

The Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, Duncan Gay, in a 50/50 partnership with the Federal Government, has allocated \$55 million for the Kapooka Bridge construction, another example of the State and Federal governments working together to bring about real improvements in desperately needed infrastructure. I consider the existing bridge, which enables the Olympic Highway to cross the rail line, to be a deathtrap. The bridge is under construction and will be completed by about November next year. The land has been acquired and environmental works have been completed, with the concrete structure being built. The Government has contributed approximately \$24.5 million to ensure construction continues. It is a magnificent bridge and the contractors involved should receive due credit.

In the budget there are also increased funds for policing. We know how important health, police and education are and they all received increased funding. The main issue for policing is always the number of police numbers in towns, villages and local area commands. The Wagga Wagga electorate has received funding for more police. In the lead-up to the election the Police Association of NSW campaigned hard for increased police resources, and I supported them. There was not a speck of daylight between the Police Association and me in identifying the need for more police officers. To his great credit, the Minister for Justice and Police came to Wagga Wagga to announce that we would receive 10 additional officers. The announcement of five of them was made prior to the budget and five afterwards, and just last week there was an announcement of another two.

Since the Coalition came to government, the number of police officers in the Wagga Wagga Local Area Command has increased by 46. Statewide, that takes the number of police to a record 16,665 officers. My electorate also encompasses part of the Cootamundra Local Area Command, which also has had an increase in the number of officers. One can always argue that more police and more resources are needed. All members could argue that; every community would like more police and more resources. But the reality is that there are limits to what any government can do in a given time. The Minister for Justice and Police has demonstrated, by the allocation of funds in this budget, that this Government is prepared to work with the Police Association and with communities to deliver better outcomes.

One of the issues that has been identified in the media in recent times is the scourge of the drug methamphetamine, known as ice. It is all over the front pages of newspapers and it is certainly the subject of much comment and discussion—and rightly so, because it is creating enormous problems for the community. That is not to say that everyone is affected by this drug; it would be ridiculous to claim that not one family is unaffected by ice. But, sadly, families that are affected face enormous challenges. The resourcing of local police will assist in driving down addiction to ice but, importantly, it will also help to catch the dealers and those who peddle this deadly drug. Local area commands around the State have access to specialised task forces. Recently, one of those task forces identified a number of criminals who were distributing drugs such as ice, and those persons were put before the courts.

I spoke about health in my opening remarks. I thank the Treasurer for allocating further funds to continue the building in Wagga Wagga of the biggest regional hospital in New South Wales. This Government, under Minister Skinner, continues to develop the Wagga Wagga Rural Referral Hospital. This magnificent hospital is rising from the domain of the old Wagga Wagga Base Hospital. Last week I had a tour through the new emergency area. It is absolutely brilliant. Not one detail has been overlooked. The staff, who have been involved during the whole process, are excited by the prospect of moving into the new hospital in January next year.

The building will be completed by about October or November, and when it is commissioned the staff will decamp from the old building, which will be deconstructed over a period of about nine months. Some \$282.1 million is budgeted for those works, and a further \$77.106 million will be drawn down from the budget to enable the works to continue. After the old base hospital is demolished, the project will move to phase three, which will see the building of a new four-storey ambulatory care building, including more renal dialysis and community health facilities. That will be the final stage of the project, which should be completed by 2019. This project is on track and on budget, and that is to the great credit of the Minister.

As I have said, funds have been allocated for the Gocup Road and the Kapooka Bridge, and those works are progressing very well. Funds were made available in the budget for the judiciary. We are continuing to build the new courthouse—long promised under former Labor administrations, but never delivered—which is good news for our community. The \$17 million allocated for construction of the new courthouse will provide six courtrooms as well as further meeting rooms, making the environment much more productive for the judicial staff, as well as for the victims of crime, who will be accommodated away from the perpetrators of crime. In other words, this will be an ergonomic environment that delivers modern judiciary facilities. Security will be upgraded by cameras. The old precinct will be air-conditioned as well. *[Extension of time agreed to.]*

A new ambulance station is more good news for the Wagga Wagga region, with \$4.5 million allocated for its construction. The old station was quite cramped, inefficient and in desperate need of investment. From the few projects I have mentioned, one can see that there have been enormous improvements in the city's and the region's fortunes in the 4½ years since the Liberal-Nationals came to government. Money has been allocated in the budget for a new rural rescue fire station at Batlow. Almost a million dollars, \$920,000, is provided for the purchase of land and the building of that new station in Batlow. That allocation was totally unexpected, and it has been received with acclamation by the community. It is so pleased that this Government recognised the need for the new station.

Batlow already enjoys a new hospital, which opened a number of years ago, but it will receive additional funding. Funds have been allocated for government property works totalling \$818,000, as well as for social housing upgrades totalling \$4.8 million. Capital works funds are provided for Country Rail and community transport that is critical for those communities that rely on services delivered by voluntary and paid staff. The roadworks list includes a number of routine maintenance items. There are works along the Olympic Highway and on State roads, including pavement upgrades along the Sturt Highway, grants to city councils, improvements to the Hume Highway at Kiamba and on the Olympic Highway, along with grants to Lockhart Shire Council, and Snowy Mountains Highway resurfacing.

Major improvements works are occurring at the intersection of Batlow and the Snowy Mountains Highway, with an allocation of \$1.9 million. This terrible intersection has cost lives in the past. Again, communities are very happy with the funding that has been allocated. Funds for new signage are also allocated, as well as a commitment to complete school crossings. That is most welcome. This budget continues to deliver for the people of New South Wales. The Government has turned an economy that was a basket case into one that is the envy of any Premier or leader across Australia. Of course, there is always more to be done. The Wagga Wagga electorate is growing; it is one of only a handful of electorates that were not affected in the most recent electoral redistribution. That is because the electorate is not suffering population loss; it is actually growing at the rate of 1.2 per cent per annum,

which equates to about 1,000 new residents a year.

Part of that success is due to the program offering payroll tax relief of \$5,000 for new workers. Wagga Wagga has one of the highest uptakes of new home owners grants. That means builders are building new homes, and as a consequence apprentices are being employed. There is a lot of good news for Wagga Wagga. This season is perhaps the best we have had in many, many years. In the time that I have been a member of Parliament I cannot recall a season that is so good and so promising. That will attract further investment because if people on the land are doing well, everyone does well. Whether it is through better cattle, sheep or grain prices, all those enterprises create wealth that then filters through the community. Some industries have signalled that they will increase their investment.

There is no doubt that this will present significant challenges for the Government. Riverina Oils and Bio Energy [ROBE] is a canola oil plant that has been operating for a couple of years, with an investment of about \$160 million from D.D. Saxena and his group. The plant has indicated that it wants to triple its output—the intake and output of canola oil. I understand that every drop of canola oil it produces is sold, such has been the success of this investment that has brought many jobs to the city. A lot of those jobs are specialised, so people with the necessary expertise have moved to the city to build and operate the plant. A triple-fold increase in the plant's output will pose significant challenges for local road and rail networks, and create the need for more expansion.

Renewed Metal Technologies [RMT] recycles lead batteries. Only yesterday it was reported in the *Daily Advertiser* that the company plans to double its input and the output of lead batteries in Wagga Wagga. It extracts all types of chemicals from recycled batteries as well as the lead product. It is a large company that is based in Canada but it has the opportunity to double its space in Wagga Wagga, which has been open for about five years. I know the Baird-Grant Government will do all it can to encourage it to invest in the city and provide important infrastructure. In that regard, we have applied for funding for Eunony Bridge through that great Minister in the other place, the Hon. Duncan Gay, who understands the need to upgrade bridges. The Minister knows that we must increase the mass weights of trucks to make them more efficient and, in order to do that, we must improve the bridges.

The work will be done under the Bridges for the Bush program. Infrastructure in our towns and cities is important, and the Minister understands that. I am so grateful he is helping us achieve that outcome and the proposed \$50 million upgrade. Teys Cargill, probably one of the largest abattoirs in the country that employs almost 1,000 people in Wagga Wagga, has indicated that it intends to upgrade its plant and increase productivity. Again, that will create infrastructure challenges, involving the moving of containers and road and rail transport. Southern Oil recently announced its intention to invest another \$120 million in the Bomen Industrial Estate. That is good news for any member of Parliament—not many could point to an investment of that magnitude.

Our region is the beneficiary of an enormous amount of investment by government and of public confidence. People have confidence in the region and in the fact that we are environmentally friendly. We grow the very best produce, including grain and beef cattle, and people are confident about investing in our city. I have outlined just some of the things that are happening there. Housing developments and shopping centres are being built. I truly believe that is the result of good policy and of confidence that our Government is engendering in business men and women all over the world, not just in our region. Indeed, Teys Cargill is an international company—Cargill, a large American company, partnered with Teys. RMT is an international company. Other multinational companies are also located in Wagga Wagga. They understand that being halfway between Melbourne and Sydney, and Adelaide and Brisbane, is a terrific location for a factory or a distribution network to access those major cities. The city has one of the lower unemployment rates in New South Wales—and with good reason, as I have tried to demonstrate today in spreading the good news about the investment that is occurring.

Good policy and good fiscal management makes all this possible. It is clear from the numbers that the Treasurer announced on budget day that the State is powering ahead. We are all enjoying the

benefit of that investment and good management, and there is more good news to come. There is no doubt that the future will present challenges for us all, but I am sure that under the leadership of Mike Baird and Troy Grant the Liberal-Nationals Government will continue to do what is best for the State. At the last election we put forward a program to lease the energy network and reinvest in infrastructure, which will ultimately add wealth and drive the State's economy further—to create jobs, train people, build houses and do all the things that we envisage will drive this State. Indeed, we will need more people to fill the jobs created by the investments I have mentioned.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) [3.46 p.m.]: I draw the attention of the House to the recent Baird Government's budget and what it means for the Swansea electorate, the Hunter and the Central Coast. For those who live outside Sydney, this Government is all about overpromising and under-delivering. Its budget has under-delivered on hospital upgrades, road infrastructure, new schools and service delivery. In fact, in my electorate the Government is closing services. During question time today the Minister for Finance, Services and Property spoke about the wonderful advantages we will derive from having Service NSW located at Warners Bay—it is already open.

A previous speaker said the service is lovely and the staff are nice; I could not agree more. Service NSW it is great and its staff are excellent. But closing the Roads and Maritime Services office in Belmont was a mistake. The Minister listed the requirements that are considered when making such decisions, including being located on main roads and transport access. Well the Minister has certainly never been to Warners Bay because it is one of the most inaccessible places in the region. I invite him to visit the area. We know that the 2015-16 New South Wales budget is built on the back of record stamp duty payments that are unsustainable. Let us be clear: This is certainly not a budget for the future.

Simply put, this Government is the highest-taxing State Government in the history of Australia. Those who need a leg up cannot rely on this Government for assistance. The devil is certainly in the detail of the budget papers. This budget is most unfair to those in our State who are doing it the toughest. This Government continues to gloat about a surplus in excess of \$2 billion, but it does not mention that it is taking the axe to vital services and important institutions. Services that families in Swansea use every day are being left underfunded, with their resources stretched to the limit. This budget cuts \$100 million per annum from the TAFE sector and \$252 million from early childhood and education, and slashes \$350 million from vocational education and training, and \$822 million from hospitals.

Mr Jai Rowell: That's a lie.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: Finished? In addition, \$88 million has been ripped from the social housing sector.

Mr Jai Rowell: It's a lie.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: Finished? This does not include the cuts that Premier Mike Baird's mate Prime Minister Tony Abbott has yet to announce to Health and Education, which will cost our State \$26 billion over the next 10 years. In addition, the Government has slugged the people of New South Wales with \$7.5 billion in taxes, including 421 fee increases that came into effect on 1 July 2015. Spending an extra \$50 here or there is okay for Government members. However, every dollar counts for people my electorate and to them \$50 is quite a bit of money. This Government has delivered five budgets and they have been underwhelming, to say the least. But nothing takes the cake like the 2015-16 budget, with its unprecedented infrastructure spending mistakes.

Everyone in this place knows that the Treasurer delivered zero dollars for new transport infrastructure projects for people in the Swansea electorate. It is a disgrace. In the Hunter, voters are witnessing the Liberal-Nationals at their best. The Liberal-Nationals are treating the people of the Hunter and the Central Coast as second-rate citizens. Most of their election promises have been put on hold and some are completely absent from the New South Wales 2015-16 budget. Those projects that have been

overpromised and under-delivered in the Hunter include \$20 million for Hunter Sports High School's redevelopment—project delayed—\$2.5 million for boating projects in Port Stephens, which is missing completely; a new Service NSW centre in Raymond Terrace and Nelson Bay, which has disappeared; \$3.8 million for Maitland ambulance station, which has been omitted; and \$10 million for a multipurpose health centre in Murrurundi. It is as clear as mud.

The New South Wales 2015-16 budget revealed that almost all the promises made to the Central Coast by the Liberals in the lead-up to the State election will not be funded this year. Premier Mike Baird and Treasurer Gladys Berejiklian have overpromised and under-delivered on spending for key infrastructure projects such as the Wyong Hospital. First, the Treasurer told us that the Central Coast was on the verge of something special. Then she funded only 10 per cent of the projects that were promised to the people of that growing region. During the election campaign Liberal members came to the Central Coast with their pockets full, promising this and that, but since the election and after the budget announcement we have discovered they have empty pockets. They came to the Central Coast promising the world and they delivered only 10 per cent. They put a lay-by down but we know they will not be back to pick it up.

The Wyong upgrade is crucial to the southern end of my electorate. The local community has been crying out for the promised improvements to be completed. We want them completed now, not in 2018 or 2019. There is no additional emergency department funding, no extra beds, no new ambulance station and no upgrades to operating theatres or inpatient services. Unfortunately, the budget papers also paint a very bleak picture for TAFE in New South Wales. I am concerned about what that means for the next generation of workers. In my electorate youth unemployment is more than 15 per cent, which is unacceptable. We cannot give people the skills they need to get local jobs. There has been a shocking decline in TAFE enrolments. This year enrolments are down by more than 43,000 since the introduction of Smart and Skilled. Approximately 80,000 fewer students are enrolled in TAFE than in 2012 and more than 2,600 full-time equivalent staff have been sacked since 2012-13. Sadly, this year 10,000 fewer apprentices have enrolled to study at TAFE.

Since the budget announcement, many people in my community have raised with me the possible closure of the Belmont campus and other campuses. I asked the Minister for Education a question about it but I could not get a clear response. I asked whether any courses would be cut from Belmont TAFE and I was advised that the Government would consult with stakeholders. I am not sure when I will get a response to my question. When I asked how many students were enrolled and how many staff were employed at Belmont TAFE, I was advised that this information is commercial in confidence. I refuse to believe there is no future for Belmont TAFE. Unfortunately, TAFE campuses have closed in New South Wales this year. I hope that Belmont will not go down the same path as Moss Vale and Dapto. I refuse to believe that young people living in Swansea and in surrounding electorates must travel to Newcastle or Sydney to get the skills they need to obtain a local job.

I am surprised that, despite the budget surplus, this Government appears to have forgotten about social services. It is one of the most important areas of service delivery that a State can provide for its citizens. While I welcome the small expansion of some social service provisions in the 2015-16 budget, I am worried that there appear to be significant shortcomings in some important areas. Advocates for the social services sector have highlighted areas where support has fallen well short, despite the Government returning a budget surplus. Housing affordability is one. A forecast increase in property values will only exacerbate a decline in housing affordability. Support services for domestic violence received fewer increases than expected. Domestic violence is prolific and it is important that this be addressed. There is ongoing uncertainty regarding disability advocacy funding. People need to be certain they can provide services for disabled people they live with and care for.

Of further concern is the decision by the Federal Government to reduce national partnership funding to New South Wales. Prime Minister Abbott has walked away from his responsibility to look after those who are doing it tough in this State. Premier Mike Baird has not spoken out against that decision,

which has already led to a cut in Aboriginal health funding. By 2017-18, expense growth will stall at 1.5 per cent, with \$2.8 billion slashed from health and education funding. As I mentioned, there was a small allocation thrown at domestic violence, but we need to get fair dinkum about that problem. I met recently with the local area commander, who advised me that 40 per cent of police work is related to domestic violence. There are not enough emergency shelters and not enough emergency beds. Women are staying at home in violent, unsafe domestic situations because they have nowhere else to go.

Mr Stephen Kamper: And children.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: The member for Rockdale is correct. Those women and children are vulnerable and need help. We must put that front and centre of everything we do. In addressing funding issues, we should remember that each week in this country two women die as a result of domestic violence. That is an appalling statistic. Although some domestic violence programs such as It stops Here: Safer Pathway and Staying Home Leaving Violence will expand, a small allocation was made to the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme and funding for domestic violence support has not grown in line with sector recommendations.

