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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday 28 October 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.

BAIL AMENDMENT BILL 2015

TERRORISM (POLICE POWERS) AMENDMENT BILL 2015

Messages received from the Legislative Council returning the bills without amendment.

STRATA SCHEMES MANAGEMENT BILL 2015

STRATA SCHEMES DEVELOPMENT BILL 2015

Messages received from the Legislative Council returning the bills with amendments.

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

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Notices of Motions

General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) given.

HOME BUILDING AND DUTIES AMENDMENT (LOOSE-FILL ASBESTOS INSULATION AFFECTED PREMISES) BILL 2015

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 22 October 2015.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [10.10 a.m.]: On behalf of the New South Wales Labor Opposition and the shadow Minister in the other place, the Hon. Peter Primrose, I speak in debate on the Home Building and Duties Amendment (Loose-fill Asbestos Insulation Affected Premises) Bill 2015. The Opposition welcomes the bill and will always welcome measures that reduce the impact that asbestos has on our communities. As noted by the Minister, the bill relates only to loose-fill asbestos—a type of asbestos that is 100 per cent pure. This kind of asbestos is not bonded or mixed with any kind of adhesive and therefore consists only of asbestos that was crushed in a hopper and pumped into roof spaces or cavities. Consequently, the asbestos fibres could easily be disturbed and become airborne and may be inhaled. Such fibres can also over time leave roof cavities and migrate into other parts of a premises.

This is a huge issue and needs to be addressed. The bill before the House seeks to implement a number of recommendations made by the Loose-Fill Asbestos Insulation Taskforce. Such recommendations include the creation of a public register that lists properties containing loose-fill asbestos insulation, the requirement that such premises display warning notices identifying the property

as one that contains loose-fill asbestos, and that a duty concession should be provided to owners of properties that contain loose-fill asbestos. This bill does implement these recommendations. It should be noted that the voluntary purchase and demolition program that was established earlier this year provides the flexibility the affected residents require to accommodate their individual circumstances—a provision that is absent from the Australian Capital Territory [ACT] program. Under this program, affected residents are presented with two options. Residents may be either adequately compensated for the purchase of their land and property or for the purchase of the building or buildings only—should they opt to only sell the building or buildings, the residents would retain the ownership of the land. In both cases properties would be purchased at the full market value as if they did not contain loose-fill asbestos. Such valuations would be made by an independent valuer.

The creation of a public register will allow members of the public to have access to a list of affected premises. This will enable members of the public to make informed decisions when purchasing a property. Informed consumers make informed decisions. This register does just that. What astonishes me is the fact that the Minister opposite said in his second reading speech that this measure "aligns with the New South Wales Government's commitment to open data". This is something that those opposite have repeatedly claimed in all sorts of debates and this claim continues to astonish me. Nothing could be further from the truth. I have said this before, but I think this debate warrants saying it again: This Government is not transparent. This Government has made secrecy and refusing access to information into an art form. The fact that the Premier recently announced that the Government had scrapped 321 of the State's targets for the sake of 30 "priority areas"—none of which makes any reference to asbestos and its reduction—makes a complete mockery of claims that the Government believes in transparency.

The bill also requires residents to display a warning sign near or on the electrical meter box marking the premise as one affected by loose-fill asbestos. The bill will also make it an offence to remove, or cause or permit to be removed, any such warning sign. This will ensure that anyone, especially tradespeople who might work on the property, will be alerted to the fact that the property contains loose-fill asbestos. The bill makes provisions to ensure that affected home owners have access to a stamp duty concession when purchasing a new home. This concession is part of the package of financial support aimed to assist affected residents. As the Minister opposite highlighted, the concession is capped at the amount payable by the Government for the affected property had it been the land purchaser.

I should also note the fact that as this bill was only introduced late last Thursday, advice has been sought from a number of stakeholders—including Shelter NSW, Unions NSW, the Asbestos Diseases Foundation and Local Government NSW—on the adequacy of the provisions being proposed. Although I found it laughable that this Government has claimed that it is the champion of open data, we on this side of the House do not oppose this bill. We agree that this bill has merit and will ensure that the very negative effects of loose-fill asbestos insulation are minimised. The provisions in the bill will ensure that members of the public are informed of properties infested with loose-fill asbestos and can make informed decisions when buying properties. The provisions ensure that tradespeople, service providers and emergency services are aware of affected buildings and can take the necessary precautions when working on the property. The provisions also ensure that affected home owners have access to adequate financial support when purchasing new properties. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) [10.16 a.m.]: I speak in debate on the Home Building and Duties Amendment (Loose-fill Asbestos Insulation Affected Premises) Bill 2015, a bill that reflects the work of this Government on this issue and our commitment prior to the election. I commend the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation for bringing in this bill to start the long journey of dealing with loose-fill asbestos installed in homes by Mr Fluffy. I also commend the Minister for Finance, Services and Property for his stewardship, especially before the election, in putting together the Loose-Fill Asbestos Insulation Taskforce. This task force has made recommendations that have given hope to the many families affected by loose-fill asbestos.

Mr Fluffy was a small business in the Australian Capital Territory [ACT] that sold some of its loose-fill asbestos insulation to home owners in New South Wales in the seventies and the eighties. Unfortunately, this insulation product that originated in South Africa came to Australia via New Zealand. I wonder if, had the product come directly from its country of origin, it would not have passed the test and therefore would not have ended up in the homes of many residents of my region. Queanbeyan, in my electorate of Monaro, is the epicentre of the homes in New South Wales affected by this insulation, with something like 60-plus homes and an apartment block containing loose-fill asbestos.

The forensic demolition of a home in the ACT in early 2014 showed that although this home had been cleaned under a Federal clean-up some 30 years before to remove the bulk of the loose-fill asbestos, fibres remained in that home—within the cavities, the subfloor and the soil. That meant the home was still unsafe as the fibres had penetrated into furniture and clothing and through cracks in cornices, vents and wardrobes. The installation of this product means that affected homes are unsafe for families to live in, although many families have lived in these homes for decades.

New South Wales residents, especially those in Queanbeyan, were left behind in the eighties and nineties when the Federal Government's \$100 million clean-up was undertaken only in the Australian Capital Territory [ACT]. Many in New South Wales have lived with this issue for decades. Last year this Government worked with crossbenchers, including Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile in the upper House, to hold an inquiry, set up a task force and set parameters for that task force. The work of the task force has led to the decision by this Government to invest \$250 million in dealing with the issue in New South Wales.

The affected areas include Queanbeyan, Palerang Shire and some residences in Cooma and on the South Coast. Affected homes have also been identified in some other areas of New South Wales. In my region many families have had to deal with this issue silently, on their own, for fear that their homes will be devalued because of the presence of Mr Fluffy asbestos. Those homes are mortgaged and the families have to deal with that debt. The Government made the quick decision, following the recommendations of the task force, to put in place the \$250 million buyback scheme. The scheme provides financial support to home owners to carry out minor works to stop asbestos fibres becoming airborne. It also provides financial assistance to home owners who have left their homes and moved into rental properties.

This is about supporting affected families in our communities. I have met affected families in my office and have seen the trauma that they are experiencing. Many have lived in their homes for decades. More recently, young families who have unknowingly bought homes containing loose-fill asbestos have been caught in a trap. Buying your first home is meant to be a life-changing, rewarding experience, but for many it has become a noose around their neck. They are left with a debt and an asset that has been devalued.

The New South Wales Government has been criticised for its decision. The ACT Government decided last year to demolish all the affected homes in the ACT and buy back and resell the land. The New South Wales Government looked at what was happening in the ACT. Here in New South Wales there are unique situations that the ACT has not encountered, and it is fantastic that the New South Wales Government has allowed for that. That means we have flexibility and a choice between buyback and demolition. People can stay on their land once it has been cleared and cleaned of loose-fill asbestos fibres. People can rebuild their homes, with financial assistance from this Government. For those who have had enough, who have lived for decades in those homes and want to get away, the opportunity to sell up and leave is also a great relief.

This is the start of a journey. The problem will not be fixed overnight, but the Government has put in place financial assistance. This is the light at the end of the tunnel. We will continue to test homes. The financial support from the New South Wales Government will provide the certainty to allow more people to come forward. Many have lived with the problem silently, worried that exposing it will affect their

families and their finances because their asset will be devalued. The Government has put in place measures to protect emergency services personnel who may have to work in these homes in times of crisis and the tradies who have to crawl through the roof cavities—some of whom may not previously have been aware of the presence of loose-fill asbestos. Most importantly, the Government is supporting families and giving them hope.

This bill makes a number of amendments to the legislation. A key amendment is the stamp duty concession for affected families who choose to buy a new home. For example, if a home owner were to transfer their affected home to the New South Wales Government at a value of \$350,000, the duty payable would be \$11,240. If the home owner then purchased a replacement home for \$400,000, the duty payable would be \$13,490. The concession would be capped at \$11,240 and the home owner would pay only the difference of \$2,250. We are working with affected home owners because we know this is a tough time.

It is wrong to think that home owners will be set free and financially supported in a way that means they will not lose out. All affected home owners in New South Wales and the ACT will pay a financial price. There is no question about that. They are already paying the emotional price, but they are going to pay a financial price. No-one will be better off, but the Government is working with home owners to provide opportunities so that they can start a new life in a new home with a minimised financial burden. That is why this bill to implement stamp duty concessions is important.

As the member for Monaro I have campaigned on the problem of loose-fill asbestos for a number of years. Members of all political persuasions come to this House to make a difference to their community. In the four years that I have been the member for Monaro, I have led on this issue, with the support of the Labor Party, the crossbenchers and the previous member for Monaro, the Hon. Steve Whan, who was part of the upper House inquiry. I give credit to everybody involved because this is not about politics; it is about outcomes. It is about people and families. The outcome is that now in New South Wales we have a fantastic opportunity to give people a new start in life in a new home that meets their needs. I commend the Premier, the Ministers who put together the program and the task force for its fantastic work.

Most importantly, I thank the families who have worked together to bring their cause to the attention of the Government. The Government has responded and will continue to work with them. I am sure that in decades to come we will still be identifying affected homes. What the Government is doing today is setting a precedent to manage the issue in the future. We want to minimise the impact on families. The changes that are enacted, based on the recommendations of the task force, will protect home owners. People buying a home will be aware of whether it contains loose-fill asbestos. Tradies who work in those homes will also be made aware. We do not want to risk their health.

The health issues are a story for another day, and probably for a future Government to deal with. Right now, it is important to provide certainties for the many families that have been burdened with Mr Fluffy loose-fill asbestos. "Mr Fluffy" has become almost a swear word in my region. It is unbelievable that a small business like Mr Fluffy was able to have such an impact on so many families. In the ACT there are 1,041 affected homes. There are probably 200 affected homes in New South Wales. That is the legacy of Mr Fluffy. I am confident that the New South Wales Government and the ACT Government are doing what they can to rid our communities of this issue once and for all, for the benefit of not only home owners but the broader community. Clearing these homes is good news for the wider region.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) [10.26 a.m.]: I speak in support of the Home Building and Duties Amendment (Loose-fill Asbestos Insulation Affected Premises) Bill 2015. I note the comments made by the member for Monaro. Loose-fill asbestos has affected many people in his electorate. This legislation is a credit to him and to the Government. Asbestos-related issues are among the worst crimes to have been committed against the people of New South Wales. Very few people, if any, have gone to prison for it. Asbestos has affected thousands of people. There will be thousands more affected by

asbestos-related diseases because of James Hardie, Mr Fluffy and others who sold their products knowing full well that they could injure people. The popularity of do-it-yourself renovations means that future generations may be affected by asbestos-related diseases. Thousands of victims are yet to find out that they are affected. It is terrible.

I am pleased that the Government has introduced this legislation. Many have died slow and painful deaths because of asbestos. Many families have suffered as a result of weak safety and building regulations in the past. There are many people who are unaware that they have an asbestos-related disease or will soon be affected by one. In the late 1960s a Canberra-based entrepreneur called Mr Fluffy began to sell loose-fill asbestos insulation. The product was never industry standard or supported by the building and insulation industry. Mr Fluffy sold it cheaply and convinced young families to put it into new homes.

I shudder to think how many children have been affected by this loose-fill asbestos going through their homes and into their furniture and clothes, as has occurred in cases of asbestos poisoning. The asbestos used by Mr Fluffy was shipped from South Africa and did not undergo any bonding process to stabilise it. It was just loose and the fibres were in the air to be breathed in—by the workers who installed it, by the families who lived in the houses, by other workers and tradies who worked on the houses and, of course, by the emergency services personnel who cleaned it out from the houses. They were all exposed to the asbestos.

If those affected houses had caught fire, asbestos particles would have become airborne throughout the street and the area and would have been breathed in by members of NSW Fire and Rescue and other emergency workers. As I have mentioned, even today a person entering a roof cavity containing asbestos can disturb the asbestos and cause the occupiers of the house to become victims of this hazardous substance. Some years ago the United Kingdom had a similar problem when a small number of asbestos workers filled their ceilings with leftover fibres from a processing plant where they were working as a cheap and makeshift method of insulating their homes. Those workers, in turn, suffered asbestos poisoning.

More than 1,000 homes in Canberra were affected, plus an unknown number in regional New South Wales. I wonder how far the installation of this asbestos spread throughout New South Wales. The results have been disastrous. What seemed to be a cheap solution became a hazard, as the asbestos was found to leak into the living areas of homes. Health inspectors in the Australian Capital Territory attempted to ban the Mr Fluffy business after they found that unsuspecting workers had been breathing in the substance. Unfortunately, at that time evidence of asbestos-related diseases was only beginning to become publicly known, even though companies such as James Hardie and their boards knew decades before about the effect of asbestos. The Australian Securities and Investments Commission and other investigations into James Hardie found such evidence and other companies also knew that this asbestos was not a safe material and could kill people.

By the late 1980s, the Australian Capital Territory Government ordered a complete audit of Canberra homes in search of the substance. The estimated cost of treating affected homes was up to \$60,000 per building. In many cases it was cheaper—and the only safe option—to demolish the entire home. In some cases couples with a couple of kids had put all their savings towards a mortgage to buy their house only to have it taken away from them as a result of Mr Fluffy and the threat of asbestos poisoning. Perhaps the most horrifying aspect of the loose-fill asbestos insulation was the poor record keeping. We simply do not know how many homes contain the product. We do not know what happened to the low-wage workers who handled the product. We cannot confirm who used the product in Sydney. It could be throughout parts of the western suburbs, on the North Shore and in the eastern suburbs. It could be anywhere and it is a matter of real concern.

Further, without testing by experts, we do not even know what the product looks like. The colour may have been changed or it may have been put into different products or bagged differently. I am

pleased that the Government is acting on this issue. The New South Wales Government has provided a system whereby warning signs must be displayed at premises where loose-fill asbestos insulation has been identified. That is a good start to the asbestos removal process. However, in some cases warning signs are simply not adequate and more needs to be done. The Opposition supports the amendment to the Duties Act. Where a home has to be acquired and demolished by the State the owner should not have to pay tax on their replacement home. The member for Monaro made mention of the stamp duty concession, and I also believe it is a very good idea.

The implementation of these reforms will be challenging and care must be taken that owners of dwellings containing loose-fill asbestos fibres are not disadvantaged. I am pleased that the Government has accepted the advice of the Loose Fill Asbestos Insulation Taskforce and will offer free legal support and counselling to affected homeowners. I also am pleased that the consideration of asbestos will be excluded from the valuation on these houses. This is a good measure that attempts to put those affected families into the position they would have been in if their homes had not been subjected to the asbestos.

The bill provides for a register of affected premises. Sadly, this register is 45 years too late. I fear too many workers and their families already have been gravely affected from their exposure to loose-fill asbestos insulation. Exposure to fibres by a worker can have a knock-on effect for the entire family. We have heard of women suffering asbestos poisoning as a result of washing their husband's work clothes and the fibres have come off the clothes and been inhaled into their lungs. However, the advantages of a register are significant. It will allow transparent access to information that building industry workers need as well as act as advance warning to emergency service workers attending a site.

As I said, effective signage is also important. Many people need access to a building but only a few experts can identify loose-fill asbestos insulation. It is essential that a two-tier warning system, comprising both the register and signage, is implemented in order to increase the safety of tradespeople and visitors to an affected building. Precautionary measures also must be extended to tenants. I am pleased that the Minister has shown his intention to amend the Residential Tenancies Act to introduce protection for tenants who may be affected by loose-fill asbestos insulation. I urge the Minister to take action as soon as possible, as families affected by loose-fill asbestos insulation in rental properties will require the same legal advice, counselling and financial support as homeowners in the same situation. *[Extension of time agreed to.]*

I note the irony in that the Baird Government has introduced this bill, a good bill, only months after abolishing the Workers Compensation Dust Diseases Board. It is ironic that the Baird Government is willing to pay to demolish fewer than 100 homes, perhaps more, across New South Wales which may be affected by loose-fill asbestos insulation but at the same time is willing to strip protections from the workers who installed it. I also note the actions of the former O'Farrell Government which, to quote the member for Cessnock, "took workers compensation five steps backward".

Apart from this bill, the Baird Government's attitude towards asbestos has been appalling. In its short time in government, the Liberals have abolished a well-run and independent board which for more than 100 years provided justice to sufferers of dust diseases. I have no doubt that this board may have assisted workers exposed to loose-fill asbestos insulation and supported widows and families affected by this insulation. Since this bill was tabled, the Opposition has sought advice from Unions NSW, the Asbestos Diseases Foundation and Local Government NSW. All these organisations have a strong history in curbing the irresponsible use of asbestos.

I particularly note the work of Unions NSW for its commitment to supporting the victims of asbestos diseases and for bringing the dangers of asbestos into the national spotlight. It is only through the hard work of the union movement over a number of decades that justice has been brought for thousands of asbestos workers. Further, I commend the work of the Asbestos Diseases Foundation of Australia, which has contacted me on a number of occasions regarding its campaigns. The foundation is tireless in its work, which is essential to thousands of innocent victims who have been ignored by

companies such as James Hardie. I commend the Asbestos Diseases Foundation.

Each year, more than 300 people in New South Wales are diagnosed with dust diseases. Sometimes workers can be diagnosed up to 20 years after initial exposure. We do not know how many may be affected by these asbestos-insulated homes. However, it is essential that the Government is prepared to care for the tens of thousands, possibly hundreds of thousands of people who have been exposed to loose-fill asbestos insulation. Sadly, many of these people—possibly the vast majority—may not be aware of their exposure. It is imperative that the Government provides support and awareness programs so that those affected do not have their lives cut short through no fault of their own.

Taking the proactive measures to right the wrongs of a tragic scam and a crime committed in the late 1960s that has placed tens of thousands of lives possibly in danger is a responsibility that this House must address. As I said, it is unfortunate that these reforms came possibly 45 years too late. It is exceptionally unfortunate that a few suppliers of loose-fill asbestos insulation were permitted to trade for a number of years. Almost half a century later, thousands of families are at risk of developing mesothelioma and other asbestos-related diseases as a result of the recklessness shown by a small number of questionable businesspeople. It is important that the implementation of this bill is as effective as the Loose-Fill Asbestos Insulation Taskforce report and as the Minister intends. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) [10.40 a.m.]: I support the Home Building and Duties Amendment (Loose-fill Asbestos Insulation Affected Premises) Bill 2015. I commend the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation for introducing this bill and his Cabinet colleagues who helped to prepare this response to a terrible tragedy in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory. I particularly commend the member for Monaro, who has been instrumental in ensuring that there was impetus behind the legislation to protect, to the extent that we can now, people affected by this tragedy. I can only imagine the horror of a parent after living in a home for a number of years and raising a family there being informed that they have been living with loose-fill asbestos in their ceiling, potentially harming their entire family who they thought were safe. Unfortunately that horror has been experienced by many families in regional and some in metropolitan New South Wales and many in the Australian Capital Territory.

This bill implements the Government's strategy to rectify, to the extent possible, the problems that are continually facing affected people in New South Wales. This bill will enable the Government to put in place mechanisms that will help to ensure that there is full disclosure of known affected properties so that New South Wales residents can make informed choices. The bill will amend the Home Building Act 1989 to allow the secretary to establish a register and to make public the address and title identifiers of affected premises. Importantly, the names of owners or occupiers who are individuals will not be included. Potential purchasers and other interested parties will also be able to search the register online. The establishment of a public register, with strict statutory requirements, provides a fair and transparent way of identifying properties that are affected with loose-fill asbestos insulation.

When buying a home, potential purchasers carry out a number of due diligence investigations. For the majority of potential purchasers, this will include obtaining a building inspection report. However, a building inspection report cannot identify a home affected by loose-fill asbestos insulation because it is not identifiable by visual inspection. Identification of loose-fill asbestos insulation requires the specialist expertise of a licensed assessor or equivalent expert. That is why a statutory public register is integral to ensuring that potential home owners have access to all the necessary information to make informed choices.

The bill before the House contains a robust legislative framework for the register so that it contains only the necessary and relevant information and that it ensures that irrelevant and inaccurate information is removed. Particulars of premises which were affected but which have been through the program and demolished and remediated will be removed from the register. This is fair and appropriate

because once the premises have been demolished and the land is free of loose-fill asbestos insulation there are no longer any risks to the community or future home owners. Currently, there is no register, warning signs or any other mechanism in place requiring a home owner or real estate agent to disclose this information. There are also no restrictions in place to prevent the property and the problem being transferred to others.

The bill requires a home owner or owners corporation of an affected property on the register to place a warning sign in a prominent position to alert tradespeople, emergency workers and service providers of the danger involved in entering the premises. I understand that once the register is established further guidance material will be provided for real estate agents about their responsibilities when marketing properties or listing rental premises. In this regard, I note that NSW Fair Trading already provides guidance for agents on their disclosure responsibilities of any material fact that may affect the decision of the potential purchaser when marketing properties, such as the presence of loose-fill asbestos insulation.

I also understand that NSW Fair Trading is continuing to work closely with the real estate industry and associated stakeholders as part of the implementation of these measures. I am confident the amendments introduced in this bill will ensure much-needed disclosure and public awareness of affected properties so that potential home owners and the community can make informed choices and so that pathways are available to current owners to make better decisions for their future. I commend the Government for taking these steps and I am proud to be a member of a government that is acting so decisively in the interests of public safety. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) [10.45 a.m.]: I support the Home Building and Duties Amendment (Loose-fill Asbestos Insulation Affected Premises) Bill 2015. In his second reading speech, the Minister explained the importance of the amendments in the bill in helping the Government to meet its objectives of providing the necessary information disclosure to help protect home owners—which is the key objective of the bill—potential home owners, tradespeople and emergency workers from the potential risks of loose-fill asbestos insulation in affected homes. I have followed this story with interest over the past few months and years. I am extremely concerned that this has occurred and I believe that this bill will go a long way towards ensuring that these homes will be cleaned up quickly. It will also ensure that home owners, tradespeople and emergency workers know about the potential risks posed by these premises. The bill does this by amending the Home Building Act 1989 to create a register of properties affected by loose-fill asbestos insulation and to require the display of warning signs on those properties.