The spotlight has been well and truly shone on the issue of domestic violence in Australia by the increasing number of abhorrent crimes committed against women and children by their loved ones. Unfortunately, it appears that the Government will continue to sweep this issue under the carpet. Assigning ministerial responsibility to addressing domestic violence appears to be window dressing after the budget allocated a miserly \$148.5 million in the forward estimates to address this growing issue. That equates to \$37 million per year dedicated to the prevention of domestic violence—an issue that sees two women a week die at the hands of a loved one. I note that the chief executive officer of the Council of Social Services of New South Wales said:

This budget doesn't actually have anything of substance by way of growth, or anything that really addresses the overall impact of domestic or family violence ... \$148.5 million over four years is clearly insufficient to address one of the most serious social and justice issues facing us ...

To top things off, Women NSW, the agency responsible for developing policies to advance the status of women and combat domestic violence, was moved to the Ministry of Health, effective 1 July this year. Being a woman is not a health issue. Moving this agency to the Health department left me baffled. Women NSW deserves a central place in government policy-making. Women NSW has been shifted from department to department—yet another example of the lack of respect this Government shows to women. Why has the Baird Government lumped Women NSW into the same department as eHealth NSW, the Cancer Institute and the Mental Health Commission? The agency charged with developing policy to address domestic violence cannot be allowed to languish on the outskirts of government decision-making.

This budget reveals the Baird Government's apathy towards keeping the State's most vulnerable children safe—with nearly \$5 million and 120 full-time positions cut from specialist child-protection services and 36 jobs cut from social housing and homelessness services. When essential services funding is cut consequences follow. Yesterday I read that in 2013 the New South Wales Ombudsman had investigated a couple and found that their authorisation to be foster carers should be revoked. Sadly, children are still in the care of that couple. That type of thing happens when there is a shortfall in funding for essential services. I was staggered that, in the midst of a royal commission being held into child sexual abuse, the Government saw fit to cut jobs in child protection in the 2015-16 budget.

More children are being reported to child protection services. The Office of the Children's Guardian is under-resourced and over-subscribed; it is struggling to cope with more applications. That the Government would cut a significant chunk of funding from the very agency tasked with protecting our kids from society's most serious offenders says a lot about its priorities. We are also in the middle of a social housing crisis. What is the Government's response? The Baird Government will spend just 4.7 per cent of its massive \$7.29 billion stamp duty windfall on social housing. The median house price in Sydney is now

\$914,056, with the overheating property market responsible for record stamp duty gains.

Skyrocketing house prices are putting a first home out of reach for many people in this State. With almost 60,000 families waiting for social housing, it is extraordinary that this Government is only willing to allocate less than 5 per cent of astronomical stamp duty revenue to social housing. Where are the people who are trying to survive on the lowest incomes in the State supposed to live? In this apparent era of unprecedented spending, social infrastructure has been forgotten. We know where the Government's priorities lie when we see the Premier, the Treasurer and other Ministers wearing their high-vis gear and hard hats in Sydney—never in Swansea—slapping each other on the back. Indeed, they are not to help the children, the homeless or those most in need in our community—people whom I see daily in my office. This is yet another underwhelming budget.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) [4.05 p.m.]: I take umbrage at what the member for Swansea has just said about this Government not supporting women or funding the prevention of domestic violence. The proof is in the pudding. In 2011 this Government appointed the first female Speaker in the history of this Parliament. We have appointed the first female Treasurer and the first female Attorney General in the history of this Parliament. We have also appointed the first Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and the first Minister for Mental Health in the history of this Parliament and both those portfolios are held by a woman. The rhetoric that this Government does not support females and does nothing about domestic violence is embarrassing. The member for Swansea is a new member so she may have forgotten the 16 years of neglect under Labor, but to say that the Government has done nothing is farcical and makes me quite cranky.

I turn now to talk about my wonderful electorate. I am extremely proud to be the member for Camden. I take this opportunity to acknowledge some great former members for Camden—former Premier John Fahey, Liz Kernohan, Camden's favourite daughter, and my predecessor, Labor's Geoff Corrigan, who was a very good member. It is a privilege to follow in their footsteps. When I was first elected I listened to other members spruiking in their inaugural speeches about how they had the biggest this or the best that in their electorates. In my first speech I said that I would not tell anybody about how wonderful Camden was until the Government upgraded Camden Valley Way. I would then stand on my soapbox. I am happy to say that I will need that soapbox very shortly because \$280 million and four years later the goat track that was Camden Valley Way—because of the policies of the Labor Government—now has two lanes in either direction from Camden to Liverpool.

I am not making light of this, but many lives have been lost on the Camden Valley Way. The improvements to Camden Valley Way will be finished by the end of the year, and the money to finalise that work was allocated in this budget. I thank then Treasurer and now Premier Mike Baird for backing Camden and ensuring that this happened. The current Treasurer, Ms Gladys Berejikian, is also doing an outstanding job. Indeed, her economic management has enabled projects such as this to be completed. I thank the Treasurer and the Government for their support of my electorate. During the term of the former Labor Government, nothing was allocated to fund upgrading of Narellan Road. Narellan Road was opened in 2007 as an election stunt but never met demand.

I thank the long-suffering people of Camden and Macarthur for their patience. Roads such as Camden Valley Way and Narellan Road will be completed at a cost of \$114 million, which also will benefit the electorates of Wollondilly and Campbelltown. The Federal member for Macarthur, Russell Matheson, has been instrumental in securing State-Federal funding. With joint funding, roads such as Narellan Road can be upgraded. However, Narellan Road is not yet fixed. It is still causing issues for my constituents, but the New South Wales Government is getting on with the job of fixing it. The Government has allocated funds in this year's budget to ensure that Narellan Road will be completed from Narellan through to Campbelltown in the not-too-distant future. I would like to recall to the Chamber the member for Swansea, if she is available.

Mr Mark Coure: Please don't.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON: I would do so only because of all the negativity. I am sure all members know the spiel about the South West Rail Link. It was announced 10 times throughout the terms of four Labor premiers who claimed that the Labor Government was providing infrastructure before people—blah, blah, blah. The point is that not one inch of rail line was laid, but under our former Minister for Transport, who is now our wonderful Treasurer, that \$2.1 billion project has come in at \$300 million under budget and has been completed 12 months ahead of schedule. It was opened on 8 February. Not only did the Government deliver the project but, more importantly, 35,000 trips were undertaken in the first month. Can members believe that?

Thirty-five thousand people used that rail service during February and patronage continues to increase. That is what the New South Wales Government is all about. The New South Wales Government understands that it is the role of government to assist families to travel expeditiously to and from work so that they have more time to spend together. I am very proud that prior to the 2011 election the Government committed \$40 million to the Campbelltown Hospital; but, after the election, the Government worked out that that funding was insufficient, so it added \$100 million. With a total allocation of \$141 million, the Government built stage one. I am very proud to say that the Minister for Health has been a tremendous friend of Camden and the Macarthur region.

I am pleased that in the next few weeks the Minister will inspect stage one of the hospital, which has been completed at a cost of \$140 million. But the Government's budget strategy does not stop there. New South Wales has the fastest-growing population in the country. During the week before the recent State election, the Government said, "Look, if we are elected, what are we going to do? We are going to lease 49 per cent of the electricity poles and wires. If we are elected, when we lease the poles and wires, what are we going to do? We are going to put \$300 million into stage two." The lease was opposed by Labor members, which is quite shameful. As members will acknowledge, I have been nothing but positive during my speech.

Mr Stephen Kamper: Just keep patting yourself on the back.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON: I have no problems with the member for Campbelltown and the member for Macquarie Fields, but they voted against the lease, which means they voted against the allocation of \$300 million to build stage two of the Campbelltown Hospital. I cannot fathom their logic but, despite opposition, the Government will proceed. I look forward to continued financial support from the Minister for Health and her visit to my electorate. I also look forward to that \$300 million being allocated to the completion of stage two of the hospital project. What do people need? They need roads and transport. The member for Wollondilly, the Federal member for Macarthur, Russell Matheson, and I have been working in conjunction to obtain funding, which means that State and Federal parliamentary representatives are working together. What a novel idea!

As a result of our collaboration, \$1.6 billion has been committed to upgrading The Northern Road. Since the announcement of the Badgerys Creek airport, the Federal Government has decided to construct the requisite infrastructure before people move into the area. Funding to the tune of \$1.6 billion for The Northern Road and \$509 million for Bringelly Road will be forthcoming because the Federal Government is involved. I thank the Federal Government for its financial support. Almost \$2 billion will be provided to upgrade Elizabeth Drive. What a cracker! The Minister for Corrections, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Veterans Affairs will be able to tell me the total funding for roads in my electorate—\$4 billion?

Mr David Elliott: More than that.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON: I am very proud that both the Federal and State governments have recognised the need to support my electorate and have put their money where their mouth is. I welcome the member for Campbelltown to the Chamber.

Mr Stephen Kamper: Have a shot at him while he is here.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON: No. I am not having a shot at him at all. The member for Campbelltown will be with me at the opening of the \$300 million stage two extension.

Mr David Elliott: If he is invited.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON: He will be invited. As part of the budget allocations for my electorate, the Narellan fire station will receive almost \$500,000 for a brand-new 9,500 litre new tanker. How good is that? When an area experiences fast population growth, it means that there will be an influx of young families. I am very proud to say that I accompanied the Minister for Education on a visit to Narellan Public School. The Government purchased a nearby private school that went belly up, and I thank the Minister for Education, Mr Piccoli, for his foresight. It was really exciting when he visited my electorate on budget day this year to announce that funding would be allocated to annex a former private school and build a school for children with special needs. One hundred students in my electorate will benefit from that decision, and I thank the Minister for his ongoing support.

I put a shout out to Narellan Public School, which does an outstanding job of looking after the current site. Well done to all those involved in the Narellan Public School for their efforts. I look forward to a special school being built in the area. Next year the brand-new Spring Farm Public School will be opened. It will cater for approximately 640 students. The funding provided by the New South Wales Government for projects in my electorate really is fantastic. This Government understands and gets it that when people are moving to the fastest growing electorate in the country, infrastructure must be provided to cater for increased demand. The New South Wales Government has responded to that demand by building roads and schools and by upgrading hospitals. Application has been made for an additional fire station at Oran Park, which is the fastest-growing community in my electorate. The whole idea is that this Government provides support.

Mr Mark Coure: Did Labor do anything over 16 years?

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON: They planned, planned and planned. It is wonderful to be part of a government that is bringing that planning to fruition. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the outstanding public and private schools in my electorate. It should be understood that both sectors do a tremendous job in my electorate and I am very proud of both sectors. I believe that our hardworking principals and teachers do not receive enough credit and acknowledgement, so I recognise in this House the outstanding job being done by principals and their staff at schools in my electorate.

Furthermore, I am extremely proud to have them as part of my electorate: Jan Rogers from Austral Public School, Sharyl Scott from Bringelly Public School, Don O'Connor from Broughton Anglican College, Jason Hawker from Camden Public School, Glen Patterson from Camden South Public School, Dawn Dallas from Cobbity Public School, Keith Wray from Currans Hill Public School, Wayne Mason who is the principal of Elderslie Public School, Andy Best who is the principal of Harrington Park Public School, Tim Vane-Tempest from Holy Family Primary School, Christine Easter from Leppington Public School and Karen Ellis from Luddenham Public School.

Others include: David Nockles, Macarthur Anglican School; Tony Fitzgerald, Mater Dei School; Paul Mallia, Mawarra Public School; Nathan Gray, Mount Annan Christian College; Annette O'Neill, Mount Annan Public School, Dale Sessions, Narellan Public School; David Byrne, Narellan Vale Public School; Naomi Wilkins, Oran Park Anglican College; Donna Shevlin, Oran Park Public School, which was built in the last term of government and was opened two years ago and which is already exceeding all expectations; Sandy Jules, Rossmore Public School; Kevin Devine, St Clare's Catholic Primary School; Toni-Marie Sillis, St Pauls Catholic Parish Primary School; John Milgate, St Justins Catholic Primary School; and Ross Whelan, Thomas Hassall Anglican College.

The high school principals and staff in my electorate include: Don O'Connor, Broughton Anglican College, which is a K-12; Roger Berry, Camden High School; Meredith Fawcett, Elderslie High School; Kylie Hedger, Elizabeth Macarthur High School; David Nockles, Macarthur Anglican School, which is K-12; John Lo Cascio, Magdalene Catholic High School; Tony Fitzgerald, Mater Dei Catholic School, which is K-12; Nathan Gray, Mount Annan Christian College, which is K-12; Brad Mitchell, who has been at Mount Annan High School for only a few weeks and who is doing an outstanding job; Naomi Wilkins, Oran Park Anglican College, which is K-12; Michael Hanratty, St Benedict's College; Damien Millar, the great St Gregory's College; Sue Lennox, St Patrick's College; and Ross Whelan, Thomas Hassall Anglican College, which is K-12. I cannot stress enough the wonderful work done by the principals and staff of those schools, and I am extremely proud that they are in my electorate.

It would be remiss of me not to mention our police. The budget shows record police numbers. I have limited time, but I will mention Ward Hanson, commander of our local area command, who does a fantastic job. Camden Local Area Command, which borders Campbelltown and Liverpool stretches south to Bowral or thereabouts, punches far above its weight given its manpower. The member for Wollondilly will agree that the police do an outstanding job and we are very proud of their efforts. The member for Swansea referred to domestic violence, something that members on both sides of the House understand and we all support zero tolerance. I single out constables Lyndall Blackmore and Sharon Pateman, who are two outstanding officers who do a wonderful job within the local area command and deal with domestic violence.

In December last year an inaugural breakfast was held for the White Ribbon 16 Days campaign, which is also being held this year. I am sure it will also be a sell-out event with the support from the business community. The Deputy Premier and Minister for Justice and Police, who is an integral part of our government, told me today that he will attend the event this year and I thank him for doing so. He is reorganising appointments in his diary so that he can attend on 3 December. Also present will be members representing the electorates of Campbelltown, Wollondilly and Holsworthy. The Macarthur region is united in saying no to domestic violence. I congratulate Sharon and Lyndall on their fantastic effort in relation to domestic violence. Local policeman Herman Pereyra also does a fantastic job liaising with the community. I cannot speak highly enough of him and I apologise that I have not mentioned him in the past four years. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

Some of the groups in my electorate that do a wonderful job—

Mr Andrew Gee: The CWA?

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON: The Country Women's Association [CWA] does an outstanding job in my electorate. Around show time the women from the CWS are busy making scones. I draw the attention of the House to a number of clubs in my electorate. I know that all members will agree that no level of government—local, State or Federal—could afford to pay our volunteers for their outstanding work. One of two things would happen if we had to pay them: either the job would not get done or it would not get done to the degree it is now. I thank all volunteers for their efforts. In my electorate we have the Lioness Club of Camden, which was established more than 30 years ago; Lions Club, Macarthur; Lions Club, Narellan; and Lions Club, Camden.

I thank all of their volunteers for their invaluable efforts. The money they raise and what they add to the fabric of our communities is wonderful. I am an honorary member of Camden Rotary Club, which has a special place in my heart because it was my father's club. I recently attended a function at Narellan Rotary Club at which I saw the members for Campbelltown, Macarthur and Holsworthy and which raised more than \$1 million. Rotary Sunrise, which unlike other clubs has breakfast meetings, is in my electorate. Because the member for Wollondilly is in the Chamber I thank members of Picton North, Picton South, Macarthur Rise and Campbelltown Rotary clubs.

Ms Jodi McKay: What about Burwood Rotary Club?

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON: That is enough; I do not want any more interruptions.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Melanie Gibbons): Order! The time for debate has expired. Does the member for Camden wish to conclude his contribution?

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON: No, I will not finish. I am happy to be interrupted; otherwise I will continue to speak.

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

Pursuant to sessional order discussion on petition signed by 10,000 or more persons proceeded with.

BALLINA KOALA COLONY

Discussion on Petition Signed by 10,000 or More Persons

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) [4.30 p.m.]: I speak in support of the more than 17,000 people across New South Wales who have signed the petition about the protection of koalas on the Pacific Highway on the beautiful North Coast. As members may be aware, the local population of koalas is under imminent threat from stage 10 of the Pacific Highway upgrade from Woolgoolga to Ballina. As the New South Wales shadow Minister for Roads, I support the building of much-needed transport infrastructure in New South Wales. Labor is the party of nation builders—from the Harbour Bridge to the Snowy River Scheme to Darling Harbour. We see a positive role for governments in building and maintaining roads. However, the portfolio of Roads, of which I am the shadow Minister, does not exist in a vacuum. The best thing the Government can do for the people of New South Wales is consider how decisions on roads, for example, impact on other parts of the community, such as the environment.