The importance of these amendments cannot be underestimated. Every day, emergency workers risk their lives to protect the residents of New South Wales. As a State and a government, we must endeavour to provide those workers with all available information to allow them to carry out their jobs in a way that will allow them the best opportunity of taking necessary action to protect themselves from any potential health risk. The statutory requirements for disclosure being introduced by this bill will not only serve to protect our emergency workers but also will provide increased health and safety protections for tradespeople and other service providers. The bill introduces requirements for the secretary to maintain a register of properties that are known to be affected by loose-fill asbestos insulation. The register will assist in informing workers and employees that there is a possibility of exposure before attending the affected premises. It will also provide emergency service workers with advanced notice of the status of any affected premises and will allow for appropriate precautions to be taken.

Complementary to the register, the second amendment in the bill introduces a requirement in the Home Building Act 1989 for owners of affected residential premises to display a compliant warning sign at any prescribed place on the premises. The objective of this requirement is to alert anyone working or residing there that the premises represent a possible risk from loose-fill asbestos insulation. The information and disclosure provided by the combination of a statutory register that contains relevant and accurate information and a mandatory warning sign regime will provide our emergency workers, tradespeople and other service providers with tools to protect themselves against any potential health

risks.

Tradespeople such as electricians, plumbers, carpenters and pest inspectors are often required to access ceiling spaces, walls and sub-floors and therefore are particularly vulnerable to exposure to loose-fill asbestos in affected premises. Tradespeople do not now have any means of identifying affected premises. Without these required protections, these workers are most at risk of exposure when carrying out maintenance or providing services. These reforms are the result of extensive investigation and consultation. Expert reports from the Joint Select Committee into Loose-fill Asbestos Insulation and the Loose-fill Asbestos Insulation Taskforce both emphasised the need to address the potential threat to workers' health and safety.

The recommendations contained in the reports are based on consultation with industry and government representatives. The Government has endorsed and adopted the recommendations of both reports for the establishment of a publicly available register and the requirement for mandatory associated warning signs. The Government recognises that the practicalities of living in premises affected by loose-fill asbestos insulation are difficult and that home owners may be concerned about their homes being stigmatised by the register and warning signs. A sensible approach has been adopted in balancing the interests of home owners of affected premises and the interests of the wider community.

Individual home owners and home owner corporations of affected properties must ensure that a compliant warning sign is displayed as required. Penalties for noncompliance reflect the seriousness of this issue. This bill ensures that the Government can deliver on its commitment to provide the community, emergency workers and tradespeople with all the necessary information to enable them to protect themselves from any potential health risks from affected premises. I commend the Home Building and Duties Amendment (Loose-fill Asbestos Insulation Affected Premises) Bill 2015 to the House.

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) [10.51 a.m.]: I support the Home Building and Duties Amendment (Loose-fill Asbestos Insulation Affected Premises) Bill 2015. We have all heard the awful stories from Canberra about the installation of Mr Fluffy loose-fill asbestos as ceiling insulation in thousands of homes and the eventual acquisition and demolition of these homes. Significant compensation has been paid to families who have lost their homes and there is possible future liability in relation to people who have developed asbestos-related diseases. Asbestos contamination is not limited to the Australian Capital Territory. It also has affected homes in 26 local government areas in New South Wales, and it is appropriate that similar measures are taken here. So far 74 contaminated homes have been identified. More than 3,000 homes have been tested, fortunately with negative test results.

The identification of loose-fill asbestos is not simple; it requires expert assessors and cannot be identified by sight alone. The Government provides free ceiling insulation testing across New South Wales. In December last year the Government established a Loose-Fill Asbestos Insulation Taskforce which recommended demolition, site remediation and disposal as the most effective method of removing the health risk. The task force made recommendations on site identification and a number of other issues. In terms of managing risk, loose-fill asbestos can be far more dangerous than bonded asbestos fibro. With loose fill, people can be exposed to toxic fibres simply by climbing into the ceiling of an affected house and crawling around. Bonded asbestos is still very dangerous but if home owners are aware that it is present and it is painted, casual contact with asbestos fibro carries much less risk. It is not necessary to demolish every asbestos fibro home; it is often only during demolition that fibres become airborne.

As the member for Granville, I am well aware of the dangers of asbestos because of the legacy of James Hardie's operations at Camellia. Bonded asbestos and other asbestos products are stored in fill throughout the Granville electorate and adjoining areas. James Hardie often gave free fill to people who were carrying out construction work or who needed fill for some reason. James Hardie provided fill in sporting grounds throughout the area for the creation of mounds or for excavation and filling and these sites have become enormously problematic.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

Ms JULIA FINN: When I was a member of the Parramatta Park Trust, a great amount of asbestos was discovered in the western area of the park. The asbestos was contained in broken sheets of asbestos fibro that had come to the surface along the riverbank. It cost thousands of dollars to remove. The removal needed to be done very carefully in order to make sure that the fibres did not become airborne. I recently reported to the House about the large amount of asbestos-contaminated fill that has been uncovered in the M4 widening project. Some of it has been removed but more asbestos remains in my electorate for the next 20 weeks until its removal.

I was concerned during the recent removal that nobody was wearing breathing apparatus, the adjoining pedestrian footpaths were not closed, and the asbestos was not being hosed down. While it is bonded asbestos in sheet fibro form, it could be cracked and broken by earthmoving equipment. I reported to the House how dismayed and disturbed I was by this. I hope when the next lot of asbestos is removed that workers will wear breathing apparatus. It is not enough to simply monitor for airborne fibres and to get out the breathing apparatus once fibres are observed. There is no cure for asbestos disease, only prevention. The wearing of breathing apparatus is an inexpensive way to prevent asbestos disease when using earthmoving equipment on bonded fill.

James Hardie has left behind a wide range of asbestos building products that people may not be aware contain asbestos. As well as fibro and loose-fill asbestos, asbestos roof sheeting has been used widely in the area where I live and fireproof doors that were installed in apartment blocks in the 1980s often contained asbestos. People are unaware of that because the doors were constructed in the 1980s when it is thought that asbestos was no longer used. In an attempt to avoid the enormous cost of asbestos disposal, the dumping of asbestos also causes problems. The costs of disposal relate to the cost involved in ensuring the asbestos waste is contained and does not spread or become airborne at the tipping site. These concerns remind us that asbestos is a very dangerous building product, but I do not think we have seen many forms of asbestos as dangerous as the loose-fill asbestos that was installed in ceilings.

For the next few decades we will see more cases of asbestos-related disease. People may not become symptomatic for 20 to 50 years. People who are suffering and dying from mesothelioma and other asbestos-related diseases have not worked with asbestos for decades. Young people whose parents carried out home renovation projects and who were exposed to asbestos as children are now dying in their thirties. Women who were exposed to asbestos by washing their husband's work clothes are dying from asbestos-related diseases. The Asbestos Diseases Foundation is based in Granville. Granville is close to where the largest number of people suffering from asbestos-related diseases live, many of whom worked at James Hardie. This weekend I will be attending their fundraising race day at Rosehill racecourse, which is well supported by the community. The Asbestos Diseases Foundation will need to continue to support people affected by asbestos for decades.

The Camellia peninsula is being redeveloped and a large residential development will be built on the site of the old James Hardie factory. The asbestos contamination of the site is concrete capped. That capping will need to be carefully removed and the asbestos fill removed so that the car park and landscaped areas will be constructed in a way that will not expose the construction workers or future residents to asbestos fibres. It is a large site and the remediation will cost hundreds of millions of dollars. There are other contaminants there, but asbestos is probably the biggest risk during the construction period and in the period following. I commend the Home Building and Duties Amendment (Loose-fill Asbestos Insulation Affected Premises) Bill 2015 to the House. It is important that we protect people who have inadvertently bought these homes that are now a risk to them and their children. The sooner we help these affected families the better.

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) [11.00 a.m.]: I support the Home Building and Duties Amendment

(Loose-fill Asbestos Insulation Affected Premises) Bill 2015. The presence of loose-fill asbestos insulation in residential premises potentially creates an enormous risk to the community because of the type of asbestos it is. It cannot be identified through ordinary inspection and there are no guarantees of success with remediation. Similar to the actions already undertaken by the Australian Capital Territory to address this problem, this Government has put in place a Voluntary Purchase Demolition Program, and community awareness and disclosure requirements.

The bill amends the Home Building Act 1989 to create a public register of known affected properties and inserts mandatory warning sign requirements for those properties. The bill also provides a stamp duty concession under the Duties Act 1987 for home owners who have voluntarily participated in the program and who may purchase a replacement property. While the guiding principle of the Government's package is the health and safety of residents in New South Wales, I stress that the Government has also given due consideration to the difficulties that affected residents face. I note that substantial evidence from affected homeowners was provided to both the Joint Select Committee on Loose-fill Asbestos Insulation and the Loose-fill Asbestos Insulation Taskforce. As a result of having loose-fill asbestos in their homes, these people face uncertain and challenging futures, not only financially but also socially.

I am proud that the Baird Government accepted the task force recommendations, which address the issues faced by homeowners. These homeowners are faced with the prospect of living in an affected home, or having a devalued asset and facing financial uncertainty. The Baird Government has set aside \$250 million for the Voluntary Purchase Demolition Program, which will provide much-needed assistance and support for owners of affected properties. Those who choose to participate will have access to financial assistance that can help with all sorts of additional costs that they are likely to face. These include relocation expenses, legal advice and counselling services.

Owners of affected properties in New South Wales will have two options available to them to provide the flexibility to accommodate their individual circumstances. In all cases, the premises must be demolished and the land remediated. The first option for home owners is to transfer the ownership of their whole property to the Government. The second option for home owners is to allow the Government to demolish their premises, while retaining ownership of the remediated land. Home owners who take the first option and transfer the ownership of their whole property to the Government may choose to purchase a replacement home in New South Wales.

The bill amends the Duties Act 1997 to give these home owners a stamp duty concession when they purchase a new home and to help them move on with their lives. The concession is capped at the amount of duty that would have been payable on the purchase of the loose-fill asbestos affected home by the Government if they were required to pay stamp duty. For example, if a home owner were to transfer their affected home to the Government at a value of \$350,000, the duty payable would be \$11,240. If the home owner then purchases a replacement home for \$400,000, the duty payable would be \$13,490. The concession would be capped at \$11,240 and the home owner would pay only the difference, which is \$2,250. The replacement home must be a residential dwelling in New South Wales and there is only one concession available per affected premises.

This bill introduces a number of important amendments that will provide this Government with the mechanisms needed to ensure disclosure and community awareness about loose-fill asbestos insulation affected properties. The bill also addresses the issues faced by home owners of an affected property. The Voluntary Purchase Demolition Program provides the financial support for the sale and remediation of land. The stamp duty concessions provided for in this bill will help home owners of affected properties to purchase a replacement property and start afresh. I commend this bill to the House, and thank the Minister for his work.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) [11.05 a.m.], in reply: As members have heard, the purpose of the Home Building and Duties Amendment (Loose-Fill

Asbestos Insulation Affected Premises) Bill 2015 is to establish a register of New South Wales residential premises affected by loose-fill asbestos insulation and the associated warning labelling of affected premises. The reforms will allow residents in New South Wales to confirm whether residential premises are affected by loose-fill asbestos insulation. The presence of loose-fill asbestos insulation in residential homes has the potential to affect a number of people, not only the home owners. I thank members representing the electorates of Fairfield, Monaro, Prospect, Riverstone, Oatley, Miranda and Granville who contributed to this debate.