The position in which we find ourselves is the epitome of a balancing act. The Pacific Highway is a vital piece of road infrastructure for New South Wales. It has also been notoriously dangerous, with certain stretches of it being some of the most dangerous in New South Wales. So we need to complete the upgrades, especially on the North Coast, which is experiencing unprecedented population growth. But at the same time, Ballina, where this upgrade is occurring, has a nationally significant population of koalas. Across New South Wales koalas are listed as vulnerable to extinction and are on the Federal threatened species list. As members may be aware, Ballina's koala population will be under threat if the planned route of the road upgrade goes ahead. Luckily, however, this portion of the road can be re-routed—that is an important point—and the positive impact of the project on the community of the North Coast can be realised.

In these circumstances the solution is clear: the road should be re-routed. And 17,000 people across New South Wales agree. The situation in which we find ourselves on the North Coast is not unique. At different times many projects have been beset with competing priorities between the infrastructure needs of the community on the one hand and environmental concerns on the other. Solutions have been found in the past. This is why the New South Wales Government employs or contracts the best engineers and designers—to fix problems like this. And the evidence is in: the project can deliver the infrastructure benefits and protect the environment at the same time. With such an easy fix it is baffling to me as the shadow Minister for Roads that this is still an issue. As we know, there are wicked problems in government, especially the State Government's focus on service delivery.

Things like homelessness, the ice epidemic, disability services and our ageing population—these are problems with no easy solution and our experts grapple with them. So when there is an issue like this,

which is an easy fix, it beggars belief that it is not addressed. Labor has recognised this problem for quite some time, and we have joined with the North Coast community in urging the New South Wales Government to look at this again and to consider alternate routes. But at the least, the very least, the Government needs to be up-front with the North Coast community and transparent about the reasons for its actions and the steps that will be taken to protect Ballina's koala population. As we know, the Government is not a fan of transparency. Whether it is information about WestConnex, speed camera revenue or the ice epidemic, the Government loves a good cover-up.

On behalf of these petitioners, I again ask the Government to provide this information to the North Coast community. I know the Government is still sad about losing the seat of Ballina—I congratulate the new member for Ballina—but the people still deserve information about their community. I do not have to tell members about the iconic place that koalas hold in the Australian environment. Many tourists come to Australia with hopes of seeing koalas in the wild. If the New South Wales Government gets its way, we will have to tell them to steer clear of the New South Wales North Coast. Of course, it is not as though that area depends on tourism!

The simple truth is that we cannot afford to deliberately and with no good reason put this koala population at risk. There are viable alternatives. The facts on the koala population on the North Coast are sobering. In the past 20 years koala numbers on the coast have declined by a third. These measures by the Federal environment Minister—which are about offsetting and mitigating to protect Ballina's koala population—are sadly unlikely to save Ballina's koalas. In the past seven months, from the stage 10 koala study area the Friends of Koala have recorded six road-killed koalas, two koalas killed by dogs and/or foxes and seven koalas affected by chlamydia, of which three had to be euthanised. [*Time expired.*]

Mr ANDREW GEE (Orange—Parliamentary Secretary) [4.35 p.m.]: I thank the member for Strathfield-Newcastle for bringing this matter to the attention of the House. The Government does not support the petition's call for an alternative route for the upgrade of the Pacific Highway. Duplicating the Pacific Highway to a four-lane divided road from Hexham to the Queensland border could not have come soon enough. This is one of the biggest infrastructure projects in the Southern Hemisphere. The New South Wales and Federal governments have invested almost \$8 billion into duplicating the highway. Under Labor, building this highway would have taken another decade. Most importantly, this project will save lives. Upgrading this highway is important to communities up and down the North Coast because they know all too well the cost to their communities of the appalling road tolls in the area.

On average, 28 people lose their lives on the Pacific Highway each year. A new route would only result in the upgrade being delayed for at least two years. But the communities of the North Coast cannot wait any longer. The Australian and New South Wales governments' approval for the 155 kilometre Woolgoolga to Ballina upgrade has a number of strict conditions relating to the Ballina koala population. We value our natural environment and are committed to protecting koala habitats across New South Wales. It is a priority for us while we are upgrading the highway to a four-lane divided configuration. To that end, we are investing millions of dollars to protect flora and fauna along this route, and we are implementing specific measures to protect koalas.

Those measures include fully fencing nearly 16 kilometres of both sides of the new highway, which will be connected to fauna crossing structures; increasing the number of fauna crossings suitable for koalas by more than 400 per cent, with crossings increasing from six to approximately 25 structures; construction of a land bridge at least 30 metres wide north of the Richmond River crossing, south of Bagotville; and planting some 130 hectares of koala food trees near the new highway corridor, where at least 50 per cent will be planted prior to construction and the remainder after construction.

The New South Wales Government has also established the Koala Expert Advisory Committee, chaired by the New South Wales Chief Scientist and Engineer, Professor Mary O'Kane, to review the koala work already completed. The panel has been established to provide guidance on matters relating to the environmental conditions set down by the Federal Minister for the Environment, Greg Hunt. The panel

of experts, independent of the project team, first met in February and will review all environmental information and make recommendations on measures to protect koalas as part of the planned 16 kilometre upgrade between Broadwater and Coolgardie.

As part of this process, scientific consultants EcoSure and BioLink, including Dr Steve Phillips, will collect data on the local koala population. Experienced ecologist Dr Rod Kavanagh of Niche Environment and Heritage will then use the data collected to complete and analyse the population viability analysis. Dr Kavanagh will report the findings to the expert advisory panel, with the outcomes expected to be announced mid this year. The results of the modelling, together with proposed mitigation measures for the new highway, will be incorporated into the Ballina koala management plan, which will be given to the Federal Minister for the Environment for his consideration in the second half of this year.

The Roads and Maritime Services investigated and assessed many routes for the new highway over a period of 10 years before obtaining approval for the route in section 10. Between Broadwater and Wardell, some six route options were shortlisted and assessed and were publicly displayed from May to July 2005, with submissions invited from the community. The approved route is located in mostly cleared land to the east of the Blackwall Range and was found to provide the best balance when considering all factors. Potential routes further to the east would have had significant impacts on the Jali lands, which hold significant cultural and environmental significance to the Bundjalung people west of the Richmond River, and on cane farming land and floodplains.

The route through the floodplain of the Richmond River would also require stabilisation of the deep underlying soft soils as it would be built across a floodplain. Many people within the local community and the local Ballina Shire Council are very supportive of the preferred route for the Woolgoolga to Ballina project, particularly section 10 of the route between Broadwater and Coolgardie. When complete, the project will reduce the overall length from 180 kilometres to 167 kilometres, saving about 13 kilometres in travel distance. It will allow for a higher posted speed limit of up to 110 kilometres per hour and reduce travel time from 130 minutes to about 105 minutes, saving 25 minutes.

The project will also reduce crash rates by an expected 27 per cent due to divided carriageways and it will improve travel reliability through better flood immunity, fewer incidents and more readily available alternative routes. The Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight expects to submit the population viability analysis and a koala management plan to the Federal Minister for the Environment for his consideration later this year. Subject to the Federal Minister's satisfaction that the information meets his requirements and the impacts to the koala population are acceptable— [*Time expired.*]

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) [4.40 p.m.]: I contribute to the discussion on the petition relating to the plight of the koala population south of Ballina in my electorate. In July this year I had the pleasure of visiting the Meerschaum Vale and Bagotville area with local residents and the tireless Lorraine Vass from Friends of the Koala, who is in the gallery and has campaigned fearlessly on this issue for several decades, to view firsthand the route of the proposed Pacific Highway upgrade between Ballina and Broadwater. For the information of the member for Orange, that is section 10 of the upgrade to which he referred. The area is a mosaic of beautiful forests, rural cottages and sugarcane farms. When I was there the trees were almost dripping with koalas and their babies. I saw about 25 koalas in one hour. It is an incredibly beautiful rural area and a hotspot for our national icons. However, the sad reality is that the colony is set to be bisected by the planned Pacific Highway upgrade.

Despite repeated evidence from top ecologists that upgrading the Pacific Highway through that nationally important koala population is liable to lead to its extinction, the Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] has refused to select an alternative route. It is the view of everyone in the conservation movement that the damage to the koala population cannot be offset or mitigated. The koala population has been described as a linchpin colony and a key source population for breeding and dispersal that is vital to the survival of koalas in the Lismore area to the west and the coastal lowland areas of Byron shire. Analysis by renowned koala ecologist Dr Stephen Phillips indicates a strong probability that the population may

become extinct in the next 20 years if the highway upgrade proceeds.

In August 2014 the Federal environment Minister announced additional environmental conditions before section 10 could be built. They included a requirement to prepare a koala plan that contained peer-reviewed population modelling for the Ballina koalas. That has not been released. Koalas are an international icon of Australia's unique wildlife but in New South Wales their situation is dire and numbers are plummeting. The New South Wales Government has a responsibility to protect this nationally significant koala population. We all want the Pacific Highway to be made safer. I contest the assertion that an alternative route will take two years and add delay. I think that is a wedge issue being put forward to deliberately upset and anger the residents of Wardell. Koalas and multi-lane highways do not mix. The RMS must identify an alternative route. Community advocacy has always been a key driver of environmentally sound decisions in this country. I congratulate all local koala campaigners who have worked so hard to preserve this important habitat.

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence—Parliamentary Secretary) [4.43 p.m.]: The Government does not support the petition's call for an alternative route to the upgrade of the Pacific Highway. I was a resident of Maclean in 1989 when the Cowper bus crash took place on the Pacific Highway resulting in 21 deaths and 22 injuries. Two months later the Kempsey bus crash on the Pacific Highway resulted in 35 deaths and 41 injuries. That is why it is urgent to complete the divided highway between Sydney and Brisbane. I saw firsthand the impact of those accidents on those communities. Cowper is only about 20 kilometres away from where I live. Many of the State Emergency Service personnel and other volunteers who attended the crash site are friends of mine and I saw the impact it had on them.

As the member for Orange said, the fact is that on average 28 people lose their lives on the Pacific Highway each year. That is why we are determined to upgrade the highway as quickly as we can and open it to traffic by 2020. The New South Wales Government takes its obligations to protect the environment seriously and is working with the community to get the best outcome for the koalas and the project. The RMS Pacific Highway general manager Bob Higgins has advised me that up to 5 per cent of the construction costs are spent on ameliorating environmental impacts.

Ms Tamara Smith: As they should be.

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS: That is a considerable amount of money, so we do take our job seriously. Five per cent of \$4.5 billion is \$225 million for the stretch of highway between Coffs Harbour and Ballina. That money will go towards funding some of the measures that the member for Orange outlined, including fully fencing 16 kilometres on both sides of the new highway, increasing the number and type of fauna crossings suitable for koalas and planting around 130 hectares of koala food trees on land owned by the Roads and Maritime Services near the new highway corridor. At least 50 per cent of those trees will be planted prior to construction and the remainder will be planted after construction has been completed. The money will also fund the development of an overarching koala management plan to educate and guide workers on the importance of appropriately managing koala incidents during the pre-construction, major work and post opening phases. We have also established an expert committee, chaired by New South Wales Chief Scientist and Engineer Professor Mary O'Kane, to provide oversight of the work being undertaken by the Roads and Maritime Services. [*Time expired.*]

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) [4.46 p.m.], by leave: I congratulate the more than 17,000 signatories to the petition to protect Ballina's koalas from the environmental vandalism of this Government. I live a long way from Ballina but because I represent an area that has been let down by this Government's bungling, waste and environmental vandalism the environmental activists of the North Coast and Tweed regions have my absolute support. The proposal to build a highway upgrade through the habitat of endangered koalas in the Blackwall Range is an affront to common sense. The proposed upgrade not only deviates from the established route of the Pacific Highway but also bisects what local conservation experts have described as the habitat of a regionally significant koala population.

In a September 2011 inquiry the Senate Environment and Communications References Committee, led by Senator Doug Cameron—there is no greater friend of the koala in Federal Parliament than Doug Cameron—found that the primary cause of koala population decline is habitat degradation. Indeed, the committee found that the long-term viability of the koala is under threat due to habitat degradation. The koala is an Australian icon that may one day go the way of the Tasmanian tiger for no other reason than our consistent unwillingness to make sound decisions with the welfare of our native flora and fauna in mind. The Pacific Highway is an important road which runs the length of the New South Wales coast. The sections between Coffs Harbour and the Tweed River are notorious blackspots and I agree those roads must be upgraded.

But when expert testimony provided to Senate inquiries about the decline of the koala population states unequivocally that "the major reason for the decline in coastal populations is habitat loss and fragmentation" we must pause and consider which route this highway upgrade will take and we must do everything we can to minimise its impact on the koala population. Therefore, the major threat to these koalas is the intransigence of the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight and his steadfast refusal to reconsider the route his highway upgrade will take to Ballina. I congratulate the signatories to this petition as they are on the right side of this argument. I implore the Baird Government to reconsider its reckless decision to destroy the habitat of these endangered koalas. I acknowledge the hard work of the Friends of the Koala who have been pushing this issue and I thank them for taking the time to advocate for this local koala population. I assure them that Labor is on their side.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) [4.49 p.m.], by leave: I add my voice to the 17,000-plus residents who have signed the petition to save Ballina's koalas. The battle faced by the community in Ballina is one that is all too familiar to me. In Port Stephens, the area I represent in this place, we continually battle irresponsible development causing loss of significant habitat. If koalas are not killed on the roads whilst they are trying to find new habitat, the stress caused by the loss of the habitat leaves them vulnerable to disease, which is the biggest cause of death. Whilst the Port Stephens koala population is officially classified as "vulnerable and rare", there is a push locally to have the population listed as "endangered" due to the ever-increasing encroachment on their habitat. Anecdotal evidence suggests that there has been a massive decline in the koala population in the last 10 years on the Tilligerry Peninsula. The decline in population is reflected in the reduced numbers of koalas being taken into care.

I understand that the proposed development is to include measures to safeguard the koala population, as we have heard today. I believe the expression is "to manage the impact". Sadly, it has been our recent experience in Port Stephens that those management measures are no guarantee of safety. We have recently seen the opening of an upgrade of the main arterial road on the Tomaree Peninsula. Koala fencing has been erected and grates have been placed in front of properties, and yet I was saddened to read this post recently on the Facebook page of a Hunter Koala Preservation member:

We lost a big beautiful boy this morning. He has been part of a collaring program on the new stretch of Nelson Bay Road. Last week, I joined the guys from NICHE, they removed the collar and microchipped him. He was released in the next tree. At 5.45 this morning he was crossing the road in the early peak hour and was hit. The poor motorist was very upset and made all effort to contact me. He had a towel over him, trying to give what little comfort he could. When I got him home, I gave him every chance, relieved his pain and his injuries were just too severe. He started fitting and then passed.

I fear too many more of these stories will be shared on Facebook if the planned upgrade occurs on the route currently proposed. Yes, an upgrade of the Pacific Highway is required, but a rethink of the route is critical. I urge the Government to reconsider its route. I congratulate the many people who have signed this petition and fought for this issue. They have raised their voices for those who cannot speak for themselves—both the fauna that is placed at risk by the planned route and future generations, who I hope

one day will be able to see koalas in the wild and not just in a picture book.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) [4.52 p.m.], by leave: I also support this petition to protect the koala population in the Blackwall Range area because since being elected to this place the largest number of communications I have received from the people of Newtown have been on this petition and the importance of protecting koala habitat. That shows something about the good people of Newtown, that is, their interest in this State extends beyond what is happening in their own backyard.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

Ms JENNY LEONG: We have heard the concerns people have raised. My Greens colleague and member for Ballina is acutely aware of these issues as she knows the risks to the koala habitat. There is another connection linking the good people of Newtown to this issue, and that is that they understand the huge impact of building roads without understanding the habitat, the community and the environment. Members may not realise that there is a connection between the threat from Roads and Maritime Services projects to the wildlife habitat in the area—such as the golden and green bell tree frog, which is under threat as an endangered species due to WestConnex. I hear members opposite raising concerns about the need for the Pacific Highway upgrade and the risks this brings. I say to those members we have a \$15.4 billion Roads budget and they are welcome to use that to assist with regional roads and upgrades of roads in their areas.

If the deviation to save the koala habitat is going to cost more money, we can have roads and also save the koala habitat. Across the State communities are gathering to say they do not want the building of roads to destroy habitat but they do want to make sure that there is safe transport and safe ways for communities to travel. They know we have money in the Roads budget to deliver the needed upgrades in a way that ensures the protection of the koala habitat. It would be sad if 17,000-plus people stand together and we ignore them. Some of those campaigners are in the gallery today. I have stood with the Friends of the Koalas in the gallery, including one man who was wearing a koala suit when I stood with him. We as communities stand up for the protection of our endangered wildlife species throughout New South Wales. We call on the Government to do the same.

Discussion concluded.

Pursuant to sessional order community recognition statements proceeded with.