With this legislation, service providers will be able to use the register to identify affected premises and take the necessary precautions to ensure a safe working environment for their employees. Workers will be able to check on site for any warning signs before commencing work and adopt the necessary precautions to ensure their safety. In the event of an emergency, such as a fire, emergency service workers will know whether a property is affected, allowing them to respond safely. Tenants and prospective buyers will have access to information that will allow them to make an informed decision about where they will live. Without this legislation, there is no means of accessing this information to alert consumers and workers to the presence of loose-fill asbestos insulation.

Once created, the register will facilitate further regulatory changes to increase the amount of information available to the New South Wales community. Following this legislation, changes will be made to planning certificates and guidelines governing tenancy and real estate agents to ensure loose-fill asbestos insulation is disclosed to prospective buyers and tenants. The Joint Select Committee on Loose-fill Asbestos Insulation urged the New South Wales Government to address the "negative health, financial and social risks associated with the presence of loose-fill asbestos insulation". We believe we have the balance right with this approach: safeguarding the community by identifying properties that are known to be affected by loose-fill asbestos insulation while providing a comprehensive assistance package for affected homeowners.

This package includes the Government's Voluntary Purchase Demolition Program, additional financial assistance and stamp duty concessions for those who participate in the program. I also thank the Commissioner for Fair Trading, Rod Stowe, Assistant Commissioners Rhys Bollen and Andrew Gavrielatos, as well as officers from NSW Fair Trading Matt Press, Gabbie Mangos and Sharon Hogan, and my policy director, Jane Standish, for their efforts and continued enthusiasm in the formulation and development of this bill. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Motion by Mr Victor Dominello agreed to:

That this bill be now read a third time.

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

REGULATORY REFORM AND OTHER LEGISLATIVE REPEALS BILL 2015

OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING NATIONAL LAW REPEAL BILL 2015

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 21 October 2015.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [11.08 a.m.]: On behalf of the New South Wales Labor Opposition and the shadow Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation in the Legislative Council, the Hon. Peter Primrose, I speak to the Regulatory Reform and Other Legislative Repeals Bill 2015 and the cognate bill, the Occupational Licensing National Law Repeal Bill 2015. The object of the Regulatory Reform and Other Legislative Repeals Bill 2015 is to abolish the requirement for property valuers in New South Wales to be registered by repealing the Valuers Act 2003. Further, other miscellaneous Acts and provisions no longer regarded as required for policy reasons will also be repealed under this bill. The Occupational Licensing National Law Repeal Bill 2015 aims to terminate the involvement of New South Wales in a scheme to replace State- and Territory-based licensing arrangements with a national occupational licensing scheme [NOLS]. This legislation will initially be put in place for air-conditioning and refrigeration, electrical, plumbing, gasfitting and property-related occupations.

The abolition of the Valuers Act under the regulatory reform bill is supported by the main lobby groups: the Australian Property Institute, the Australian Valuers Institute, and the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. Although the abolition of the Act will mean the industry will become self-regulating, the existing certification by NSW Fair Trading has not been highly regarded. As a result of the abolition of the Act consumers would be encouraged to use only those valuers professionally trained and certified by the Australian Property Institute. These changes will also result in the State's 3,000 valuers saving money as they will no longer have to pay an annual fee in order to register with NSW Fair Trading.

With regard to the number of miscellaneous amendments to and repeals of outdated and spent Acts and other provisions, we see no reason to object to these changes as they are essentially administrative housekeeping rather than a major initiative for better regulation. It has been rather comical to witness the Minister's chest beating, claiming how he is "lifting the regulatory burden" on businesses and citizens when the proposals before the House are essentially repealing spent provisions that are no longer operative and therefore impact on no-one. The occupational licensing bill gives effect in New South Wales to the decision of the Council of Australian Governments to terminate the national occupational licensing reform in favour of jurisdictions. This reform is all about minimising the licensing impediments to labour mobility throughout Australia.

The New South Wales Mutual Recognition (Automatic Licensed Occupations Recognition) Act 2014 provides for the automatic mutual recognition of certain occupational licences issued in other jurisdictions. That means any individual who holds a recognised licence from another jurisdiction is taken to hold the equivalent licence throughout New South Wales. The legislation before us is essentially administrative housekeeping that will repeal a number of miscellaneous, unused, outdated and spent Acts and other provisions. There is no major regulatory reform here. This is not some new or a major initiative that requires rigorous debate; we are simply tidying things up. As such, the New South Wales Labor Opposition does not oppose these bills.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) [11.12 a.m.]: I am pleased to make a contribution to debate on the Regulatory Reform and Other Legislative Repeals Bill 2015 and the Occupational Licensing National Law Repeal Bill 2015. As members are aware, the Tweed electorate borders the fifth largest city in Australia, called the Gold Coast. Many tradespeople cross that border on a regular basis, but some legislation has inhibited employment and business opportunities in both States. That is why I am pleased that this Government has taken the initiative in these bills. The Regulatory Reform and Other Legislative Repeals Bill 2015 is the first of its kind. It represents this Government's commitment to reducing regulatory burden and increasing productivity as well as continuing its commitment to removing unnecessary legislation that has run its course. The bill not only removes redundant legislation but also goes further to remove unnecessary, counterproductive and burdensome regulation that currently impacts businesses across New South Wales. Many of those businesses are based in the Tweed.

This Government will continue to work hard to identify requirements and legislation that can be removed. The bill is important because it allows for a series of repeals of Acts and regulations, some of which are more complex and substantial as they require transitional provisions. Examples include the HomeFund Restructuring Act 1993 and the Internal Audit Bureau Act 1992, which involves the sale or winding up of entities established under the Act. The bill repeals 30 Acts and regulations. Those Acts and regulations have remained in force for as long as they have been needed but are now redundant or unnecessary and therefore serve no further purpose on the statute books.

The bill removes unnecessary legislation so that businesses across New South Wales can more easily comply with regulatory requirements and more easily access the information they need. Wading through redundant legislation costs businesses time and money. It has always been a theme of this Government that we should get out of the way of small business and let them get on with what they do best—that is, running their businesses and employing people in metropolitan and regional areas. That is most important. Removing unnecessary, counterproductive, burdensome and redundant requirements allows businesses to spend more time operating and expanding their business. That will lead to improving their bottom line, increasing productivity and generating jobs. I now turn to the Occupational Licensing National Law Repeal Bill, which reflects the decision of the Council of Australian Governments not to pursue national occupational licensing reforms. As we know, it would be a long and arduous task trying to get every State and Territory—

Mr Jai Rowell: Very hard.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: I note the interjection by the member for Wollondilly and concur with him. He is always spot on with his comments and progressive in his thoughts. All jurisdictions agreed to investigate alternative approaches to increasing labour mobility that will deliver net benefits for businesses and governments. As a first step, New South Wales introduced its automatic mutual recognition scheme through the Mutual Recognition (Automatic Licensed Occupations Recognition) Act 2014, which provides the framework for automatic recognition of licences issued outside the State. I fully supported that legislation in this place. As I have indicated a number of times, it has had a significant impact in my electorate where the State boundary is across the road and tradespeople and businesses do business on both sides of the border.

Anything we can do to make their lives easier has my full support. By allowing recognised licensees to work across borders without needing to hold multiple licences the system can improve labour mobility and cut red tape. It is a simpler, decentralised alternative. It means that an individual who holds a recognised licence is taken to hold the equivalent New South Wales licence. Hallelujah! Finally, there is some common sense. I applaud members on my side of the House for the common sense they have brought to this issue. New South Wales has moved ahead with mutual recognition for the holders of certain electrical licences from Queensland, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory, meaning that those licence holders can work temporarily in this State without needing to obtain an additional New South Wales licence.

When the reform was first announced my office was inundated with praise and commendation from tradespeople in my town. They said, "This is a really great move. Keep up the good work." The bill also dissolves the national entity that was established under the occupational licensing national reforms and provides for the necessary transitional arrangements to effectively manage dissolution. That is another piece of obsolete legislation removed from our statute books. Once again, this is a common-sense approach. I am proud to be part of this Government. I commend these bills to the House.

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) [11.18 a.m.]: I thank the member for Tweed for his excellent contribution to the debate. He is certainly 100 per cent for the Tweed, but my question to him is where else would one be but Wollondilly? He has squarely outlined the importance of this legislation for tradespeople who are entering the State. This Government has demonstrated time and again its commitment to reducing the regulatory burden for business and the community. I support the Regulatory

Reform and Other Legislative Repeals Bill because it not only removes redundant legislation but also reduces the regulatory burden for business and the community, and that is what we on this side of the House are all about. This is another step towards achieving the Government's priority of making New South Wales the easiest State in which to start a business.

As announced recently by the Hon. Victor Dominello, Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation, a fantastic Minister, from 2011 to December 2015, the Government will have reduced red tape for business and the community by around \$980 million in annual savings. This far exceeds the \$750 million target. We are making it quicker and easier for business and the community to interact with Government, saving them time and money. From 2011 to June 2015, the Government introduced 54 new principal pieces of legislation and repealed 237 under its one on, two off policy. This is a ratio of around 1:4. This removes the legislation that can make it harder for business and the community to find out what they need to know.

The bill provides a new avenue for reducing regulatory burden. It removes not only redundant legislation but also unnecessary, counterproductive and burdensome requirements. It fills a forgotten gap in legislative reform. Government agencies will continue to work hard to identify requirements and legislation that can be repealed. This will make it easier, and less confusing, for business to meet the requirements that we set. The bill before us today repeals 30 Acts and regulations—removing unnecessary requirements, and providing greater clarity around the laws and requirements that do need to be met.

For example, repealing the Valuers Act 2003 and Valuers Regulation 2010 will abolish the registration requirement for persons practising as a property valuer in New South Wales. This saves businesses time and money. They no longer need to apply for, or renew, a registration, saving industry more than \$800,000 a year. This is time and money that can be better spent in ensuring businesses are productive, employ more staff and provide better services to their customers. Similar action has already been taken in other jurisdictions, such as Victoria, and has demonstrated that there are no market failures caused by a lack of licensing for valuers. This move also implements recommendation 13 of the report of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART] "Reforming Licensing in NSW—Review of licence rationale and design", dated September 2014. I know the member for Kiama is very excited about this, so much so that I see he is now consulting the member for Terrigal about this. They are clearly both excited about this, and I can almost hear them from where I am standing.

I now turn to the Occupational Licensing National Repeal Bill. This bill reflects the decision of the Council of Australian Governments [COAG] not to pursue national occupational licensing reforms. Instead, all jurisdictions agreed to investigate alternative approaches to increasing labour mobility that will deliver net benefits for businesses and governments. As a first step, New South Wales has introduced its Automatic Mutual Recognition Scheme through the Mutual Recognition (Automatic Licensed Occupations Recognition) Act 2014, which provides the framework for automatic recognition of licences issued outside the State. By allowing recognised licensees to work across borders without needing to hold multiple licences, the system can improve labour mobility and cut red tape. It is a simpler, decentralised alternative.

I know the member for Camden is excited about this, and he is now consulting with the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation, who is in the Chamber. He is a fantastic Minister, and dressed so suavely today. I know the member for Camden, whose electorate borders the electorate of Wollondilly, is excited about the regulatory impacts that will free up businesses to get on with the job. It is a great thing for the people of Camden. The Automatic Mutual Recognition Scheme means that an individual who holds a recognised licence is taken to hold the equivalent New South Wales licence.