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION STATEMENTS

SOUTH WEST SYDNEY ACADEMY OF SPORT

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) [4.55 p.m.]: I congratulate the young athletes of the South West Sydney Academy of Sport [SWSAS] on their recent success at the Clubs NSW Academy Games. The SWSAS historically has had strong contenders in this competition, which is organised by the Regional Academies of Sport, and 2015 was no exception. This year SWSAS was represented in the Australian Football League, netball, golf, triathlon and hockey events. Notable successes included: the Australian Football League [AFL] under-14s team, who won the tournament undefeated; the netball division 1 team also winning undefeated; the AFL under-16s team and netball division 2 team, both achieving second place; one golf team achieving third place; and the boys and girls hockey teams achieving third place and fourth place respectively.

This year marked the first ever triathlon competitors from SWSAS in this competition. They had great success, as the majority of the seven SWSAS competitors placed in the top 10 for their age group. These results are inspiring, with all athletes in the netball teams playing against competitors a year older.

Golfer Blake Borton placed in the top 10 competitors overall, and Jackson Gray won both the aquathlon and triathlon events for his age group. I encourage the athletes of the SWSAS to continue their hard work, and I look forward to meeting our superheroes of tomorrow.

ST MARYS VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA OUTPOST

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) [4.56 p.m.]: On Vietnam Veterans Day, Tuesday 18 August, I was privileged to be a guest at the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia St Marys Outpost Commemoration Service at the St Marys RSL. It was fantastic to see so many members of our community take part in this service, including a delegation of students from local schools such as the fantastic Colyton High Trade School. The ceremony, which was held at the beautiful Cenotaph, entailed a "Table Service for the Missing", representing each branch of the services. It was a pleasure to lay a wreath during this very moving ceremony. I give special thanks to the guest speaker, Lieutenant Commander Stafford Lowe, for delivering a moving speech and also to the Sunset Station Singers and the Lancers Band for providing us with entertainment on the night. I also thank Tony Mullavey, President of the St Marys Vietnam Veterans Outpost, for inviting me and to everyone who participated in this very moving service.

ELIZABETH ISLAND CLEAN-UP

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) [4.57 p.m.]: I congratulate the amazing collaborative effort of many concerned community members in the electorate of Swansea, Marine Rescue Lake Macquarie, the Combined Hunter Underwater Group and Lake Macquarie City Council who all came together recently to clean up the beautiful Elizabeth Island, which had unfortunately become an unofficial rubbish tip. Following the incredible advocacy of father and daughter duo Rod and Gabby Attenborough, who brought the state of the island to the attention of authorities, the community quickly pulled together for a day of action to get the island back on track.

A day of community action saw passionate lake users clean up not only Elizabeth Island but Pelican and Spectacle Islands too. Over 20 participants collected 55 bags of rubbish plus canopy frames, tyres and boat seats. You name it and the volunteers picked it up. In total, 420 kilogram of general waste, including 80 kilograms of metal, was collected. I am proud to say that I was able to lend a hand with the clean-up and once again congratulate the groups and community members involved. I got a jet ski ride back to shore.

GAP BLUFF

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse—Attorney General) [4.58 p.m.]: Last night I attended a local community meeting in my electorate hosted by the Watsons Bay Residents Association about a National Parks and Wildlife Service proposal for Gap Bluff. I thank President Roger Bayliss and Louise McElvogue for organising the meeting. Over 100 residents attended. The Gap Bluff proposal is for six buildings owned by the National Parks and Wildlife Service to be fitted out by Gap Bluff Hospitality for use as function centres, short-term accommodation and a restaurant. The residents and I share strong concerns that this proposal substantially increases the intensity of use for Gap Bluff, Camp Cove Beach and Green Point Reserve, bringing with it more traffic, noise and activity in my local community.

Watsons Bay is a small peninsula of precious and fragile natural beauty and with a tight-knit community. This proposal, especially the restaurant plan for Constable's Cottage at Cliff Street near Camp Cove Beach, would impact seriously and negatively on the amenity of local residents and alter what has historically marked out this special area in the Vaucluse electorate. It is essential that, going forward, the National Parks and Wildlife Service works closely with the local community to ensure that any next steps regarding the proposal properly respect and consider the input and views of the Watsons Bay community.

EASTLAKES PUBLIC SCHOOL SENSORY GARDEN

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) [4.59 p.m.]: I was delighted to attend the launch of a new sensory garden at my old school, Eastlakes Public School. The garden is a terrific initiative undertaken and to be maintained jointly by the Windgap Foundation and Eastlakes Public School. It is a beautiful new addition to the playground decorated with creative items made by the students and providing a safe, natural space for students to gather and learn. The garden is carefully and lovingly designed to stimulate the senses and help with sensory development. It provides not only much-needed infrastructure for children with a sensory delay but also an important opportunity to open dialogue with all students about disability and people with different needs. I congratulate Eastlakes Public School and the Windgap Foundation on this great initiative.

COMMODORE GRAHAM SLOPER, PITTWATER COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD 2015

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning) [5.00 p.m.]: I applaud retired Commodore Graham Sloper for his incredible contribution to my community of Pittwater. On Thursday Commodore Sloper was presented with the Pittwater Community Service Award 2015. Following a highly distinguished career in the Royal Australian Navy, Graham has continued working tirelessly to assist those in need. Graham, together with his wife, Danni, has worked hard to recognise all those who have served our country, aided local charities and support groups, and ensured assistance is available to the most vulnerable members of our community.

Serving and supporting others is inherent in Graham's character. Graham is the president of the Avalon Beach RSL sub-branch, convener of the annual Avalon military tattoo, vice president of the northern beaches RSL district council, a member of the northern beaches Anzac centenary committee and has been instrumental in helping improve veterans' support services on the northern beaches. Graham organised the Warringah and Mackellar Anzac centenary commemoration at Narrabeen. More than 3,000 people attended this terrific community event. I congratulate Graham and thank him for his ongoing service to our community.

HOMES FOR HEROES

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Corrections, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) [5.01 p.m.]: On July 31 I attended an event hosted by Bespoke Medical Innovations in my electorate. The company announced its generous support for the Homes For Heroes Program established by RSL LifeCare to provide accommodation and other support services for homeless veterans. Bespoke chief executive officer Mr Darren Churchill committed a percentage of revenue from the sale of the new Apnea-Seal product through the company's association with RSL LifeCare to this worthy program. Bespoke is also providing educational sleep apnoea workshops at RSL clubs and retirement villages throughout Sydney. The Norwest Business Park continues to attract quality businesses such as Bespoke Medical Innovations. This hub of innovation and employment will only grow stronger thanks to the imminent North West Rail Link.

SCHOOLS SEXUALITY EDUCATION

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) [5.01 p.m.]: Like many parents who have contacted me, I am deeply angered by the decision of the Minister for Education to ban the film *Gayby Baby* from screening in New South Wales schools. The value of diversity is one of the most important things we can teach our kids. Any argument that screening a film promoting community and acceptance is not educational or lies outside the intent of the New South Wales curriculum is simply rubbish. It is disappointing to say the least that the Minister has bought into the latent homophobia led by the *Daily Telegraph*.

Tomorrow is Wear It Purple Day, when we celebrate diversity and respect and stand with our lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and questioning [LGBTIQ] youth against homophobia. What

started as a grassroots campaign has now grown to include hundreds of schools and organisations. I commend the tens of thousands of students who will take part tomorrow, particularly those at Burwood Girls High School where Wear It Purple Day began. I applaud the young women at Burwood Girls High School for the leadership they have provided in pushing for quality and acceptance for all. They should be proud. They understand that respect and understanding are values worth celebrating in our schools.

PORT MACQUARIE PINK LADIES

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie—Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education) [5.02 p.m.]: Port Macquarie Pink Ladies, and men, now numbers 150 volunteers. Over the past 12 months, this force for goodwill has given 20,000 hours of service at Port Macquarie Base Hospital and raised \$14,000 for hospital equipment. People such as Gabby Gregory, Lesley Watts, Dorothy Green, Christene Tait and Julie Sara wear a smile in all they do—be it directing patients and visitors, delivering library books to a bedside, refreshing vases of flowers or collating patient information packages. Their more recent fundraising efforts have delivered wheelchairs, a paediatric emergency trolley and patient lifters. Raffle tickets and handmade gifts are constantly being sold in anticipation of the next equipment purchase. These volunteers were honoured in August by hospital staff, and I would like to add my appreciation for their energy and selflessness.

MARINE RESCUE BALLINA GROUP BRAVERY CITATION

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) [5.03 p.m.]: I acknowledge Marine Rescue Ballina members Tony Handcock, Rodney Guest and David Nockolds. They were recently awarded a group bravery citation for their extraordinary lifesaving efforts during a rescue operation in 2013. The men courageously set out in dark and dangerous conditions to try to tow a stranded cruiser away from the breakwall of the notorious Richmond River bar. During the rescue, their own vessel capsized and the rescuers and crew all ended up in the water. I also acknowledge the Ballina Jet Boat Rescue team, who responded and landed all safely ashore on Shelly Beach, and the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service, which attended that evening.

ST STYLIANOS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) [5.04 p.m.]: I congratulate St Stylianos Greek Orthodox Church, GyMEA on a successful annual dinner dance on Saturday 22 August 2015 at Doltone House, Sylvania Waters. It was a pleasure to attend the event with my family as the parish celebrated our conservative values and Greek heritage whilst enjoying Greek dancing and trivia. I thank parish priest, Father Constantine Varipatis, and his wife, Eleni, for their ongoing guidance and support. I also thank parish president George Gatz; vice president Paul Parris; treasurer George Timothy; secretary John Assarapin; committee members Nick Reissis, Michael Coursaris and Andrew Hondros; events committee members Angie Kakakios, Maria Caputo, Kathy Assarapin, Helen Anthopoulos, Helen Lakatos, Voula Koustoubardis, Maria Karabelas and Philip Kariatlis; and auctioneer George Bouteris for their tireless efforts. The parish has been at the heart of the Greek orthodox community in our shire for more than 20 years, and I look forward to building a stronger community together.

VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC COMMEMORATION

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) [5.05 p.m.]: I recognise the function to commemorate the seventieth anniversary of victory in the Pacific in the Second World War, which was held on 14 August at Cabra-Vale Park Cabramatta. The function was organised by the victory in the Pacific committee and had the support of the following clubs: Cabra-Vale Diggers group, City of Campbelltown Returned and Services League [RSL] Sub-Branch; Canley Heights RSL Sub-Branch; City of Fairfield RSL Sub-Branch; Harbord Diggers RSL Sub-Branch; Ingleburn RSL Club Limited; Ingleburn RSL Sub Branch; City of Liverpool RSL Sub-Branch; Merrylands RSL Sub-Branch; Mounties Group and Smithfield RSL Sub-Branch. A special acknowledgement should go to John Barron, the indefatigable organiser. This event has been held at

Cabra-Vale for about a decade and draws a significant audience. Speakers this year included John Crozier, Chaplain William Phillips and Rod White, President of the New South Wales branch of the Returned and Services League of Australia.

KURINGAI YOUTH ORCHESTRA

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.05 p.m.]: I acknowledge the Kuringai Youth Orchestra, which recently won the orchestra competition at the prestigious Sydney Eisteddfod 2015. It is the second year in a row that the Kuringai Youth Orchestra has won. As a non-profit organisation, Kuringai Youth Orchestra is generously supported by the Ku-ring-gai Council, local businesses and volunteers. They raise funds through grants and donations from commercial sponsors and the community in order to invest in our young people. The Kuringai Youth Orchestra is just over five years old and has been assisted by the reputable Kuringai Philharmonic Orchestra. Both are successful community orchestras demonstrating substantial talent, resources and capabilities within our community. I wish the Kuringai Youth Orchestra well in its performance this Father's Day, Saturday 6 September, and continued success in the future.

BLUE MOUNTAINS ROTARY CLUBS

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) [5.06 p.m.]: I pay tribute to the good work of Rotary clubs throughout the Blue Mountains. Rotarians are committed to service and community, with ongoing charitable projects throughout the region. I acknowledge the presidents of the Upper Mountains "Sunrise" Rotary Club, Michael Small; the Katoomba Rotary Club, David Arnott; the Blackheath Rotary Club, Eddie McCoy; the Central Mountains Rotary Club, Noel Hifferman; the Springwood Rotary Club, Pat Ainslie; and the Lower Mountains Rotary Club, Pamela Noal. I acknowledge also all the other members, many of whom I have met at recent "turning of the wheel" changeover functions. In particular, I commend the combined efforts of Rotary clubs across the mountains in bringing together the Police Officer of the Year Award, which this year was given to leading Senior Constable Steven Day and to Senior Constable Mary-Lou Keating. They are both officers of integrity and high standing within our community. Rotary is a force for good at international, national and local levels. For the work of local Rotarians in the Blue Mountains, I say thank you.

ORANGE PUBLIC SCHOOL RUGBY LEAGUE TEAM

Mr ANDREW GEE (Orange—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.07 p.m.]: I draw the attention of the House to the achievements of the Orange Public School boys' rugby league team. Orange Public School was one of 27 primary school sides that won through to the State finals of the Telstra Legends Shield at Macquarie University about a week ago. The team progressed through the initial group stage on the day with ease, defeating Gynea Bay Public School 18-12 and Tanilba Bay Public School 18-nil. Orange Public School was placed in the top tier pool alongside Dee Why Public School and Bateau Bay Public School. Orange Public School beat Dee Why 18-10, before playing Bateau Bay and drawing 12-all.

Unfortunately for Orange Public School, the central school progressed after scoring the first try of the game. The Orange Public School rugby league team has a long list of achievements for 2015, including being the first team from Orange Public School to win the western area title. Team members were also crowned champions at the Orange leg of the Peachey Shield. The team consists of: Jack Cole, Harry Grant, Jack Aveyard, Jack Besgrove, Dylan Ryan, Caleb Tamatea, Kaden Williams, Will Burdack, Brodie Markworth, Angus Staniforth, Kaleb Sutherland, Seth Haydon, Jackson Hill, Ryan Rutherford and Charlie Harris. Michael Kelly is the Orange Public School rugby league coordinator and Wayne Hill is the co-coach. I congratulate the Orange Public School team.

PORT STEPHENS POLICE CITIZENS YOUTH CLUB

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) [5.08 p.m.]: Last week I joined well over 200 other

people to recognise the fortieth anniversary of the Port Stephens Police Citizens Youth Club [PCYC] at a gala dinner. The Commander, Youth Command, for PCYC New South Wales, Superintendent David Scrimgeour, addressed the audience, speaking of the importance of PCYCs. What impressed me most from the conversations I had with the committed PCYC team is the relevance of the organisation in today's society. The goal of getting young people active is more important than ever, with the increasing prevalence of technology, obesity and mental health issues in the lives of young people.

I am pleased to report that the Port Stephens PCYC is going strong, with more than 1,900 members who enjoy basketball, netball, gymnastics, boxing, soccer, archery, dance and a homework hub. I congratulate Port Stephens PCYC on its significant contribution to our community over the past 40 years. I look forward to working with president Diane Scobie, her terrific committee and club manager Matt Brealey to support the important work they are undertaking, and I wish them every success for the next 40 years.

RICHMOND VALLEY BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.09 p.m.]: I offer my congratulations to the Casino Chamber of Commerce and Industry for organising the Richmond Valley Business Excellence Awards, held recently at the Casino Returned Servicemen's Memorial Club. I was fortunate to attend this celebration of the wonderful businesses and their staff from across the whole of the Richmond Valley who make this region such a wonderful place to live and to visit. Congratulations to the winners on the night: Retail, Metcalf Meats; Hospitality, Casino RSM Club; Trade/Construction, Casino Tyre Professionals; and Best New Business, Lighting, Electrical and Data; Beauty/Fitness, The Ivy Room Hair Studio; Sustainability, Kookaburra Early Learning Centre; Home-based, Sabihah Coulture; Professional Services, LJ Hooker Evans Head; Community, On Focus; Best Apprentice, Sacha Clark; Best Employee, Bridie Garwood; and Best Business, Casino Tyre Professionals. A special mention to Frank Karam, who was awarded with a Lifetime Achievement Award and was inducted into the Business Hall of Fame.

SHAKTI

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) [5.10 p.m.]: Today I commemorate the twentieth anniversary of Shakti, a great organisation that supports women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds escape gender-based violence and take control of their lives. I was honoured that Shakti asked me to sponsor its twentieth anniversary celebrations at the New South Wales Parliament on 12 August. Shakti, which in Hindi means strength and capacity to bring about change, started in New Zealand in 1995 and has been supporting women from Asia, Africa and the Middle East to escape domestic violence and other forms of abuse such as dowry abuse, forced marriages and honour-based violence. This is essential for women who may not otherwise feel that they can talk about their problems and be understood at mainstream domestic violence services. In recent years it has expanded to Australia and run its Sydney operations from Granville and Parramatta, receiving a number of grants from Parramatta City Council. It is doing a tremendous job. I wish Shakti every success for the next 20 years.