New South Wales has moved ahead with mutual recognition for the holders of certain electrical licences from Queensland, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory, meaning that these licence holders can work temporarily in New South Wales without needing to obtain an additional New South

Wales licence. This bill also dissolves the national entity that has been established under the occupational licensing national reforms and provides for the necessary transitional arrangements to effectively manage dissolution. This is another piece of obsolete legislation removed from our statute books. The Hon. Victor Dominello is the best Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation this State has ever had. I commend these bills to the House.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! There is too much audible conversation in the chamber.

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa—Parliamentary Secretary) [11.24 a.m.]: I support the Regulatory Reform and Other Legislative Repeals Bill 2015 and the cognate bill. This bill continues to deliver on the commitment of the Baird-Grant Government to boost productivity by reducing regulatory burden, as well as making it easier to understand current legislative requirements. The Baird-Grant Government knows that understanding regulatory obligations is a significant cause of concern for business, and one of our priorities is to make New South Wales the easiest State in which to start and run a business.

A large proportion of businesses responding to a recent Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry national survey on red tape indicated that they are finding regulation unnecessarily complex. A New South Wales Business Chamber survey on red tape in 2013 also revealed that more than 70 per cent of business respondents found regulations to be overly complicated. Furthermore, New South Wales businesses reported that they spent more than 220 million hours, or \$8.4 million, meeting their regulatory requirements. Removing redundant and unnecessary legislation makes it easier for business and the community to find out and to understand the requirements that they must abide by, which in turn saves them time and money.

This bill removes not only redundant legislation but also unnecessary, counterproductive and burdensome requirements. This will allow businesses to spend more time operating and expanding their business, increasing productivity as well as generating jobs. This is crucial for business owners in Western Sydney. As we know, Western Sydney is the powerhouse of the New South Wales economy and is the third-largest economy in Australia. It is crucial for my constituents and for business owners in Western Sydney that these bills be passed. They will enable businesses to have the time and energy to put into strategic planning and designing their businesses so they can continue to grow and to employ more people in Western Sydney, particularly young people—giving them a step up and opportunities.

I support and encourage the hard work of New South Wales Government agencies to make it easier and less costly for business and the community by identifying requirements and legislation that can be removed. This bill repeals 30 Acts and regulations. This includes repealing six amending Acts that have already commenced but are now included in the principal legislation, and provisions of five Acts that cannot commence because they amend Acts or provisions that have since been repealed. For example, the repeal of the West Scholarships Act 1930 will save schools the time taken to administer the trust under the Act, as it has been determined that this is not commensurate with the benefit to students, and the interest on the capital invested has decreased.

One important example of the reforms contained within the "spring clean bill" is the repeal of the Valuers Act 2003. The repeal gives effect to recommendation 13 of the report of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART] about reforming licensing in New South Wales, which was released earlier this year. The IPART report identified more than 770 different licence categories in operation in New South Wales, accounting for \$2.8 billion in government revenue each year. The new framework for licences proposed by IPART ensures that agencies are required to ensure licences are efficient and fit for purpose.

Valuers in this State are now accredited by a series of peak bodies, such as the Australian Valuers Institute, the Australian Property Institute and the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. They are supportive of these repeals. The presence of these professional organisations removes the need for

Government to intervene by way of licences. The repeal will mean that valuers will no longer have to pay the \$885 registration fee to obtain a licence. It also means valuers will no longer have to pay a \$747 renewal fee every three years to maintain their licence. This represents a saving to industry of more than \$800,000 a year.

This is good news for the 3,000 professional valuers who operate in New South Wales. It brings us in line with other States, such as Victoria, that have deregulated the valuation industry. It also continues the Baird-Grant Government's commitment to making New South Wales an even better place in which to live and operate a business, as well as being an attractive place in which to invest. I take this opportunity to commend my very good friend and colleague the Hon. Victor Dominello, Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation, for his hard work. I also commend the Minister's departmental staff for their hard work in streamlining the operations of this Government and wish them well as they continue their focus on looking after the interests of the people of this State. I commend these bills to the House.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) [11.30 a.m.], in reply: The Regulatory Reform and Other Legislative Repeals Bill 2015 removes not only redundant legislation, such as the statute law revisions and staged repeal processes, but also unnecessary, counterproductive, and burdensome requirements. I thank all members who have contributed to this debate, including the member for Fairfield, the member for Tweed, the member for Wollondilly, and my very good friend the member for Mulgoa. This bill relies on the hard work of government agencies to find ways in which to reduce and remove unnecessary, counterproductive, and burdensome requirements for business and the community.

Recently I said that from 2011 to December 2015 the Government will have generated about \$980 million in savings for business and the community by reducing red tape. This far exceeds the \$750 million target we committed to prior to the election. Under the one on, two off policy from 2011 to June 2015 the Government achieved a ratio of around 1:4, it introduced 54 principal pieces of legislation and it repealed 237, which is a significant achievement. This bill will ensure that agencies continue their focus on reducing red tape. This is an important part of the regulatory reform agenda. Under this bill approximately 30 Acts and regulations, which were in force for as long as they were needed, were repealed. Let us remove them and get on with the job.

I turn now to the Occupational Licensing National Repeal Bill 2015, which reflects the Council of Australian Governments' decision to not pursue national occupational licensing reforms. Instead, all jurisdictions agreed to investigate alternative approaches to increasing labour mobility that will deliver net benefits for businesses and governments. As a first step, through the Mutual Recognition (Automatic Licensed Occupations Recognition) Act 2014, New South Wales has introduced the Automatic Mutual Recognition Scheme, which provides the framework for automatic recognition of licences issued outside the State. By allowing recognised licensees to work across borders without needing to hold multiple licences, the system will help to improve labour mobility and cut red tape. It is a simpler, decentralised alternative. This means that an individual who holds a recognised licence is taken to hold the equivalent New South Wales licence.

New South Wales has moved ahead with mutual recognition for the holders of certain electrical licences from Queensland, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory. That means these licence holders can work temporarily in New South Wales without needing to obtain an additional New South Wales licence. This legislation also dissolves the national entity that was established under the occupational licensing national reforms and provides for the necessary transitional arrangements to effectively manage dissolution. These bills will ensure that more obsolete legislation is removed from our statute books, which can only be good for business and for the creation of more jobs in New South Wales. I commend these bills to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bills read a second time.

Third Reading

Motion by Mr Victor Dominello agreed to:

That these bills be now read a third time.

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

STRATA SCHEMES MANAGEMENT BILL 2015

STRATA SCHEMES DEVELOPMENT BILL 2015

Consideration in Detail

Consideration of the Legislative Council amendments.

*Schedule of amendments to Strata Schemes Management Bill 2015
referred to in message of 27 October 2015*

No. 1 CDP no. 1 [c2015-129A]

Page 22, clause 50 (4), lines 32–34. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead:

- (4) The term of appointment of a strata managing agent may be extended by the strata committee for successive periods of up to 3 months after it would otherwise expire (but not for any period that would extend beyond the date of the next annual general meeting of the owners corporation) pending a decision as to the reappointment of the strata managing agent.
- (5) However, if a strata committee has extended a term of appointment of a strata managing agent under this section, the strata committee must give the strata managing agent at least 1 month's notice of a decision not to reappoint the strata managing agent or not to further extend the appointment.

No. 2 CDP no. 2 [c2015-129A]

Page 22, clause 50 (5) (b), line 38. Omit "7 days". Insert instead "1 month".

No. 3 SFP no. 1 [c2015-132B]

Page 22, clause 50. Insert after line 39:

- (6) An instrument of appointment of a strata managing agent for a period of 3 years (as referred to in subsection (1) (b)) is taken to include an option for the agent to extend the term of the appointment for a maximum period of 3 months after the end of the term of 3 years, if the owners corporation decides not to reappoint the agent and does not

extend the term of appointment under subsection (4). The agent must give the owners corporation written notice of the exercise of the option.

- (7) A strata managing agent is not entitled to exercise an option under subsection (6) if the owners corporation gives the agent written notice that the agent will not be reappointed at least 3 months before the end of the term.

*Schedule of amendments to Strata Schemes Development Bill 2015
referred to in message of 27 October 2015*

No. 1 CDP no. 1 [c2015-104B]

Page 74, clause 170 (1). Insert after line 20:

- (b) a full and frank statement by the proposed purchaser or developer of their intended use of the strata parcel,

No. 2 CDP no. 2 [c2015-104B]

Page 78, clause 179 (1) (e) (ii), line 22. Insert "(at its highest and best use)" after "site".

No. 3 CDP no. 3 [c2015-104B]

Page 78, clause 179 (1) (f) (iii), line 31. Insert "(at its highest and best use)" after "site".

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) [11.43 a.m.]: I move:

That the House agree to the Legislative Council amendments.

The Government supports these sensible amendments. Amendment No. 1 proposes an amendment to clause 170 of the development bill, which provides that matters have to be included and detailed in the renewal plan given to owners. This amendment will require the purchaser or the developer to provide in the renewal plan a full and frank statement of their intended use of the strata parcel. This will ensure that throughout their investigations into and consideration of the renewal plan, owners will have full disclosure of what is planned for the site. It is important when considering plans that the owners have all the information available to them so that they can make a decision in their best interests. This will provide an additional safeguard that will enable owners to understand the true value of their lot and help them to assess whether the terms of the settlement are agreeable to them.

Amendments Nos 2 and 3 propose amendments to clause 179 of the development bill. This clause details the documents and information that has to be given to the Land and Environment Court with any application for review of a renewal plan. This amendment requires that the independent valuation given to the court for the building and its site must be based on its highest and best use. It also requires that before the renewal plan is given to the Land and Environment Court for consideration, two independent valuations are to be provided—one for the compensation value of each of the individual lots and the other for the building and its site. This amendment provides a further safeguard by requiring that the valuation prepared for the building and its site is assessed on the basis of its highest and best use. This will give the owners full disclosure of the value of their collectively owned property.

By requiring the renewal plan to include the statement of the intention of the purchaser, the court will have that information before it when considering whether or not to approve the proposal. Having the valuation based on the highest and best use of the building and its site will help the court when it

exercises its discretion as to whether the terms of the settlement are just and equitable. Last night I listened to the debate on these bills in the other place. The question was asked as to whether the Government will undertake consultation on the definitions of "highest and best use" in the regulations. I can assure members in the other place that broad consultation will be undertaken because this Government is committed to protecting owners in that situation and to ensuring that they get the highest and best use of their lots. This will be based on the current and potential zonings of the area and the collective use of the area, rather than the individual lot itself. The Government supports these sensible amendments, which were proposed by the Christian Democratic Party.

A number of amendments were also proposed to clause 129A. These amendments to the management bill will change the period of contract extension for strata managing agents to three months under clause 50 (4). They will also require the strata committee to give the strata managing agent at least one month's notice in the event that they will not reappoint or further extend the appointment. Finally, the notification period has been changed from seven days to one month. The Government has indicated it will support these Christian Democratic Party amendments. The amendments are supported by key industry stakeholders such as Strata Community Australia, the Real Estate Institute of NSW and the Association of Strata and Community Managers.

Allowing for a longer period for each rollover will provide greater certainty and flexibility for agents and owners corporations, but will still meet the objectives of giving owners corporations greater control over the appointment and reappointment of their agent. Accordingly, the Government supports these amendments. The Shooters and Fishers Party amendment states that a strata managing agent's contract must contain the ability for the contract to be extended for three months only, which can be exercised by the agent in the event that the contract is not to be renewed and the owners corporation has not agreed to a three-month rollover under clause 50 (4).