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

MILLIE HALL, NATIONAL JUNIOR MEAT JUDGING CHAMPION

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) [5.11 p.m.]: Millie Hall, a student of St Josephs High of Aberdeen, has had recent success at the Twenty-eighth Annual Wingham Beef Week. She won a total of eight individual and team ribbons, among them the 2015 Australian Junior Meat Judging Competition Champion Individual, a remarkable effort for a 15-year-old. Due to Millie's success at the Wingham Beef Week, her next contest is in November at the Upper Hunter Beef Bonanza, where 600 paraders and junior judges will come together to showcase their cattle and learn more about the beef industry. I

congratulate Millie and wish her all the success for her future endeavours.

ZOE ELLIOTT, KINCUMBER HIGH SCHOOL

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) [5.12 p.m.]: Last month I had the pleasure of presenting Zoe Elliot from Kincumber High School with the Australian flag. I also had the pleasure of meeting Zoe and her classmates on a recent visit to Parliament House. Zoe, who is in year 11, left Australia last week for five months as an exchange student to the town of Sullivan in Missouri, United States of America. We send Zoe best wishes and look forward to reading her blog of her memorable days in America, which no doubt will be a rewarding experience for her.

SLOVENIAN NATIONAL DAY

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) [5.13 p.m.]: On Sunday 14 June 2015 I had the pleasure of attending the twenty-fourth anniversary of the Slovenian National Day celebrations. Slovenian National Day is undoubtedly a very important day for all Slovenians, as it marks the very day when Slovenia declared its independence from the former Yugoslavia, on 25 June 1991. The road to independence was forged on 26 December 1990, when Slovenia held a plebiscite to determine its sovereignty. The referendum, which is now known as Unity Day, resulted in 88.5 per cent of Slovenians voting in favour of their country becoming an independent nation.

Slovenians have been migrating to Australia since the mid-nineteenth century, with large-scale immigration taking place after the Second World War. Since that time, Slovenians have made a great contribution to Australian society, introducing their fine foods, traditions and culture to Australia. I take this opportunity to congratulate all recipients of the New South Wales Slovenian Community Awards and thank them for their tireless hard work and dedication to their community. I am proud of them and their achievements. I also thank the President of the Triglav Club, Mr Peter Kroppe, and his board of directors for inviting me to a wonderful day of celebration.

ALBURY WODONGA CHAMBER BUSINESS AWARDS

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) [5.13 p.m.]: Congratulations to Colin Joss, Managing Director of the Joss Group, who was inducted into the hall of fame at the Albury Wodonga Chamber Business Awards. Colin commenced his apprenticeship as a carpenter in 1960 and has been in the commercial building business since 1975, establishing Colin Joss and Company, which today employs 1,600 employees. Successful businesses at the Chamber Business Awards included Johnsons MME, which won Most Outstanding Business and Employer of Choice; Twin City Roller Doors, for Excellence in Innovation and Outstanding Small Business; Meet PAT, for Outstanding New Business; Border Pathology, for Outstanding Medium-Large Business; Regional Imaging, for Excellence in Commercial, Professional and Business Services; Harrington Hair, for Excellence in Hospitality, Leisure and Retail Services; and Techcellence, for Outstanding Micro Business. Daniel Fewster was named Outstanding Young Business Person and Nick Roseby Business Entrepreneur. Congratulations to all involved.

TRIBUTE TO ELLIOTT DONAZZAN

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) [5.14 p.m.]: I recognise Elliott Donazzan, a member of my campaign team who last week was diagnosed with classical lymphoma, having a fist-sized tumour in his lung. Elliott is a man of conviction and talent who at only 22 years of age continues to impress those around him with his business prowess. He is a dear friend and inspires me to be better. My thoughts and prayers are with Elliott as he prepares to undergo chemotherapy treatment next week. I have no doubt that his typical strength and tenacity will serve him well during this incredibly difficult time for both him and his family.

TRIBUTE TO GLEN KOLOMEITZ

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.15 p.m.]: Today I congratulate Glenn Kolomeitz on his recent appointment to the position of Chief Executive Officer and State Secretary of RSL New South Wales. Mr Kolomeitz has been a tireless campaigner for the rights of returned servicemen and servicewomen and his elevation to this role is a testament to his continuous hard work. His advocacy work on behalf of veterans in our community and across the State is unmatched. He is a true credit to our community, our region and our State. It is wonderful to be able to put his outstanding work on the record in this place as he is someone I know well.

Glenn has an exemplary military service record as an aircraft maintenance instructor, an air traffic controller, a military police platoon commander and an investigations manager. He left the military to join the NSW Police Force in order to further serve his community. Whilst serving with the police, he completed his law degree and now practises to provide pro-bono legal work for veterans in our community. He returned to the regular army as a legal officer and was deployed to East Timor and Afghanistan. After leaving the army, he continues to advocate and work tirelessly for those who have served our country. I thank him for his service to our police force and our military, as well as for his continued service to our veterans community, and I wish him all the best in his new and exciting role with the RSL.

Community recognition statements concluded.

Pursuant to sessional order private members' statements proceeded with.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

1001 NIGHTS IN FAIRFIELD: LITTLE BAGHDAD EXHIBITION

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [5.16 p.m.]: On Saturday 22 August 2015 the Fairfield City Museum and Gallery held the launch of 1001 Nights in Fairfield: Little Baghdad Exhibition. The Little Baghdad Exhibition was a culmination of three distinct projects: The Long Tables dinner parties, Let's Party Like its 620 BC, and 1001 Nights in Fairfield. Little Baghdad was developed over several years with collaborations by many dedicated people. One such group playing a vital role in the success of the overall project was the South West Sydney Iraqi community. The project was facilitated by the Fairfield City Museum and Gallery, Powerhouse Youth Theatre, Fairfield, and New South Wales Service of the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors, based at Carramar, also known as STARTTS. The project could not have been staged without the assistance of Arts NSW, Australia Council of Arts, Australian Museum, Scanlon Foundation, Australian Government Department of Social Services and Information and Cultural Exchange.

Congratulations to the curators of the exhibition Ms Lena Nahlous from Fairfield City Museum and Gallery and Ms Karen Therese from Powerhouse Youth Theatre, Fairfield. The exhibition assistant was Mr Timothy Talty; design was by Province Studio; and the photographer was Ms Helen Tran. The three projects that comprised the exhibition were unique in their presentation. The Long Table was a series of Iraqi inspired dinner parties, engaging artists and audiences in critical and creative discussion. The fruit of this was the colourful collage of symbols and words written by the Iraqi community and displayed at the Fairfield Museum. Let's Party Like its 620BC was a long weekend performance party, which included installations, performances and a very tasty food safari. 1001 Nights in Fairfield was an exhibition that presented multidisciplinary works created in the context of the entire project.

The Iraqi culture is integral to the make-up of the Fairfield, Auburn and Liverpool communities. The community explored themes that resonated within the Iraqi culture. A large range of materials was used to explore these themes, through textiles, media work, visual arts and ceramics. The exhibition was an expression by young Iraqi-Australian artists in response to artefacts in the Australian Museum's

Ancient Mesopotamian collection, as well as work already completed by established contemporary artists. The exhibition shows Iraq and Iraqi culture in a positive light, moving away from the stereotypical association with modern Iraq and the complex wars that have seen it enmeshed in turmoil. Thanks to this exhibition, the wider community got a glimpse into the rich history of Iraq. People could feel a part of the spice trades, the markets and the rich colours, aromas and imagery that go along with the Iraqi culture. The early Iraqi civilisation invented the circle and language, which illustrates that the Iraqis have always been keen on the development and evolution of culture.

The 1001 Nights in Fairfield exhibition is also a tribute to the youth of Iraq who now reside in Australia. It shows how they have been shaped by their past experiences, their rich culture and their experiences in Australia. 1001 Nights in Fairfield would not have been possible without the magnificent works of Hedar Abadi, Zahra Alsamawi, Eiman Al Unbudy, Cigdem Aydemir, Sean Bacon, Nicole Barakat with the Parents Café and the Fairfield Intensive English Centre, Zanny Begg with the Choir of Love, Ali Abbas Makrab, Layla Naji, Aghnar Niazi, Changing Lives participants, Province, Haidar Abbas Abadi and the STARTTS Clay Collective, and Undrawing the Line. Thank you to Fairfield City Museum and Gallery, Powerhouse Youth Theatre and STARTTS for supporting exhibitions that showcase the diverse cultures that form the melting pot that is Fairfield and south-west Sydney in a different and vibrant way.

TRIBUTE TO NATHAN BASHA

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy) [5.21 p.m.]: Last week I had the extreme pleasure of meeting with an inspiring young man from my electorate. Nathan Basha is a dedicated advocate for people with disabilities. He is committed to improving the expectations people with disabilities have of their own lives. Nathan's message that they should expect the same chances in life, in work and with friends and family is strengthened by his enthusiasm and energy for his cause. Through his work as a motivational speaker, Nathan inspires everyone to recognise the inherent potential within all of us. Nathan's role is all the more impressive due to his personal understanding of living with a disability.

As a young man with Down syndrome, Nathan is able to speak of the isolation that comes with having a disability and the pursuit of ordinary life experiences. Nathan moved out of home a few years ago, leaving his mother, Joanne, his father, Marcel, and younger brothers, Lintyn and Jaden. He has learned to cook, to iron and to clean on his own and he looks forward to movie nights with his mates. The most important part of living on his own is the sense of independence that Nathan has gained. With his good friend Rhiannon Brodie by his side, Nathan has travelled all over the world as a motivational speaker covering a range of topics. From Singapore to the United Kingdom, from New Zealand to the United States and all across Sydney, Nathan is a highly sought after public speaker. He has done all this whilst maintaining his job at the "coolest radio station in Sydney", Nova.

He has lobbied educators and students at schools and universities, members of the disability sector, medical professionals and various community organisations, as well as members of Parliament. For the past two years Nathan has been engaging with the corporate sector to bring about changes in attitudes to employing people with an intellectual disability. Nathan has worked tirelessly in recent years to improve the employment opportunities for people with disabilities. This year he is hoping to find jobs for 20 people with intellectual disabilities. As Nathan says:

People have given me opportunities that changed my life; please help me give others the same.

In 2013 the Minister for Ageing and Disability Services acknowledged Nathan's efforts by appointing him as an Ambassador of Living Life My Way, a pathway framework to the implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme. Nathan embraced this role as yet another chance to promote employment opportunities for people with disabilities. He was appointed for his leadership and influence and his efforts not only to inspire individuals with a disability but also to change community mindsets and create a more inclusive society. As a finalist for the 2014 Australian young people's human rights award, Nathan was

recognised yet again for his achievements.

As he is a resident of Lane Cove, I have the honour of representing Nathan in the New South Wales Parliament. We both attended the fine institution of St Ignatius' College, Riverview. I thank former headmaster Shane Hogan and the staff and students of the college for providing a positive environment for Nathan to grow and develop his exceptional communications skills. I thank Nathan's family and friends for continuing to support him in these important endeavours. Most importantly, I thank Nathan for his tireless efforts in creating a society that is more inclusive and for promoting employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.25 p.m.]: I join the member for Lane Cove in congratulating Nathan Basha. I acknowledge the extraordinary contribution that he is clearly making. As someone with a disability—a visual impairment and a condition—I have to say that it is important to give courage and incentive to people with disabilities to go out and live the lives they want to live and to encourage them every step of the way. Clearly, that is what Nathan is doing. It speaks volumes about the member for Lane Cove that he chose, of all the topics he could speak about tonight, to give one person the credit he clearly deserves for being a wonderful ambassador and a great leader for other people to follow. I thank the member for Lane Cove for his private member's statement.

RED AND BLUE EMERGENCY SERVICES BALL

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie—Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education) [5.26 p.m.]: The Port Macquarie-Hastings community is well known for its generosity, and a fundraising ball held recently certainly cemented that reputation. The Red and Blue Ball was held at Panthers Port Macquarie to raise money to buy a number of defibrillators for our local community. Over a Thai dinner, three young people—Jess Genders, Daniel Steinbeck and Dane Rickwood, all of whom are trainee paramedics from Charles Sturt University in Port Macquarie—were thinking about how they could give back to the community through the Student Heart Project. The trio decided a way to do that was to raise money by holding a ball: Invite some 420 people to get dressed up in their finery, hire a band and go along and have a fun night with fine food and wine and dance the night away for a good cause.

Whilst it sounded like a good idea, putting it all together took a huge deal of time and energy. In fact, it was pulled together in just four months by these novice fundraisers. They need not have worried, because our community rallied around them and offers of support came pouring in. Panthers Port Macquarie, the Rotary Club of Port Macquarie, the local business community, Charles Sturt University, ZOLL and Defib for Life—to name just a few—all helped out. Our local media also got behind the event and gave the ball plenty of publicity, which I am sure helped to encourage people to buy a ticket. The evening was a huge success, everyone looked fabulous and it was wonderful that the night was supported by so many young people from our local community.

The ball raised money to distribute automated external defibrillators [AEDs] throughout the community. With a higher than average older population living in the Hastings, these AEDs could come in extremely handy. According to the Heart Foundation, each year around 54,000 Australians will suffer a heart attack. That equates to one heart attack every nine minutes. Sadly, in 2013 heart attacks claimed 8,611 lives—on average, 24 each day. Clearly, there is a need for AEDs, which will definitely save lives. Thanks to these dynamic young people, \$15,000 was raised on the night, which was enough to purchase six defibrillator units—an outstanding result. The next phase of the project is to select exactly where the AEDs will be located, and our community stakeholders will have input in that decision. Once again, I congratulate Jessica, Daniel and Dane and commend them for this excellent result. It is a fantastic achievement and a great outcome for our community.

HEATHCOTE ROAD SAFETY

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) [5.28 p.m.]: I bring to the attention of the House an important issue of road safety. Despite our best efforts, the road toll remains too high. In fact, the road toll was higher in the first half of this year than it was for the same time last year. Every death on our roads is a tragedy and impacts families and local communities. The New South Wales Government is working constantly to improve road safety. Only yesterday the Minister for Roads launched Operation Saturation, a campaign designed to improve road safety awareness and save lives. My own electorate is not immune. Earlier this month there was a fatal traffic accident on the bridge on Heathcote Road over the Woronora River. I put on record my heartfelt sympathies to the family of the driver of the car involved. Mr Drew Cullen tragically lost his life in that accident and leaves behind a partner and young child. While the exact cause of the accident is still being investigated, having grown up locally and being a regular user of that stretch of road, I am very aware of the perils of driving across that bridge. I thank all the people in my community who have rallied for action. I share your sentiment.

Since my election in 2011, I have consistently raised the issue of safety along the whole of Heathcote Road, including on that bridge. I was pleased to announce with Premier Mike Baird, in February this year, a major road funding program of \$300 million that includes funds for Sutherland shire roads. As part of the program, funding will be provided in 2016-17 to begin the process of improving the Heathcote Road bridge. While this is welcome news, it is important to recognise that major road projects can take many years to design, construct and complete. We must ensure that every feasible step is taken to make the bridge as safe as possible from now until the improvement works are completed. In the interim, it is important that we look at any and all measures that could be adopted to improve road safety on the bridge.

That is why in 2012 I commenced discussions with the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, the Hon. Duncan Gay, about the issue. I have also asked the Centre for Road Safety to look at what more can be done in the area. We owe it to the local community to ensure that we have left no stone unturned. Armed with information from the Centre for Road Safety, we can determine the additional safety measures that are appropriate for that stretch of road and ensure that they are implemented. I thank the community for their support in this matter. I look forward to being able to update the House and my community in the not too distant future.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.33 p.m.]: I commend the member for Heathcote for his strident advocacy on behalf of his electorate. He is undoubtedly one of the hardest working members in this Parliament. As I am the Parliamentary Secretary with responsibility for an area that covers part of his electorate, the member raises Heathcote Road with me constantly. There is no doubt that the \$300 million that has been made available for roads, including those in the Sutherland shire, would not be in the budget without the lobbying, persistence and advocacy of the member for Heathcote. He should be proud that he gets projects going; he does not just talk about them. He is a relentless worker who wears a track to Ministers' offices, beats down their door and does not take no for an answer. The member for Heathcote will continue to put his community first and fight for them every step of the way. The results he has achieved across his electorate speak volumes. When the member for Heathcote retires, there will be no need to build a monument to him; they are scattered across his electorate as a testament to his success.