If the owners corporation has already advised the agent three months before that it will not reappoint then the option of a three-month renewal will not apply. This is in keeping with the current requirements under the Property, Stock and Business Agents Act. The amendment is in keeping with the overall objectives of the bill to provide owners corporations with appropriate protections when appointing and reappointing strata managing agents. This will also provide greater certainty for strata managing agents when they are not reappointed. The amendment is supported by key industry stakeholders such as Strata Community Australia, the Real Estate Institute of NSW and the Association of Strata and Community Managers. The Government supports this amendment.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [11.40 a.m.]: I will address the amendments proposed by the Christian Democratic Party to the development bill. The Opposition has concerns regarding the Legislative Council's amendment to include the term "highest and best use" after "site" on page 78, clause 179 (1) (e) (ii), line 22. This is a little ambiguous as there is no definition provided for it. Should a definition of this not be added to the legislation the meaning of "highest and best use" will be ambiguous and intentions will vary between strata owners. For instance, a lot owner who planned to stay in a redeveloped building that provided better facilities would have a vastly different view from a lot owner who was looking to sell and get the highest financial return. The Opposition requests that the Government examine this issue when drafting the regulations.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) [11.41 a.m.]: I acknowledge the concern raised by the Opposition. The Government will consider that in formulating the regulations. The Government made it clear in the second reading speech and in debate that the intention is to protect owners. We will make sure that we consult broadly to confirm the definition of "highest and best use".

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

Motion agreed to.

Legislative Council amendments agreed to.

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

**PRIVACY AND PERSONAL INFORMATION PROTECTION AMENDMENT (EXEMPTIONS
CONSOLIDATION) BILL 2015**

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 22 October 2015.

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) [11.42 a.m.]: I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Amendment (Exemptions Consolidation) Bill 2015. The Opposition does not oppose the bill. The bill has two broad objectives. One is to consolidate and rationalise exemptions to the information protection principles under the primary Act, the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 [PPIPA] that previously have been long-term exemptions under public interest directions by the Privacy Commissioner. This is achieved by amendments to legislation in this bill and amendments to the Privacy Code of Practice. The second is to provide amendments to the principal Act that allow the disclosure of personal information for research purposes; make it clear that current exemptions concerning law enforcement include for the purposes of another State, Territory or the Commonwealth; and extend the meaning of "investigative agency" to include additional public sector agencies with an investigative role.

In relation to the first of these objectives, the Attorney General has provided an assurance that no change in policy or practice is intended. The first of these objectives relates to public interest directions issued under section 41. These are directions made in writing by the Privacy Commissioner, with the approval of the Minister—in this case the Attorney General—indicating that an agency is not required to comply with an information protection principle or a privacy code of conduct. Section 41 (3) requires that the Privacy Commissioner be satisfied that the public interest in requiring the agency to comply with the principle or code is outweighed by the public interest in the commissioner making that direction. The issue is that such directions were intended to apply only temporarily, until a more permanent and formal solution was determined. That is not quite what has happened with public interest directions [PIDs]. Paragraph 7.68 of the NSW Law Reform Commission report "Protecting Privacy in New South Wales", published in May 2010, states:

However, out of the 11 PIDS currently in place, eight have been in place for over six years, and the remaining three have unspecified end dates.

Paragraph 7.69 states:

This confirms the observations made above with respect to privacy codes, namely that there exist significant practical shortcomings with the current system and that, similarly to privacy codes, the use of PIDS has been "stretched" to allow agencies to function properly.

The report then proceeds to quote from a statutory review of the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998, which said:

The main problem with the use of section 41 directions is that what should be a short-term solution to an information management problem becomes the effective long-term solution. The directions are simply re-made continuously as they expire because of lack of satisfactory progress on negotiating a more long-term solution.

At paragraph 7.70 of its report, the commission concludes:

We are of the view that a statutory basis for long-term exemptions is vastly preferable to the use of PIDS, and that the use of PIDS should be limited to the original intent behind the provisions—as temporary measures.

I understand that at least one of the PIDs has been in existence for up to 12 years. The PIDs that are dealt with by the bill include the following: direction on information transfers between public agencies; direction for the Department of Family and Community Services and associated agencies; direction on the processing of personal information by public sector agencies in relation to their investigative functions; direction on the disclosure of information to credit reporting agencies; direction on disclosures of information by the New South Wales public sector to the National Coronial Information System; direction on the collections of personal information about third parties by New South Wales public sector human services agencies from their clients; and direction on the disclosure of information to victims of crime.

This is undoubtedly a positive development but some practical issues arise. The use of PIDs and the reissuing of them could provide a review mechanism of their terms and whether they need to remain in the same terms. That level of flexibility is lost in pursuing a statutory version. There also remain weaknesses in the regime. There is no mandatory reporting to the Privacy Commissioner of serious breaches of the principles. In that context, I note recommendation 9.2 of NSW Law Reform Commission report No 127. One has the sense of cherry-picking from the recommendations of the commission's report. I also note that this recommendation was contained in the report of the Privacy Commissioner dated May 2015 and tabled in this place. The lack of resources for the Privacy Commissioner exacerbates this weakness. Resourcing issues were also raised in the Privacy Commissioner's report and have attracted the attention of parliamentary oversight committee.

There are provisions in this bill outside the scope of the PID issue. The definition of "investigative agency" is expanded to become more general, as well as specifying particular agencies. This seems reminiscent of some of the recommendations in the NSW Law Reform Commission report to which I have referred. Section 19 is amended by this bill as it imposes restrictions on disclosure to a person or body in a jurisdiction outside New South Wales or to a Commonwealth agency. This follows a 2008 decision by the administrative decisions tribunal. Trans-border disclosure will be regulated by this new provision, which is said to be based upon the Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002. Similarly, the extraterritorial transfer of personal information concerning law enforcement is amended to take account the decision by the Administrative Decisions Tribunal Section 27 (b) provides a new exemption relating to research. This replaced another PID but in different and hopefully clearer terms. The Opposition does not oppose the bill.

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) [11.48 a.m.]: I speak in support of the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Amendment (Exemptions Consolidation) Bill 2015, which incorporates seven long-term public interest directions into legislation and the Privacy Code of Practice. A public interest direction allows the Privacy Commissioner, with the approval of the Attorney General, to make a written direction that a public sector agency is not required to comply with obligations under the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 in specific circumstances. Many agencies rely on one or more of these public interest directions in their day-to-day operations. Public interest directions are an unsatisfactory approach to providing long-term privacy exemptions. The coverage of the exemptions is piecemeal, as they are intended only as a stopgap measure. Moving long-term public interest directions into legislation and the general privacy code will have a number of advantages.

It will promote transparency as the exemptions will be more readily visible to the public; it will ensure that there can be parliamentary scrutiny of the exemptions; it will promote efficiency by removing the necessity for the Privacy Commissioner to remake each direction every 12 months when they expire; it will provide certainty for agencies about their obligations under privacy legislation as they will no longer need to rely on directions that expire after 12 months; and it will give effect to the NSW Law Reform Commission's view expressed in its report 127, "Protecting Privacy in NSW", that the long-term

exemptions from the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act should not be provided through public interest directions and that it was preferable that long-term exemptions have a legislative basis.

Moving the directions into legislation through this bill will not alter their underlying policy purpose or introduce any significant policy changes. From the point of view of an individual whose personal information is being handled by government, the status quo is preserved. The bill will insert a new exemption to the information protection principles that govern the collection, use and disclosure of personal information where the information is collected, used or disclosed for research purposes in the public interest. The new provisions will be based on health privacy principles 3 (1), 10 (f) and 11 (f) in schedule 1 to the Health Records Information Protection Act 2002. Even where the exemption applies, privacy protections are still afforded to individuals. For example, de-identified information must be used where reasonably practicable, and where identifying information is used it must not be published in a generally available publication.

An exemption from the information protection principles for research is currently contained in the Public Interest Direction on Disclosures of Information for Research Purposes. However, the direction is unclear and was not intended as a long-term measure. The exemption in the Health Records Information Protection Act has operated effectively over a long period of time and appropriately balances the public benefit of facilitating research with the need to protect personal information and privacy. It is simpler and clearer than the existing public interest direction.

The amendments also have the benefit of ensuring that research exemptions are consistent across the Health Records Information Protection Act and the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act. This would simplify policy and practice for public sector agencies that handle both personal information and health information. The amendments would give effect to recommendation 7.9 of the NSW Law Reform Commission's report 127, "Protecting Privacy in New South Wales". For all the reasons I have outlined, I commend the bill to the House.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) [11.52 a.m.]: The Privacy and Personal Information Protection Amendment (Exemptions Consolidation) Bill 2015 will update the provisions in the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 relating to the trans-border disclosure of New South Wales citizens' personal information by New South Wales government agencies. Although protections relating to the trans-border disclosure of personal information were contemplated when the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act was enacted, the existing regime is ineffective. A decision by the former Administrative Decisions Tribunal in *GQ v NSW Department of Education and Training (No 2)* interpreted the Act in such a way that it found there are no restrictions on the disclosure of personal information by New South Wales public sector agencies to someone outside of New South Wales or to a Commonwealth agency.

To address this gap in the protection of personal information, the ineffective provisions will be replaced with provisions modelled on the approach taken in the Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002. This approach has proven to be effective over a long period of time in relation to health information. A new information privacy principle will be introduced, which will allow the disclosure of personal information to someone outside of New South Wales or to a Commonwealth agency where the individual consents to the disclosure, or where a law or contract imposes similar privacy principles on the receipt of the information by the entity outside New South Wales.

The new provisions will increase the level of protection for the personal information of New South Wales citizens and will cure an anomaly, while ensuring that New South Wales public sector agencies retain flexibility to share information across borders. The new approach will promote consistency between the Health Records and Information Privacy Act and the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act, thereby simplifying the legislative framework for the protection of personal and health information in New South Wales, and streamlining policy and practice for public sector agencies that handle both personal information and health information.

The bill will clarify those exemptions that allow for the disclosure of personal and health information to operate across borders for the purposes of law enforcement, the protection of public revenue or the investigation of an offence. New South Wales public sector agencies can receive requests for information from other jurisdictions for law enforcement purposes. For example, the Australian Federal Police may be investigating the commission of Federal offences and may seek information about a person's identity such as information on a birth certificate or a marriage certificate from the NSW Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages. Currently there is some uncertainty about whether the exemption is limited to law enforcement purposes and offences in New South Wales. This uncertainty arises because the decision of the Administrative Decision Tribunal in *GQ v NSW Department of Education and Training* stated that in the absence of an explicit contrary intention the Act should be interpreted as applying only to New South Wales.

The amendments will clarify that the intent of these provisions is that they apply across borders and permit the disclosure of personal information for the purpose of, for example, the investigation of a criminal offence that occurred in Queensland where New South Wales agencies hold relevant personal information that might assist the investigating authorities in Queensland. It should be emphasised that the exemptions simply mean that privacy laws are not a barrier to the provision of information. The exemptions do not require agencies to provide information if they are entitled to refuse to disclose the information in the absence of a subpoena, a warrant or other lawful requirement. The bill sets out these important changes to the legislation. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) [11.59 a.m.]: Madam Temporary Speaker (Melanie Gibbons), it is a pleasure to be in the House when you are in the Chair. Also in the House is our wonderful Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education. I am proud of the work the Minister does. One of our newer Ministers, she does a wonderful job and I thank her for her efforts. It is a privilege to speak today on the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Amendment (Exemptions Consolidation) Bill 2015. I commend the Attorney General for this legislation. One thing this Government has is common sense, and it is clear from the Attorney's second reading speech that this bill has been based on common sense. I commend our first female Attorney General for all the work she does, but I am sure that she would be the first to acknowledge, and she has told me, that it is a team effort.