NARELLAN PUBLIC SCHOOL

CAMDEN MEN'S SHED

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) [5.34 p.m.]: Last Thursday it was my privilege to visit a wonderful school and a fantastic organisation in my electorate. I had the pleasure of attending Narellan Public School. The first school to be established in Narellan, on church land, was a church school, which opened in 1839 under the supervision of Reverend Robert Frost, foundation Headmaster of the King's School at Parramatta and Rector of St Peter's Church of England, Campbelltown. By 1842, 45 children were being taught at the school, in the capable hands of Mr Samuel Turton. In 1846 the number of

children had increased to 96. The school was also used by Reverend Thomas Hassall for church services. In 1875 a government national school was established on the site originally marked for a courthouse. It later became Narellan Public School. I thank the wonderful Camden Historical Society for its assistance in providing information on the history of the school.

I was invited to the school by assistant principal Mrs Jo Cooley. She does a wonderful job and is a great assistant principal. I was asked to speak to years 5 and 6 students about my role in Parliament and as a local member. The students have been studying government in class and I can report that they have been listening well. I was impressed. The students' knowledge of government and its role in our community was exceptional. Each of the 86 students had one question, if not multiple questions, to ask me. The questions ranged from how I got into politics to the favourite part of my job, the least favourite part of my job and my favourite footy team.

It was great to spend time with the students in a classroom environment, not only to share firsthand my knowledge of a subject relevant to their studies but also to hear the thoughts and ideas of our future leaders. I thoroughly enjoyed myself. I know the students wanted me to put on the *Hansard* record a big hello and thank you to classes 5-6C, 5-6B and 5-6W. Principal Dale Sessions and his dedicated staff are to be commended for their ongoing support and encouragement of all students. I thank Mrs Cooley for her invitation to the school. I also thank her stage three colleagues Miss Biffin and Mrs Creber, who are also wonderful teachers, for the opportunity to address their students.

On the same day, I attended the opening of the next stage of the Camden Men's Shed. The extension will enable further storage of its equipment. The extension was made possible with the assistance of an IMB Community Foundation grant of \$9,700 and an additional \$8,600 from the Camden Council Bicentennial Equestrian Park 355 Committee. The men's shed at Camden was established in August 2008 and has maintained the Bicentennial Equestrian Park in Camden—also known affectionately as the BEP—for the past seven years. The social, health and wellbeing benefits that members have received from their association with the men's shed are immeasurable. Founding members Stephen Butler, Colin Calver and Alan Withers are still actively involved. The Camden Men's Shed meets three days a week, and its pride and joy is the continual upkeep of the Bicentennial Equestrian Park.

The Bicentennial Equestrian Park is an 80-hectare property owned by Camden Council that offers a variety of activities to the community, including equestrian, campdraft, polocrosse, recreational riding and pony club. The park also caters for social activities such as birthdays and weddings. Most weekends there are up to 1,000 people camping at the park to participate in an equine activity. The park is so popular that it is booked out for the next 12 months. The members of the men's shed have brought many skills to the park—there is nothing they cannot do. As a result of their efforts, the Bicentennial Equestrian Park is in pristine condition. Men's shed members have also assisted Camden Hospital by repairing its garden furniture. Once a week the men's shed hosts members of Campbelltown Disability Services Australia, giving them the opportunity to learn extra skills. I thank the members of the men's shed for their continued dedication to the park. The work they do is invaluable, and no government could afford to pay them for it. I thank them for volunteering.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.38 p.m.]: I thank the Chief Government Whip and my good friend, the member for Camden, for that statement. I point out to the House that when the Gonski agreement was being debated the member for Camden was stridently in favour of it. I note his passionate support for public schools in his electorate, in particular Narellan Public School. I commend the school, principal Dale Sessions and assistant principal Mrs Cooley for inviting him to speak. I am sure everyone agrees that speaking to young people about our democracy is one of the most enjoyable parts of the role of a member of Parliament.

I join the member for Camden in commending the Camden Men's Shed. I reflect the comments he made about IMB grants. They provide communities with additional support to council funding. Having visited Disability Services Australia in Campbelltown to speak with some of its clients, I have no doubt that

they will benefit too. I thank the member for Camden for his hard work in this place and for acknowledging the value of public education and of volunteers, who make extraordinary contributions to our communities.

WOLLONGONG FORESHORE LAND

Ms NOREEN HAY (Wollongong) [5.39 p.m.]: I place on record my concern about an issue that I have raised a number of times in this place through motions and questions to Ministers. The Mayor of Wollongong and council representatives have travelled to this Parliament several times to meet with Government representatives. I have asked what this Government is up to regarding selling off the land around the foreshore. Hansard may not be aware that it is selling that land. The community does not want it sold. The community does not want this Government to continue to sell off publicly owned commodities in my electorate. When this Government cannot and will not deliver something, such as the lifts at Unanderra railway station—

Mr Andrew Gee: The entertainment centre.

Ms NOREEN HAY: Yes, what is wrong with giving Wollongong an entertainment centre? It is not my fault that the member for Kiama could not win the electorate of Wollongong. I know he would love to be its representative.

Mr Gareth Ward: I won my own electorate, thanks very much.

Ms NOREEN HAY: Then maybe you should spend some time in your own electorate and keep your backside out of mine.

Mr Gareth Ward: I love spending time in your electorate; they love seeing me.

Ms NOREEN HAY: They do not; they hate you with a vengeance.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! I remind the member for Wollongong to direct her comments through the Chair.

Ms NOREEN HAY: I will address my comments through the Chair because I want the member for Kiama to know that people in my electorate have an intense dislike for him. The member for Kiama keeps hanging around like a bad smell. Wherever he goes something is sold off. Look what happened to the port. He has been plodding around JJ Kelly Park, which will be the next thing he sells. He has been plodding around the lake and the foreshore. We are not fools. We want to know what has been going on in these secret meetings between Government representatives and the Mayor of Wollongong. To be honest, I have not spoken to the Liberal councillors. I know that the Labor councillors oppose selling off any land around the lake.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The member for Kiama will cease interjecting.

Ms NOREEN HAY: We are simply battle weary from trying to stop this Government selling things off in Wollongong. Get your hands off Pillar Administration. It employs 700 people and is doing a good job. It makes a lot of money because it competes like nobody else. Even though it does a fantastic job this Government is talking about selling it off. We are not going to sit quietly while it sells off the land on the foreshore. We will not stand for the member of Kiama walking like royalty through my electorate, accepting applause and receiving pats on the back. He is the opposite of Robin Hood: He comes in during the night, grabs the public resources and flogs them off to his nearest friend. What will the Government do when it runs out of things to sell? My question to the Parliamentary Secretary—

Mr Gareth Ward: Ask away.

Ms NOREEN HAY: I will. Let us see whether the member for Kiama can answer. What has the member for Kiama been up to in meetings with councillors? Has he been dealing to sell off the land on the foreshore? I want the member for Kiama to get his hands off Pillar Administration and anything else in my electorate that he is contemplating selling off. Most importantly, I want the member for Kiama to tell us what he is up to in those secret meetings with the council representatives.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.44 p.m.]: They come to mock but remain to pray.

Ms Noreen Hay: What about the lifts at Unanderra station?

Mr GARETH WARD: The member for Wollongong was talking about privatisation and said she was against it. In Parliament in the lead-up to the election the member for Wollongong stated she was against the sale of the port, but she changed her position and supported the long-term lease of Port Kembla to fund infrastructure in the Illawarra. That is what her leader did.

Ms Noreen Hay: Point of order—

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! I do not think the member for Wollongong can take a point of order during private members' statements.

Ms Noreen Hay: Believe me, I can. The member for Kiama has done it in the past. At no stage did I change my position.

Mr GARETH WARD: You are disagreeing with your leader, are you?

Ms Noreen Hay: I am disagreeing with you selling my port. I have always disagreed with it. You should provide lifts at Unanderra station. I will never change my views.

Mr GARETH WARD: The reason council representatives are coming to see me is the incompetent and hopeless local member. No-one can blame them for wanting to speak to me instead of the member for Wollongong.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! Members will come to order and act with decorum.

VOICE, INTERESTS AND EDUCATION OF WOMEN

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.45 p.m.]: Voice, Interests and Education of Women [VIEW] was founded by The Smith Family in 1960 as a service to women. It is now one of Australia's leading volunteer clubs. It is non-political and has no religious affiliation. VIEW members fundraise, volunteer, raise awareness and are the largest community sponsor of children for The Smith Family's Learning for Life program. In the past year VIEW members across Australia raised more than \$1 million and supported more than 1,100 children. VIEW clubs are a valued part of The Smith Family. They offer a friendship network for members, providing a sense of purpose and fun while supporting the education of disadvantaged children. Volunteers read to preschool children, mentor at local after-school learning clubs, share craft skills by making students stationery packs and help with student breakfast programs at local schools.

I understand that VIEW is the only national women's organisation that is focused solely on supporting and advocating for the education of young Australians in need. VIEW members raise awareness of The Smith Family through local media and by building and establishing networks in their local communities. This enables The Smith Family to reach out to more families to provide better education opportunities to children who need them. Marian Kingham, one of my constituents, is a national

councillor of VIEW Clubs Australia, and I am happy to help her promote the club's valuable work. The club's national network of 17,000 members in 340 communities across Australia has a strong and longstanding commitment to improving the wellbeing of women and children.

There are eight VIEW clubs with approximately 358 members on the North Shore and northern beaches of Sydney. They currently sponsor 27 students on The Smith Family's Learning for Life program. The Learning for Life program provides emotional, practical and financial support to help young people with their education from their early learning years through to primary and high school. It helps to build skills, knowledge, motivation, self-belief and positive relationships. This support leads to a higher likelihood of these young people remaining engaged at school and developing a future career path. My wife and I have sponsored a child under the Learning for Life program for some years and I encourage others to consider doing likewise.

The members of VIEW regularly present, debate and vote on issues that are of national importance to women and the community in general. The biennial National VIEW Convention provides the opportunity for those issues to be formally debated and finalised by attendees. Resolutions from the conference then become the public focus of VIEW members when lobbying governing bodies. VIEW clubs provide a wonderful opportunity for women to volunteer in the community while enjoying the support and friendship of other women. They also empower women to have their voices heard on issues of importance for the future wellbeing of Australian society. The money raised by VIEW members from fundraising activities and local community events clearly helps support the education of disadvantaged members of our communities. I commend them for their activities.

NORTHERN RIVERS LIVESTOCK EXCHANGE

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.49 p.m.]: Tonight I inform the House of my support for the upgrade of Casino's Northern Rivers Livestock Exchange. This is one of the most important pieces of infrastructure in the Northern Rivers because it supports a major industry in northern New South Wales—the beef industry. It has the potential to create more than 200 jobs in an area of high social disadvantage and to improve productivity in the beef industry. With the Northern Co-operative Meat Company employing more than 1,000 people in Casino, it is not surprising that Casino is known as the beef capital of Australia or, as Maz Compton from the Dan and Maz 2DayFM breakfast show said when she entered the Beef Queen competition earlier this year, "Casino are the best dudes in beef". I could not have said it better.

In acknowledging the importance of the beef industry to Casino and northern New South Wales it is imperative that this industry be nurtured and encouraged to grow wherever possible. One opportunity to support the beef industry and the jobs it underpins is to modernise the Casino saleyards. There is widespread support for this project across the political spectrum as well as across the region. Former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd visited the saleyards in May 2013 as a backbencher and recognised the importance of the facility to the beef industry and the region. The New South Wales Government provided the Richmond Valley Council with a \$3 million low-interest loan for a partial upgrade in August 2013.

Federal Nationals member for Page, Kevin Hogan, has worked tirelessly with Richmond Valley Council, government agencies and Ministers to secure funding to complete the upgrade of the saleyards. He has identified it as one of the key projects in the Northern Rivers that can create jobs and increase productivity, and he continues to lobby the Federal Government for funding under the National Stronger Regions Fund to upgrade the facilities. I, too, consider this to be one of the most significant infrastructure projects in the region that has the capacity to create jobs in regional New South Wales, underpin a vital industry to the region and increase productivity. It ticks all the boxes and I believe it warrants New South Wales Government financial assistance. As the local member I can assure the Richmond Valley Council that I will be lobbying for funding from the long-term lease of the poles and wires because I firmly believe that this project satisfies all the criteria to be eligible to access this fund.

A report by the Richmond Valley Council has projected that an upgraded saleyard has the capacity to increase throughput, increase productivity, create jobs and underpin the beef industry in northern New South Wales. The construction phase will provide short-term benefits to the regional economy, including eight direct jobs and 20 flow-on jobs through industrial and consumption-based multiplier effects. Capital investment of \$7 million will produce a total output benefit of \$13.54 million. This will increase total wages and salaries by \$2.2 million and value-added product by \$4.51 million. Continuing operations will increase throughput by \$40.8 million, providing sustained regional economic benefits of \$65.94 million to output, 200 new jobs, an \$18.27 million increase to wages and salaries and a \$32.66 million increase to value-added product. Ongoing benefits include increased industry and economic competitiveness and a more robust relationship with the major stakeholder, the Northern Co-Operative Meat Company, which is a major contributor to the regional economy.

Regional economic indicators are expected to improve. Output is expected to increase by 4 per cent a year, or \$72.5 million; local jobs to increase by 3.6 per cent; total wages and salaries to increase by 4.9 per cent a year, or \$19.7 million; and the region's value-added product to increase by 4.5 per cent a year, or \$35.4 million, through flow-on industrial and multiplier effects. A strategic investment in upgrading the Casino saleyards has enormous flow-on benefits that will strengthen and diversify other regional sectors in a region with high disadvantage. Creating and sustaining jobs in the bush is extremely difficult, but I firmly believe this project is worth funding for the long-term regional benefits it will create and I will not give up on trying to secure funding for the saleyards.

CENTRAL COAST PLANNING

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) [5.54 p.m.]: It is now 12 months since the Baird Government released its discussion paper on the future of the Central Coast region. It is now more than four years since the Liberal-Nationals Government junked Labor's 2006 Regional Strategy and left the Central Coast without a planning framework. While many viewed the discussion paper at the time as an election stunt, the Baird Government promised it was formulating a long-term vision for the Central Coast. However, on 17 August journalist Denice Barnes of our local paper of record, the *Central Coast Express Advocate*, reported:

Employers, businesses and planning authorities have been left in the dark following continued delays in the release of the State Government's Central Coast Regional Growth and Infrastructure draft plan.

The article quoted a spokesman from the Department of Planning saying that the department was "still reviewing submissions", and reported that he refused to give a release date or a timeline. The article stated that a spokesman for the Minister for Planning said it was his understanding it would not be "any time soon". Labor has long recognised the importance of planning in building a secure society. Nowhere is this more important than in regional areas such as the Central Coast, the Hunter and the Illawarra, where strong regional plans are necessary to ensure regions have an economic life of their own that is not dependent on the state of the national economy or on areas outside of their region. Strong local planning by government provides the framework that can underpin a community's regional identity and sense of place, thus ensuring economic stability for the region.

In this regard I note that it was the former Labor Government that first recognised the Central Coast as a region in its own right in 2005, established the Central Coast Regional Strategy for 2006 through to 2031, and amended the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act to constitute the Central Coast as a region for planning purposes. These initiatives have underpinned the development of the region over the past 10 years. In the absence of a plan, our two councils have gone in different directions and cooperation through the Central Coast Regional Organisation of Councils is at an all-time low. Investment and planning by business and local government has stalled. As the Central Coast Business Chamber has observed:

Businesses needed to do their own planning to survive and planned around government processes.

The Regional Manager of the Central Coast Business Chamber stated:

We need time frames and businesses are expected to work around time frames and we expect our government representatives to do the same.

In the absence of the guiding hand of the State, private enterprise will choose short-term profit over long-term sustainable investment. We can see this on the Central Coast but more widely in New South Wales. Private capital is investing in real estate and rent seeking rather than long-term sustainable businesses. We will not build long-term economic stability with a property bubble. In The Entrance electorate, housing affordability is moving beyond the reach of local people and their children. State planning can deliver affordable housing—its absence leads to bubbles. State planning is essential in ensuring all of us have economic opportunity and economic security. This Government should restart the planning process for the Central Coast sooner rather than later.

RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE, ORANGE

Mr ANDREW GEE (Orange—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.57 p.m.]: Tonight I pay tribute to Ronald McDonald House, Orange, which is providing a home away from home for seriously ill children and their families from across New South Wales. The multimillion dollar house is one of the largest to be built in Australia and caters for families from three-quarters of the State. The house features eight family rooms that can accommodate families of six. Each room has its own ensuite bathroom and access to laundry facilities. Two of the units are self-contained. The house also features open-plan communal and private living areas, dining and kitchen areas and administrative space for staff and volunteers. The communal living areas also provide a teenage retreat, an area for young children, a children's library and computers. Additionally, there is an outdoor barbeque and dining area and there will soon be an outdoor play area.