Mr Mark Coure: Name the team.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON: I will. All our staff do a great deal of work, but do not always get the recognition they deserve. I acknowledge the following members of the Attorney General's staff: Kevin Wilde, chief of staff; Jason Walsh, policy director; Shannon Thompson, senior policy adviser; Julian Crowley, media adviser; Lachlan Crombie, policy adviser; Mary Klein, policy adviser; Nick Ruygrok, who does an outstanding job as parliamentary liaison officer; and Makaela O'Rourke, executive assistant.

Mr John Sidoti: What about the cleaners?

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON: They do a wonderful job but they are not aligned to the Attorney General. We do not acknowledge staff as we should, and I want to thank the Attorney and her staff because they do a great job. Members have already spoken about the good characteristics of this bill and, as the Attorney General is in the Chamber to give her speech in reply, I will conclude my remarks.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse—Attorney General) [12.02 p.m.], in reply: Privacy law, by its very nature, is complicated. It involves balancing individual rights against the public interest in ensuring that information that is shared by services in the community is shared for the efficient delivery of government services. This bill seeks to focus on reducing some of the complexity. Firstly, the amendments in the bill will consolidate and rationalise exemptions to the information protection principles under the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act. These are based on the long-term exemptions

under the public interest directions made by the Privacy Commissioner under section 41 of the Act. The Law Reform Commission and the New South Wales Privacy Commissioner have clearly indicated to the Parliament and to me as Attorney General that we need to act in that respect.

The second part of the bill will amend the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act to clarify the circumstances in which personal information may be disclosed outside New South Wales, including clarifying that the law enforcement exemptions in the Act apply beyond New South Wales borders, across States and Territories, and nationally. The final provision in the bill is a new one. It relates to the disclosure of personal information for the purposes of research. These provisions will replace the existing public interest direction on research in our community and will simplify practices for research agencies while maintaining the balance of appropriate privacy protections.

This bill includes seven directions that have been made and renewed on a regular basis into the Act. Because they have been put into the Act it is clear that those exemptions from privacy have been well understood as being of assistance to our Government and government agencies in sharing information for better services for the community. It is appropriate that they be embodied in the Act so that there is no uncertainty and no potential gap with our agencies sharing that information for the purposes outlined in the Act. The directions end if they fall outside the provisions of the Act. Of particular interest to me as Attorney General is information that can be shared between agencies to better help victims of crime in our community. I welcome the certainty that will be brought to the sharing of information for that purpose which the bill before the House will provide. On that basis, I commend the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Amendment (Exemptions Consolidation) Bill 2015 to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

THIRD READING

Motion by Ms Gabrielle Upton agreed to:

That this bill be now read a third time.

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

GREATER SYDNEY COMMISSION BILL 2015

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 27 October 2015.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.05 p.m.]: I support this innovative legislation which creates the Greater Sydney Commission. The Greater Sydney Commission will be responsible for developing and overseeing the city's housing and jobs targets. It will further have a say in infrastructure planning. The Government is enacting legislation designed to respond to the city's future growth. Importantly, the commission will be given the power to regularly review major council planning controls, known as local environmental plans [LEPs], and to act as decision-maker for rezoning proposals currently determined by the Minister.

Under the provisions of the legislation, Sydney will be divided into six districts. The commission will have 13 appointees, including an independent chair, who will report directly to the Minister for

Planning; an independent environment commissioner; an independent economic commissioner; an independent social commissioner; six district commissioners, who will be nominated by Sydney councils for the purpose of advocating their needs; and three key government heads from the Department of Planning and Environment, Transport for NSW and NSW Treasury. These representatives will be chosen by elected officials, thereby giving councils the opportunity to play a major role in the decisions that shape their areas.

The representatives will be appointed for a maximum of two four-year terms and will be required to have expertise in fields such as planning, urban design, engineering and tourism. Serving mayors, councillors and members of Parliament will be ineligible for taking on these roles, as will property developers. In announcing the introduction of this legislation, the planning Minister stressed that it would be different from the congress of mayors model promoted by the Labor Party during the last election. The Minister said, "Our model seeks to depoliticise planning decisions by having a board that does not seek re-election". The commission will be supported by a finance and governance committee, an infrastructure delivery committee and a strategic planning committee. The Sydney Joint Regional Planning Panels will be replaced by the Sydney Planning Panel. The commission will have a chief executive officer [CEO] and a small staff.

The establishment of the Greater Sydney Commission has been part of this Government's agenda since June 2014. Back then, its creation was announced by Premier Mike Baird and the then planning Minister, Pru Goward, and this was followed by an extensive consultation process, which involved local government and State agencies. A mayors' roundtable, chaired by the Minister for Planning, was held not only as a briefing session but also as a means of obtaining feedback from key stakeholders. Later, a series of six briefing sessions were held with council staff and State agencies and were split around the six subregions. This legislation is crucial and important for the future of our city. For too long, infrastructure and planning in Sydney have been carried out on an ad hoc basis.

After 16 years of Labor neglect, without any forethought for the future and without any firsthand knowledge by authorities of what needed to be done, the city is now able to grow. With the establishment of a single agency, the delivery of infrastructure and urban planning priorities will be streamlined. The priorities not only will be streamlined but they will be delivered as part of the bigger picture. Other jurisdictions such as London have shown the way on how to better manage urban growth and provide choice and opportunity for housing, employment and transport. The city must grow in a holistic way, and the Greater Sydney Commission will deliver this outcome. Currently, Sydney is the eighteenth largest metropolitan area in the developed world. It demands a strategic approach to planning rather than a disconnected group of government agencies working apart.

Add to that 41 councils of varying sizes and capacities all working in isolation and we have a recipe for disaster. When we consider the worldwide trend favouring city living, we need a plan that will improve lives now and in the future. The main issue challenging Sydney's growth is the housing crisis and housing affordability. This Government believes that increasing housing supply and supporting new housing estates is best achieved by funding infrastructure as a means of putting downward pressure on prices. The Government is aiming to ensure that 664,000 new homes are built by 2031, and it sees the Greater Sydney Commission as playing a key role. I add that the establishment of the Greater Sydney Commission has the total support of the Urban Development Institute of Australia. Its chief executive officer Stephen Albin said, "We need to get the Greater Sydney Commission going." He added:

The next phase in Sydney will require continued investment in infrastructure, but also better ways to manage it. We really don't manage development well. We have got no clear metropolitan development program, and no sub-regional plans have been released.

The creation of the commission also has the support of the Sydney Business Chamber, which stated:

Three commissioners with responsibility for the economy, the environment and social planning

sends a clear message that the Sydney of the future is one where broad community interests are given equal consideration.

It is only possible to achieve this if planning of the city's needs is coordinated. An integrated approach to environmental, social and economic planning has the potential to deliver substantial and continued growth. The establishment of the commission will bring together the New South Wales Government, local government and independent experts. To this end, we not only solve the problem of poor planning and lack of infrastructure, we also will achieve a collaborative approach that will benefit all communities. Support for the Greater Sydney Commission does not stop at peak organisations, government and councils.

I am pleased to note that it has the support of the Leader of the Opposition. In an address to the Committee for Sydney last December, he said that these important decisions are not about politics but rather are aimed to benefit the broader community. It is a promising sign for the future of New South Wales that the establishment of the commission has received so much support. The provisions of this bill and the establishment of the commission will provide much-needed strategic planning and the alignment of resources and delivery to enable the continued growth and prosperity of our great city. We do not have a moment to lose. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) [12.13 p.m.]: I am pleased to contribute to debate on the Greater Sydney Commission Bill 2015. The Opposition supports the bill; however, it has views on the way forward, as have been outlined by the Leader of the Opposition. The bill establishes the Greater Sydney Commission as a government agency that has functions relating to planning and development in the Greater Sydney region. I agree with the Minister when he said that we face unprecedented challenges. Whereas in 1900 only 10 per cent of global populations lived in cities, today 50 per cent live in the cities, and by 2050, 70 per cent of the global population will live in cities. By 2031 Sydney expects to have another 1.6 million people, as was stated by the Minister, and more than half of that growth will occur in Western Sydney. That region takes in part of the south-west and outer south-west of Sydney, or the South West Growth Centre, where I humbly represent the good people of Campbelltown.

The Greater Sydney Commission will be comparable to authorities established in other cities that have grown and will continue to grow, such as the Greater London Authority, the Metro Vancouver or Victoria's Metropolitan Planning Authority. The Greater Sydney Commission will comprise 13 members, as stated by the member for Drummoyne and the Minister. Community attention has been drawn to the selection process and who will be eligible to serve on the commission. I note that the Minister said that advertisements will be placed shortly and I will watch with interest how that transpires.

I draw the attention of the House to matters raised at the recent Festival of Urbanism where it was stated that over half of the world's population live in cities and that that proportion is growing. By 2050 it is estimated it will have risen to about 70 per cent. Despite the mythologising of the land in rural Australia, we have long been a highly urbanised country. Today two-thirds of our population live in capital cities. It is estimated that by 2031 the number of families in the city of Sydney will potentially increase by 45 per cent. Our State and Federal governments appear to be on track. However, they are challenged in terms of infrastructure and ensuring that services match growth. We do not need to look too far, in fact, to the electorates in Western Sydney, which are experiencing most of this growth, to see the provision of services. I hope the commission will address that issue, particularly in health, education and community infrastructure.

It is vital that we ensure the commission remains progressive and addresses the issues that matter most to our local communities. The 2011 report of the Grattan Institute on housing is still very relevant. It identified a mismatch between the housing we have and the housing Australians say they want. Contrary to myths and assumptions, Australians want a mixture of housing choices. We are seeing this through the planning laws and the constructions occurring throughout our communities. Urbanisation is critical. We cannot continue to develop our food basins and we should not sentence people to a life on

the outskirts of suburbia, cut off from effective transport and services. The Grattan Institute also stated that this was an area that needed to be addressed, particularly going forward.

This issue of growth is particularly relevant in Greater Western Sydney. In recent times we saw in the greater Macarthur area an initial land release of 7,700 hectares, comprising 35,000 new homes. These new homes must be matched by the provision of infrastructure and services so that these families can live in a fantastic community, as other communities currently enjoy. Services that are required include health services, regional hospitals and educational facilities, particularly TAFE. It is vital we have institutions that encourage our student leaders and young people to prosper; otherwise I fear the socio-demographic circumstances that will transpire for them and the negative effects on our economy. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, between 2011 and 2036 the population of Campbelltown is forecast to increase by 42.8 per cent from 155,915 to 215,875. The population has been steadily increasing from 148,743 in 2003 to 156,572 in 2014. These are forecast numbers and they continue to grow. Population growth requires greater services; that needs to be at the forefront of the goals of the Greater Sydney Commission, once it is established.

In 2013 the Department of Planning and Infrastructure [DPI] population projections claimed that the Macarthur population would increase by almost 200,000 by 2031 in the Campbelltown, Camden and Wollondilly electorates. Campbelltown City Council general manager at the time, Paul Tosi, confirmed that the Campbelltown city population was projected to grow by 80,000 to about 230,000 over the next 20 years. By all indications, medium-density and high-rise dwellings would house up to half of that population. The member for Drummoyne talked about the 16 years of Labor, which we continually hear about. That was obviously well before my time, but I must be frank and say that the community has grown tired of that rear-vision mirror outlook and has become mind-numbingly bored by it.