Volunteers run the house on a 24-hour, seven-day a week basis. The house relies on fundraising to cover ongoing costs and to fund the second stage of the house, which will involve more accommodation. That work is currently underway. Since opening on 13 April 2015, 29 families have stayed at Ronald McDonald House, coming from places such as Cowra, Peak Hill, Condobolin, Canberra, Broken Hill, Griffith, Parkes and Forbes. On average, most families stay for a period of between 31 and 90 days. Many of the families involved have had a child as an inpatient in the child and adolescent mental health unit at Orange Hospital. I note the presence of the member for Goulburn in the House. The Minister has visited Orange and seen the mental health facilities there. Indeed, she has been a great supporter of those facilities. I thank her very much for her ongoing support.

Last Saturday, the annual Ronald McDonald House Ball was held at the Orange Function Centre. The theme this year was *Phantom of the Opera*. A record \$103,378 was raised, which included \$32,500 from the health Minister for a new security fence with car park gates to be installed on the southern side of the house, along with a height safety system for the house. The Minister, on behalf of the New South Wales Government, made that commitment to Ronald McDonald House when she visited there about a week ago. It has been very warmly received by the community of Orange and the surrounding districts. The donation will ensure the safety and security of families, volunteers, staff and visitors to the house. The remaining funds will be used to sponsor rooms.

I pay tribute to the Ronald McDonald House, Orange, board and staff. The chair and driver of this project from the beginning was Joanne Lewis. Joanne and her husband, Geoff, are highly respected members of the Orange community. For many years they ran the McDonald's restaurant in Orange. They are highly regarded and very active community members. I pay tribute to Joanne and Geoff tonight for their hard work. Joanne in particular has been passionate about this project, and without her vision I do

not think it would have become a reality. The vice-chair is Catherine Nowlan and the board members are Sharon Jones, Heather Robinson, renowned accountant John Thompson, renowned solicitor David Ironside and renowned councillor Jason Hamling. Also on the board are Malcolm Harrison, Todd Bryant, Gary Barraclough and Mick Fabar, whose office is next to my electorate office. Malcolm Rosborough, Geoff Lewis, Andrew Wannan, Nicole Baker are also on the board.

Executive officer Rebecca Walsh has done an amazing job in transforming that House through the building process. The learning program coordinator is Alison Wilkins. I thank the board members, chair and vice-chair for their hard work in fundraising—not only this year with the "Phantom of the Opera" Ball but over many years. This facility will be highly valued by families all over New South Wales; it is primarily for the benefit of people who live outside the Orange region. The member for Castle Hill is a very strong supporter of Ronald McDonald House. He understands the value of this facility to the people of Orange. Congratulations to everyone involved on this great fundraising effort for Ronald McDonald House; a job well done.

GOULBURN ELECTORATE EVENTS

Ms PRU GOWARD (Goulburn—Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Medical Research, Assistant Minister for Health, Minister for Women, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) [6.02 p.m.]: It has been a winter of intense cold in the Goulburn electorate, from Gundaroo to Robertson, with snowfalls we have not seen the likes of in decades. The drive from Goulburn to Crookwell and on to Bigga and Binda was a fairyland of white. I dare say there will be many stunning local Christmas cards arriving in letterboxes this December. The snow caused considerable damage, and the Upper Lachlan Shire Council has been kept busy with repairs and clean-up from the 30 centimetre overnight fall. Clean-up costs are in the millions of dollars, and the job of clearing fallen timber is likely to continue for many months. But that cold did not stop 250 people in Goulburn turning out for a forum on the drug ice hosted by the local Anglican cathedral team and chaired by the police local area command.

Ice has become a serious concern across New South Wales communities, including regional centres. Indeed, any town on a major highway makes a similar complaint because the drug can be moved in easily. This takes a heavy toll on local police and health services. I congratulate Bishop Stuart Robinson, Acting Inspector Evan Quarmby and Carol James on their outstanding efforts in bringing us all together that night. Mission Australia and Anglicare's Simon Bennett gave extremely supportive advice to those many people who wanted to know how they could tell if someone was affected by ice. With great courage, Leigh Pollock told the story of her daughter, Brooke's, ice addiction and its terrible consequences. You could have heard a pin drop. It really brought home to me how very anxious the community of Goulburn is to take responsibility for this problem and to be involved in the solutions. Another forum is planned soon and a Southern Highlands community ice forum has been scheduled.

Like most regional areas, our community groups stay busy over winter with fundraising for local charities that have become regular social fixtures. Congratulations to Sue Hannan on the wonderful lunch she and her committee organised to raise money for much-needed palliative care and oncology equipment at Goulburn Base Hospital and to St Saviour's for a great heritage ball. Finally, I cannot let the opportunity pass without acknowledging the incredible efforts of the Murrumbateman community, headed by Mike Reid and Councillor Jasmin Jones, in collecting 930 signatures for a petition for a primary school in Murrumbateman. This is a very significant proportion of that community and underscores just how strongly this young community—with its hundreds of young families and children—wants its own school. Likewise, a petition in support of improvements to Yass High School was also extremely well supported. I was proud to present both of these petitions to officers of the Parliament. We certainly breed them tough and determined down my way.

VIETNAM VETERANS DAY

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—The Speaker) [6.07 p.m.]: It gives me great pleasure to talk about two ceremonies that I attended for Vietnam Veterans Day. I note that many members have spoken about Vietnam Veterans Day, which took place a week ago. I always make an attempt to go to Vietnam Veterans Day ceremonies because I have a very strong veteran community in my electorate. This year I went to the Huskisson Voyager Park memorial service and also to the service at Bomaderry. I laid a wreath and spoke at the Bomaderry service. My comments were centred on the fact that the Vietnam War was a war of my generation. When I attended high school the Vietnam War was beginning. I did not really understand at that time what it was all about. Nevertheless, when I attended university and studied history, arguments about the Vietnam War were raging all around me. I remember the sit-ins at Sydney university and the marches in Sydney protesting against the Vietnam War. Again, I did not really understand why people were protesting, but when I left university to start teaching, the Vietnam War was still raging.

In my generation young men were waiting for that marble to drop. They were waiting to become soldiers and to be sent away to Vietnam. After many long years, the country had every right to turn its back on that war and wonder what the hell we were doing there. However, one of the worst episodes in our history occurred when the Vietnam veterans returned to this country. They were treated absolutely dreadfully. One of my favourite sayings when I taught history was that the lesson of history is that we never learn the lessons of history. But after the return of those veterans from the Vietnam War I think we did learn the lesson that we should never treat our veterans in that manner. They had absolutely no choice but to go to a war that they did not understand—a war that I did not understand; that nobody really understood.

When I was at school the textbooks had not been written—I am showing my age—about the various battles that occurred. The textbooks about the 60,000 members of our navy, army and air force who were involved in the Vietnam War had not been written. There were no textbooks to tell us about the 500 Australians who lost their lives and, worse than that, the three million Vietnamese civilians and soldiers, and hundreds of thousands of Cambodians and Laotians who lost their lives. It really was a dreadful war. The textbooks had not been written and the statistics had not been compiled at that time. Now we come together to remember the Vietnam War.

We remember Long Tan, even though it was one battle, because it was symbolic. In that battle 10 soldiers were ambushed near a rubber plantation and 18 Australian men lost their lives. The Battle of Long Tan was symbolic of the Anzac spirit. Those soldiers were defending an area against thousands of North Vietnamese Vietcong, but they hung in there and many of them lost their lives. I am always proud to represent the South Coast electorate at these memorial services if I can attend them. I am certainly a supporter of the Korean War veterans—a very strong group—and the Vietnam veterans in my electorate.

I give credit to a wonderful man, Rod Simpson, a veteran who was in the Battle of Long Tan, who always runs the Vietnam Veterans service at Huskisson. He and his committee hold a great service at Voyager Park in Huskisson, one of the most beautiful places in which to gather to remember the Vietnam War. The service at Walsh Park in Bomaderry is very moving also. It always brings tears to my eyes because it is a war of my generation. Anzac Day also brings tears to my eyes because my father fought in World War II and died far too young, suffering various scars. He was a great father but he had scars from that war, as did those Vietnam veterans.

If we can ever learn anything from war—and there is probably not much—it is that we should never again treat our veterans disrespectfully. I do not think we ever will. I think this country has learned a huge lesson, with Anzac Day ceremonies growing so much. The fact that every year we see more young people involved—and every member knows this because they attend these ceremonies—is a wonderful thing; it is not a glorification of war. However, we should never forget the sacrifices that the young men and women have made over the years to protect this country, to keep it safe and above all keep it free and keep it a democracy. We should not forget that sometimes that is the reason wars are fought—to protect what we believe in. I congratulate everyone involved in the ceremonies and all the members who

attended the memorial services. It is a fine thing for us all to be involved.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.12 p.m.]: I commend the member for South Coast for raising the importance of Vietnam Veterans Day. It is important to acknowledge all our returned veterans, from Vietnam and other theatres of war over the years. The member referred to Huskisson, a gorgeous area on the South Coast. Huskisson is particularly close to my heart given that my dearly departed mother was born there. Although her father, my grandfather, Cecil Sinclair Williams, was stationed at Jervis Bay and did not serve in Vietnam, he saw action aboard HMAS *Australia* in the South Pacific, in particular, the Coral Sea, during World War II, one of the more significant areas of service and a particularly poignant time in the history of this country. I thank the member and acknowledge the dedication and sacrifice of all our returned veterans.

TRIBUTE TO UNCLE LES ELVIN

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) [6.13 p.m.]: Today I pay tribute to Uncle Les Elvin, who passed away unexpectedly on Sunday 16 August 2015, aged 77, not long after his seventy-seventh birthday. Uncle Les was an Aboriginal elder, a Wonnarua man, the first elder of the Aboriginal people recognised broadly and warmly in our community. He worked hard to bring people together and close the divide that unfortunately still exists between our Indigenous first Australians and those who came here later. Les was a Wonnarua man who was proud of his Indigenous heritage, and was always willing to share his culture and heritage with everyone. Les is survived by his wife, Jan, his three children and his seven grandchildren.

Les was a well-respected Aboriginal elder, artist and teacher. In 2008 he won the Australian NAIDOC Aboriginal Artist of the Year award and has since designed a number of the Newcastle Knights Indigenous jerseys. In 2011 he became the fourth person and the first non-former mayor of Muswellbrook to receive the keys to the city. In 2012 he was named Cessnock city's Citizen of the Year. In 2014 Les assisted the bid by Cessnock City Council for the Asian Cup by hand painting boomerangs, which were sent to all 16 countries taking part to welcome them and ask them to use Cessnock city as their base for the Asian Cup. Eventually Japan, perhaps Asia's premier team, took up that offer.

In June this year Les was awarded the major prize in the Weston Art Show. Les was a humble and generous man who touched the lives of all he met. It was fantastic to see so many school students at his funeral. The visual presentation during the funeral service showed many photos of Les painting with young people. He managed to win the respect of the intellectual and he won the hearts of the young people. Somehow at the age of 77 he was never seen as old by these young people; he was seen as young, warm and generous. Les and Jan also opened their hearts and homes to many former inmates when they left jail.

I was not aware of the amount of work that Les had been doing in the jail to try to help Indigenous prisoners get in touch with their Aboriginal heritage, to show them that they belong and have a place in society. He told them they should be proud of their history and should embrace it. When some of these inmates left jail they sometimes got in touch with Les, who helped them get back on their feet. Interestingly, Les died of a heart attack at the opening of the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council Conference held at Cessnock. He had just given a welcome to country to the delegates when he collapsed from a heart attack and died in front of them. With the indulgence of the House I will read into *Hansard* the last words that Uncle Les Elvin spoke, which was to welcome the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council to our area. He said:

Good morning Anagunga welcome. My name is Les Elvin.

William Jonas my Aboriginal grandfather was of the fresh water people from the Paterson, Allen and Williams river region known as the Gringai clan, part of the Wonnarua Nation.

Firstly I would like to acknowledge the Wonnarua people as the traditional custodians of the land upon which this important event is being held. The words Wonnarua means hills and plains. To know the boundaries of our custodian land, these words of knowledge have been passed on through time, the land upon which the waters flow into the water ways of the Huma or Hunter River are the custodian land of the Wonnarua people.

This time of the year we celebrate Naidoc. Naidoc [The] Theme for 2015, We Stand On Sacred Ground, Learn, Respect and Celebrate seems to be a fitting theme to this event. [this local land council event we are here to celebrate today].

When we talk about our custodian land, we are talking about our sacred ground. For Aboriginal Australians, we might mean homeland, or tribal or clan area and we might mean more than just a place on the map. For us, country is a word for all values, places, resources, and stories and cultural obligations associated with that area and its features.

I am a proud Wonnarua man who has lived in this area most of my life, and have seen many changes good and not so good, but today's event I see as a strong step towards closing the gap. I would like to welcome all Aboriginal people from different custodian lands.

I would like to welcome everyone to this event. It is the belief of the Wonnarua people that by giving welcome we are inviting you onto our custodian land.

I would like to pay my respects to all elders past and present. In remembering the elders of the past it is our way of acknowledging and recognising Aboriginal people as the first Australians.

On behalf of all Aboriginal people I would like to invite you to learn our culture, respect our culture and join in and help us celebrate our culture.

On behalf of the Wonnarua Anagunga Welcome to our country.

Rest in peace.

FISHERMANS BAY PROPOSED LAND DEVELOPMENT

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) [6.18 p.m.]: There are many places in Port Stephens of incredible beauty and environmental significance. One such place is a parcel of land that sits between the communities of Fishermans Bay and Anna Bay. It is a pristine coastal tract of land, which is straddled by the Tomaree National Park. Living in the national park, there are no less than 24 threatened fauna species, including koalas, powerful owls and sugar gliders. Local residents frequently see these beautiful creatures and indeed, on the last occasion I visited the area, I was delighted to see a snoozing koala in the tree tops. Unbelievably, earlier this year a joint regional planning panel conducted a hearing and approved the development of this pristine parcel of land by UrbanGrowth for a 106-lot residential subdivision. But I am here today with good news—people power can work.

Last Friday, after a lengthy, hard-fought battle by the community, UrbanGrowth finally abandoned its plans for the 24-hectare residential subdivision. I commend and congratulate the founders and members of the Anna Bay Community Action Group, which subsequently became the South Tomaree Community Association, on their tireless work over many years to oppose irresponsible development. I make special mention of Roz Scoles and Simone Aurino for their passion for the environment and the community, leading the charge against the proposed development. Stuart Dayman and many others also made significant contributions over many years.

I also recognise the University of Newcastle's legal centre for its willingness to take on the case on behalf of the community. Without passionate and committed people from the community challenging

the decisions every step of the way and the legal team to back them up, we would have seen this unique tract of land gone for good. But why should it take a community having to commence action in the Land and Environment Court against UrbanGrowth and the Joint Regional Planning Panel [JRPP]—both government instrumentalities—for anyone to look properly at what was at stake? Surely the planning and approval process is flawed if no genuine scrutiny of the application occurred at any stage in the process until court proceedings were initiated.

How can a joint regional planning panel be the final arbiter of a development application in such an environmentally sensitive area when it is a government agency that is making the application? The absurdity of the process is highlighted by the fact that there were only four members sitting on the JRPP for the hearing, two of whom are councillors on the very council that gave the initial approval for the development. One of those two councillors was the mayor of Port Stephens. Not content to sit back and watch the environment destroyed, the community maintained a campaign that I was privileged to witness and support. The campaign included not only the commencement of legal proceedings but also the commissioning of aerial photography, independent wildlife assessment reports and meetings with Department of Planning officials.

The Hunter Koala Preservation Society was always a vocal opponent of the plan in an area where the mayor of Port Stephens uses the term "koala-lover" as an insult. Unlike reports prepared in support of the development application [DA], the society was able to establish that koalas are often found in the Fishermans Bay area. The lack of transparency and communication from UrbanGrowth and the Port Stephens Council from the start of the ordeal was astounding. It would have been easy for many people to give up—but not the group to whom I pay special tribute today.

They were accused of being anti-development—a charge they firmly denied and stood up to, pointing out that when the DA was filed by UrbanGrowth 2,500 properties were on the market in Port Stephens, which is one of the regions hit hardest by mortgage foreclosures. In other words, if people wanted to move to the area there was housing in abundance. Pristine habitat in a vulnerable wildlife corridor did not need to be bulldozed, paved and sold. They also drew attention to large tracts of privately owned and cleared land in the same area, which would have been much more suitable for development. Common sense did not prevail. UrbanGrowth continued in its bid to decimate a sensitive environment. I will share some of the Facebook comments that appeared after the news of the community's victory:

Most people told us not to waste our time, some quite unkindly, but we had to try. The wonderful group of people who make up the Anna Bay Community Action Group, now South Tomaree Community Association, have facilitated a virtual miracle proving that individuals CAN make a difference in our collective world.

Unfortunately, I share the community's fear that it is not over yet. The land remains in the ownership of the Land and Housing Corporation and forms part of the Crown Lands Homesites Program. The fear is seemingly justified. It has been reported recently that the decision by UrbanGrowth to withdraw its application has disappointed Mayor Bruce MacKenzie. He vowed he would "live to see the day when there will be houses on this land". I support the community in its call to have the land returned to the people to ensure that the spectre of irresponsible development does not continue to loom large over the community, or future generations. I thank the tireless community campaigners for their unwavering commitment to environmental sustainability and the right of future generations to experience pristine Australian bushland.

BOX HILL ILLEGAL WASTE DISPOSAL

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.23 p.m.]: A month ago a local resident in my electorate noticed waste building materials being illegally deposited late at night onto a five-acre block of rural land in Box Hill, and raised the alarm immediately with the council. The council inspected the property at 25 Terry Road, Box Hill, and issued a clean-up notice to a company by the

name of Demo Worx on 15 August this year to be implemented by 16 September 2015. On Monday 17 August, another resident contacted me advising that the owner of this site had put a leaflet into residents' letterboxes stating that asbestos of both a friable and bonded nature has been detected on the site. As we know, friable asbestos is 100 per cent pure and, because it is very soft, it can become airborne and extremely dangerous if it is blown around. If it is subsequently breathed in, it can cause asbestosis and/or mesothelioma.

The resident who contacted me said that at the time a westerly wind was blowing straight across nearby homes, which are as close as 30 meters from that dangerous material. At the time the asbestos had not been buried or covered and was exposed to the elements. It was just lying in a heap on the property. Several very young children live with families in adjoining properties. I contacted the council immediately and was advised that the owner of the property is none other than Coles Supermarkets. Coles apparently purchased this five-acre rural block of land at 25 Terry Road, Box Hill. The property is in the middle of a new residential release area. The site eventually will be used for a new Coles Supermarket as the area develops.

In the meantime, Coles has leased the property to receive some income from its investment until construction of the supermarket begins. The company that Coles leased the site to is KMAC Waste Services Pty Ltd trading under the business name of Demo Worx, which is a demolition company that removes waste materials from building sites across Sydney. Following my latest representations to the council, the property is now in virtual lockdown with a 24-hour security guard parked outside. There is an encompassing mesh and steel boundary fence with several large "Keep Out, Asbestos" signs on it. When I contacted the local council, the response stated:

... the tenants were unlawfully using the site as a waste transfer station. Since being advised of the use, council has met with solicitors acting for Coles. Coles have since terminated the lease and evicted the tenants as the tenants are known for similar dumping incidents at nearby Riverstone. Security has been placed on site to ensure there is no more dumping.

The site was inspected two weeks ago by a Hygienist who located both friable and bonded asbestos. Under the advice of the Hygienist, Coles have since covered the asbestos and screened the site off.

We [the council] are interviewing the tenants this afternoon and the solicitors acting for Coles on Friday. Given the presence of asbestos a modified Clean up Notice will be issued on the tenant this afternoon. The properties adjoining the site have all been notified of the contamination issue. The EPA has also been advised

I wrote back to the council immediately and stated:

Where the hell does Coles get off, leasing a parcel of rural land to a demolition company??? Are they for real? Anyone with an ounce of common sense would know a waste/demolition company is going to bring illegal waste material onto this site!

On past experience in these matters, it has always fallen to the sometimes unfortunate OWNERS of the land to ultimately pay for the clean-up and or removal of contaminated waste, if other parties cannot be found or prosecuted.

I hope in this case the same applies and Coles receives a healthy fine for both the contamination of their land and their own ignorance and stupidity. Let Coles know if they procrastinate for one minute in cleaning up this site I will proceed to raise this matter in the media, feel free to pass this email onto Coles.

This email was sent on Monday 17 August and the council passed on my email to Coles. Since that day,

instead of immediately undertaking to clean up its site and protect my community from the potential hazards of asbestos, Coles has spent an entire week trying to make contact with me and my office by phone, email and mobile phone. I have advised my office to tell Coles representatives that I do not intend to talk to them and to tell Coles to clean up its site. I believe that Coles, through its complete lack of due diligence in relation to checking to whom it leased the site, is complicit in the contamination of this property. Coles' failure to clean up the site immediately and remove the asbestos has extremely dangerous consequences for the lives of people in my community, none the least the adjoining owners.

As promised, I have undertaken to raise the matter in the press. Channel 7 covered the story last Sunday night, with several residents raising their concerns publicly not only about the asbestos on this site but also about the other dangerous materials that were burnt on the site, sending dangerous fumes across neighbouring homes. While the demolition company is completely to blame for bringing illegal materials onto the site, Coles failed to fulfil its responsibility and duty of care to our community by failing to clean up the site immediately. Last weekend we had torrential rain and the property in question is now awash. Contaminated material is running off the site into nearby creeks and waterways. I again urge Coles to clean up its site, chase down the tenants to whom it leased the site, and ensure that the demolition company is prosecuted and punished for depositing illegal material on this property.

BURWOOD GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) [6.28 p.m.]: Today I express support for students, staff and parents of Burwood Girls High School. I have some of the most outstanding schools in New South Wales in my electorate of Strathfield. When I speak about those schools, I refer in particular to Burwood and Strathfield girls high schools. Tonight I speak about Burwood Girls High School, which is a leader in recognising and celebrating diversity. It is a school that advocates for inclusion and tolerance while recognising that facilitating where it is most needed requires real and meaningful action. That is why this week the students at Burwood Girls High School planned to show the movie *Gayby Baby* on Wear it Purple Day.

That important film tells the story of four children—Gus, Ebony, Graham and Matt—whose parents are gay. It is a story reminiscent of hundreds of stories of children across New South Wales and Australia. What has not been widely published is that this film has a very strong and personal connection to Burwood Girls High School community. The director, Maya Newell, is a Burwood Girls High alumni, as was Katherine Hudson, the founder of the Wear it Purple Day, and I acknowledge and congratulate both women. However, as members are aware, yesterday Burwood Girls High School was banned from showing *Gayby Baby* during school hours. This ban, now in place at every public school across New South Wales, was in reaction to a headline in a Sydney newspaper.

Craig Laundry, the Federal member for Reid, stated that he was inundated with calls of complaint to his office. As the member for Strathfield, I would have expected I would also have received those complaints, but I did not. I received seven emails, six from the same source. I replied and indicated that I had spoken to the principal and that she had confirmed that attendance at the screening of the film and participation in Wear it Purple Day were optional. I also indicated that the principal had my full support—and she continues to have my full support.

Prior to the ban, neither Burwood Girls High School nor the Department of Education had received any complaints. The president of the Parents and Citizens Association has also confirmed that he received no complaints from the community or parents. So I am a little perplexed at the comments of the Federal member about the flood of complaints he has received. I am also disappointed that he has made this issue about same-sex marriage. This is not about same-sex marriage. The students at Burwood Girls High School have no political agenda. Cath Sefton, a Burwood Girls High School parent, was quoted in *The Guardian* today:

What the school is doing as part of Wear it Purple Day actually has nothing to do with gay

marriage, it is about respect for diversity, about people who are different from you.

One of the best things about the school is it teaches people to respect other people.

As I said earlier, I am proud of the students and whole school community, not only for their commitment to social justice and inclusion but also for the grace they have shown. When they could have been silenced, they have acted with incredible dignity. Today at an event celebrating women in policing, I saw school leaders Qisthy, Eve and Lucy. I gave them a hug and told them how proud I was of them. They are strong and forthright young women. They are young women who are brave and empathetic, and they are young women who have taken a stand against discrimination and intolerance. I say to the Burwood Girls High School community that I stand with them, and tomorrow I will be with them on Wear it Purple Day. There is so much I could say in support of Burwood Girls High School. However, I feel the best way that I can express my admiration is to record in *Hansard* the statement posted by the school prefects on Facebook. The post, which had almost 13,000 likes and almost 3,000 shares last time I checked, states:

The Prefects of BGHS wish to express their disappointment at the media coverage of the school's intended showing of the documentary *Gayby Baby*. As Burwood girls, we pride ourselves on our support of diversity—in whatever form it takes. Throughout the year we partake in multiple events which aim to support and celebrate the diversity of our school community as a collective.

These include International Day—which celebrates our multicultural community—this year raising \$15,000 for international charities, an annual Iftar dinner to support our Islamic community, and Lunar New Year celebrations to support our Asian community, amongst a range of others.

We consider ourselves leaders in the push for equality and acceptance—for all people. When it is considered that the LGBTIQ community has the highest rates of suicide of any population in Australia and experience significantly higher rates of mental health issues, we consider our support to be just one small step in creating better understanding in the community. We are a proud school. We are proud of our culture. And we are proud of the leadership our school shows in supporting all views and the right for all people to be accepted.

I say to Burwood Girls High School students that as the member for Strathfield I am proud of them.

VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC COMMEMORATION

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) [6.33 p.m.]: As members know, recently we commemorated Victory in the Pacific [VP] Day, which marks the surrender of Japan to the Allied Forces and the end of the Second World War. This year is the seventieth anniversary of that event. I was invited to lay a wreath on Saturday 15 August in recognition of those who served. It was a solemn occasion that I was privileged to share with friends—the members of the Epping RSL sub-branch. The men and women who lived through the Second World War are often said to be our finest generation. It was a generation faced with a palpable threat to their freedom and way of life. For them, losing was not an option.

It is the incredible spirit, bravery, selflessness, sacrifice, resilience, and resolve of that generation that sets them apart. They defended not only their own freedom but also ours, ensuring peace and prosperity for generations to come. The Second World War touched nearly every life on the planet in some way. Everyone made sacrifices, be it at home or abroad, though some were forced to endure more than others, which brings me to my friend Harry Fransman, who has lived in Epping for more than 20 years. He was born in Rotterdam, Holland, in 1922 and is a survivor of the Holocaust. Harry is now 92 years old and is an inspiring individual. Following the Nazi invasion of Holland, Harry was taken from his family and eventually found himself in a camp called Blackheimer, which was a sub-camp of Auschwitz. I cannot begin to imagine the inhumanity and despair of prisoners in such a place. Being Jewish was his crime.

Some members may recall last year seeing Harry's art collection displayed in the foyer of this place. The collection is called "Drawing on Memory", and contains depictions of the various miracles that have occurred in Harry's life that meant he survived against all odds. The exhibition was hosted by Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile, who is also a friend of Harry. These moving artworks have also been displayed in the Sydney Jewish Museum. Although it is one of immense hardship, Harry's story is not without a happy ending. He eventually escaped from his Nazi captors and returned to Holland. He went on to serve in the armed forces in the Dutch East-Indies, known today as Indonesia.

Harry later migrated to Australia, and today he lives in Epping with his wife, Marilyn. He still volunteers at the local St Vincent De Paul in Epping, a charity he has worked for over many years. He is also a war veteran and marches down George Street every Anzac Day. He invited me to attend this year's VP Day commemoration. Those who have met Harry know that he is a talkative, polite, and friendly character, always willing to share his remarkable story over a cup of tea. His memory is as sharp as ever. Harry feels it is his calling to share his story of survival, in the spirit of peace so that future generations never forget the horror of the Second World War and that we never repeat the mistakes of the past. Despite enduring much more hardship than most, Harry remains positive and friendly and he is forever grateful to God for his miraculous journey of survival.

I would describe Harry as "living history". It is one thing to read about these events in books, but to hear firsthand from someone who has lived through such times and survived the Holocaust is a chilling reminder of how recently these events occurred. It is also a reminder of how lucky we are to live in such a peaceful and free society. Harry, I thank you for your friendship and for inviting me to join you and other local veterans on VP Day 2015. I look forward to sharing more cups of tea and hearing more of your remarkable story. The tale of Harry's journey is one of many inspiring accounts from a generation of Australians who truly understand the spirit of mateship, courage and sacrifice. Members can imagine how many more inspiring Australians are out there with untold stories to share. They could be living just around the corner. So, in commemoration of VP Day 2015, I salute our finest generation and thank them for their service. Lest we forget.

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.38 p.m.]: I commend the member for Epping for sharing that inspirational story of Harry Fransman. It is one of the many of stories that we are aware of across all our communities. On this occasion it is a demonstration of the member's connectedness with his community and his care and concern for all people. On behalf of the broader Parliament, I thank Harry for sharing his drawings in this place as he has in other places.

RODRIGO FUENTES AND LIVERPOOL CITY COUNCIL

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) [6.39 p.m.]: I draw the attention of the House to the extraordinary situation in which a constituent of mine, Rodrigo Fuentes, finds himself. I hasten to add that this situation affects many of my constituents, not only Mr Fuentes. Those of us who have been in public office for any length of time will inevitably have come across odd, stupid, unintended and utterly bizarre decisions that are made from time to time. Most public officials and employees try to do the right thing and genuinely try to make good, sensible decisions. As with any other group, however, sometimes they get it spectacularly wrong. Regrettably, that often happens at the local government level. I have spent enough time in that sector not to assume a default position of always attacking local government. However, the case I raise tonight indicates that Liverpool Council has been inexplicably stupid, utterly inconsistent and has made a laughable decision.

Rodrigo Fuentes recently built a house in William Buckley Drive in the suburb of Carnes Hill. It is a nice and newly developed area of my electorate behind Carnes Hill Shopping Centre. Until not long ago it was vacant land. Newly developing estates and suburbs have been a feature of my electorate from the time I was first elected to represent it, and even before that. Having completed building his house for himself and his family, Mr Fuentes not unreasonably wanted to place a driveway at his house. Every other completed house in the suburb has a driveway, of course. He did not want a particularly exceptional

driveway. He wanted just an ordinary driveway similar to that of thousands of others in the electorate—indeed similar to that of several councillors and even members of Parliament in our region. He wanted it to be a grey colour.

There are good practical reasons for it to be grey, and it is a very common colour for driveways. Once again, it seems the same as that of the colour of the driveway of some councillors and members of Parliament in our region, and indeed thousands of others. Naturally, he wanted it the same colour for its whole length, from garage to roadway gutter. However, he was told that the council would not allow this. The council demanded that the part of the driveway on the council's own footpath be plain white concrete—not that frankly it will remain white for all that long, I suspect. That is not a requirement that I have noticed the council insisting upon in other suburbs, nor apparently in the rest of Carnes Hill or indeed the rest of William Buckley Drive. This is part of what Mr Fuentes wrote to me:

I just finished building my house and I wanted to have a grey driveway, nothing out of the ordinary. Liverpool City Council said to me and to the concreting company that I was using, that the driveway area on council land had to be left plain. I looked around and pointed out that more than half of the houses on my street have the driveway of their choice whether it be stencil or coloured concrete all the way to the road.

He further said:

It's not that I was going for a high gloss slippery surface. I was told that it must be plain concrete with no colour. My concreter was also told that if he did use colour concrete all the way down he would be penalised and not allowed to work within the Liverpool council area in future jobs. My concreter said to me that the council's decision doesn't make sense because my neighbour directly across has his grey coloured driveway all the way up to the road. I would understand if this was a new estate and everybody was going to have to have this 50-50 style driveway, but why introduce this requirement half way through a development phase. It is very unfair. If they have tried to introduce a level of uniformity in the area they have failed miserably. It looks terrible."

Being a law-abiding citizen, Mr Fuentes did as he was told by council. Three weeks after his driveway was completed a house around the corner had a full colour driveway poured. Understandably, Mr Fuentes wants to know what is going on. Why is he forced to comply with what he regards as a silly rule while other people are not? When I was first contacted by Mr Fuentes my initial reaction was that even Liverpool council could not be this stupid. I should have known better. I went out to verify Mr Fuentes' concerns and he is absolutely right. Whilst I certainly know Carnes Hill and had doorknocked in William Buckley Drive as recently as March, I had not paid that much intimate attention to driveway colour. Mr Fuentes is certainly correct. There are quite a number of 50-50 council mandated driveways, but there are just as many full coloured driveways, including in very recently constructed houses.

In William Buckley Drive, where I counted, 13 driveways were 50-50 and 17 were full coloured. One driveway was completely white so it did not count in either of those categories. Indeed, the house around the corner had just had a full coloured driveway laid several days before. One could tell it was just done because it was still taped off when I looked at it. Whatever council's policy is here, it is a failure. As Mr Fuentes said, it is an absurdity. If there is justification for the council's approach, then it should apply to the whole suburb and not in the haphazard and random way it has. In Mr Fuentes' street at least half the houses have full length full coloured driveways, including a house directly opposite his.

There is then the issue of whether the policy makes sense to begin with. On the aesthetic of it, I agree with Mr Fuentes. They look pretty awful. I wrote to the council's chief executive officer on 18 August but so far have not received a response. Indeed, I have not even received an acknowledgement. That is not the first occasion on which the chief executive officer has dealt with complaints I have made by simply ignoring them. Amongst council decision-making, this is as silly as it gets. I will be pleased to hear when

the adults are back in control at Liverpool City Council.

Private members' statements concluded.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 6.44 p.m. until
Tuesday 8 September 2015 at 12 noon.**