I acknowledge the Hon. Craig Knowles and his efforts as a former planning Minister in establishing the Growth Centre Commission, identifying the South West Growth Centre and getting housing in the right place with the right infrastructure. I draw the attention of the House to the M2, M7 and M5 expansion as well as the South West Rail Link, which was begun by the last Labor Government. I commend this Government for following through with that plan; however, much more needs to be done. I also acknowledge that in the 16 years of Labor \$306 million was provided to upgrade health facilities in the region. I do not draw that example to score a political point; I draw it to highlight the importance of providing the services people need when a region is growing and its population is increasing. The Hon. Craig Knowles was pivotal during his time as Minister and remained passionate because he was a good member of Parliament as the member for Macquarie Fields. He took the steps that were necessary and engaged in the required negotiations with private enterprise and otherwise.

Jobs are vital and a jobs strategy is essential. The Grattan Institute pointed out that if many people cannot get high productivity jobs—the jobs are disproportionately located towards the centre—it creates a drag on economic growth. It also pointed out that it is harder for women caring for children in outer areas to participate in the workforce. My wife and friends of mine are fantastic women in leadership and representative roles in our community. I always admire what they do because I know of their logistical struggles. We cannot escape the fact that we must support people on these issues. Longer commutes result in higher living costs of thousands of dollars a year, pressure on family life and lower wellbeing. They are not my views; they are the findings of the Grattan Institute.

The Grattan Institute also found that in outer suburbs such as Campbelltown and Penrith people earn lower incomes than the average and are more likely to be employed on a casual basis. I hope that one of the strongest focuses of the Greater Sydney Commission will be to create jobs in the right places for the right people. The services sector is growing much faster than other sectors and so big cities now dominate the economy. More jobs are concentrated in city centres while new housing is most likely at the edge, as we have seen. The Greater Sydney Commission needs to focus on that issue as a high priority. According to the Grattan Institute, big cities are dividing geographically and housing ownership rates are falling for younger and low-income households. They are just some of the issues confronting local

families, businesses and the economy. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) [12.23 p.m.]: I support the Greater Sydney Commission Bill 2015. It is important to note that the Greater Sydney Commission, which will be established by the bill, will be led by independent experts in their fields. The commission will also have the ability to draw on existing expertise from other agencies to support the commission's functions as required. This Government is committed to maximising efficiencies from sharing the available data, expertise and knowledge base within government to work collaboratively and minimise unnecessary duplication of services. That is why this Government is designing a commission that will be able to draw on expertise from different government agencies to formulate a coordinated approach to deliver on Sydney's priorities.

In achieving its outcomes, the Greater Sydney Commission will deliver an interdisciplinary approach to ecologically sustainable development. This Government understands that the best planning outcomes avoid the need to choose between either economic opportunity or high environmental quality. That is extremely important, and it is why the Government is appointing three commissioners to drive that modern planning approach and ensure we achieve a good balance between all things that are important to the community. The economic, social and environmental commissioners will be charged with delivering integrated solutions that ensure sustainable and inclusive growth in the future.

The environment commissioner will lead the dialogue on environmental matters and activities that are important for Sydney. The environment commissioner will bring the environmental perspective into planning for Sydney to make sure that as it grows and changes it becomes the sustainable and resilient city that our constituents expect. In doing that, the environment commissioner will work with the economic and social commissioners to find solutions to planning problems that will maximise the long-term wellbeing and prosperity of the community rather than juxtapose environmental outcomes against economic or social ones. Differing levels of importance have been placed on those aspects in the past. It is time that we bring them all together in the one place.

The commission will provide guidance on how to achieve ecologically sustainable development outcomes and will encourage development that is resilient while taking into account natural hazards to better manage risk. The provisions in the bill will establish the Greater Sydney Commission as an independent decision-maker reporting directly to the Minister for Planning. The commission will comprise 13 members: a chief commissioner, three Greater Sydney commissioners, six district commissioners, and the secretaries of the Department of Planning and Environment, Transport for NSW and Treasury as ex-officio members. The secretaries of the three government agencies will be able to align the commission's priorities through the work of their respective agencies. The three Greater Sydney commissioners will take on the roles of the social, environment and economic commissioners that I have outlined. The commissioners will be leaders in their field and will provide thought leadership on issues relating to ecologically sustainable development outcomes for Greater Sydney.

The six district commissioners will have a significant role in bringing a district perspective into the deliberations of the commission and will play a pivotal role in representing the unique challenges, opportunities and priorities of their district. We know that each district has unique needs. Bringing those needs together with what Sydney needs as a whole is incredibly important. The district commissioners will work closely with councils, each of which will play a key role in the selection of their district commissioner. That level of involvement in the interview process is a major step in giving councils the opportunity to be involved in decisions that will shape their districts.

A chief commissioner will be responsible for bringing together the experts and their perspectives to deliver planning for Sydney. The chief commissioner will be a person of influence, integrity and reasoning when it comes to deliberations on enhancing Sydney's global city status and actioning initiatives to ensure that Sydney remains a great place to live. As well as the members of the commission, a chief executive officer will oversee the day-to-day operations of the commission and provide direction and strategic leadership to implement our metropolitan strategy, A Plan for Growing Sydney. The chief

executive officer and commissioners will be supported by a small team—nothing elaborate—that will draw on the expertise of government agencies, councils and specialists as needed to carry out the functions of the commission.

By drawing on the existing expertise within government, the work of the Greater Sydney Commission will be better placed to strategically align land-use planning and infrastructure delivery and able to provide more comprehensive and informed advice to government. It is so important that there is one place to bring together planning for our infrastructure, our hospitals, our jobs, our housing with those three concerns front of mind—and with the liveability of our city and our regions front of mind—for these experts in their area of expertise. I note that the former Minister for Planning, the Hon. Pru Goward, is with us in the Chamber. I know she spent a lot of time talking to different industry bodies and other groups about how to set up this commission—it has been a long time in planning.

There has been great feedback from the Sydney Business Chamber and other organisations and business groups. They have all praised the setting up of this body. They believe it is the best thing for growing Sydney, as do I and as does Minister Goward. I also thank the current Minister for Planning, the Hon. Rob Stokes, for continuing this plan and bringing it to fruition so that we can be here today with this legislation before us. This is about the Sydney of the future. It is really important that we bring everybody together with a focus on the environment, ecological sustainability and our economy. It is important to bring everybody together to talk to each other and to plan properly for our future. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [12.30 p.m.]: On behalf of The Greens, I address the Greater Sydney Commission Bill 2015. I will start by painting a picture of my experience of the record of this Government in this area. Sure, it is not as bad as that of the former Government; but that bar is so low as to be almost impossible to go under. I start with UrbanGrowth NSW. We were told that UrbanGrowth would be the body which would set the strategic framework for the Bays precinct, Parramatta Road and so on. We entered into the Bays precinct process with goodwill and worked very closely with UrbanGrowth NSW. We went through a very detailed process, and I acknowledge the work that UrbanGrowth has undertaken to develop a strategic framework.

We were told that we would go through the consultation process and a transformation plan would be released. The transformation plan would not be about land use but rather a broad, strategic plan. We would have a strategic framework, which looked at issues such as transport and the integration of active transport within these areas, and then we would have the procurement process. We had a process which we were told was not a glorified unsolicited bid process but rather a call for great ideas. Over 200 great ideas were presented to the UrbanGrowth NSW panel. We were told:

The Call for Great Ideas will be separately published so that all Great Ideas can be openly considered by the NSW Government, community and industry as the Destinations are progressed.

Would that not be great—the great ideas would be "openly considered"? So you can imagine our surprise when the Premier, in a story in the *Daily Telegraph* on the Bradfield oration, said he thinks we should stick a global multinational corporation, one with dubious tax practices, in White Bay. This comment came before the great ideas submissions had even been made public. A compendium of the great ideas was published the day after the *Daily Telegraph* story. These comments undermined the strategic work that UrbanGrowth NSW has been doing, and they are, in my mind, disappointing. When the Premier says that Google should go there, guess what is going to happen? Google is going to go there. To me that is of serious concern. I say that not only because it has disappointed a lot of people, given the process we were promised, but also, and more importantly, all the ideas put forward by organisations—which put money, time and effort into the call for great ideas—were immediately dismissed and brushed aside.

Their work was not published. It was not put on exhibition. It was not—as we were told it would

be—"openly considered by the NSW Government, community and industry". It all came down to a speech point made by the Premier, and that is disappointing; it is very disappointing indeed. Listeners can imagine my concern at the Government setting up another body, full of unelected, unaccountable bureaucrats, to laud it over local government. We have been told by the Leader of the Opposition, who is sitting in the shade of the Liberal Party tree when it comes to this issue, that it is all about joined-up government. This is not about joined-up government; this is about the destruction of democratic accountability and the domination of local government. Our concern is that this simply will not work.

The Greater Sydney Commission [GSC] is a body populated entirely by appointees of the planning Minister—a chief commissioner, appointed by the Minister; three Greater Sydney Commissioners, as has been identified; and six district commissioners, who are meant to represent local government. There is no pretence that the district commissioners will be democratically accountable to their local areas. They are appointed for five-year terms and chosen at the discretion of the Minister. Sure, the Minister can take feedback about who should be appointed; but, in the end, the Minister can ignore that. The bill provides that in choosing the district commissioners:

Before appointing a person as a District Commissioner to represent a district in the Greater Sydney Region, the Minister is to seek the advice of the local council—

much like the way that UrbanGrowth sought advice in the call for great ideas. It continues:

... in relation to the proposed appointment.

However, the Minister is not prevented from making an appointment if a local government fails to provide any such advice when requested to do so.

In other words, it is our understanding that local councils can give advice and the Minister can ignore it. What is the point of having district commissioners when they have no responsibility at all to engage with local communities or councils and are not in any way accountable to anyone as to how they exercise their powers? The Greater Sydney Commission will have the power to prepare and implement district plans for the six districts of Greater Sydney. These district plans will be binding on local councils, and councils will be required to amend their local environment plans to accord with the district plans. My understanding is that councils' local environment plans will be overridden by the district plans. If I am incorrect, I would appreciate a clarification.

The GSC will have a liaison role with the secretaries of the Department of Planning and Environment, Transport for NSW and Treasury. This is intended to allow for a whole-of-government approach to infrastructure and planning. It does not come with any powers in the GSC to compel infrastructure or investment. The question is: Why the absence of the Ministry of Health? We know the importance of the Ministry of Health. Why is it excluded from this process? The district commissioners will approve or reject the developments that impact most on local government areas. This power is currently exercised by the Joint Regional Planning Panels [JRPPs]. While the JRPPs are State dominated, at least they have some local representation with three members of the JRPPs being State appointed and two being local government appointees.

The GSC will also undertake the strategic planning role in Sydney under the strategic planning committee. It will produce a metropolitan plan and subregional metropolitan plans, which produce the enforceable housing and development quotas imposed on councils and are often used as the basis to remove council planning powers and to impose "urban renewal" or "activation zones" on unwilling local communities. By granting these powers to unelected bureaucrats with no democratic mandate the Government is effectively removing any form of democratic control on planning in Sydney.

The Greens support an alternative model for regional planning that involves democratic joint organisations of councils, with statutory backing, taking the lead on regional planning in their

communities. We note the proposal presented by Hunters Hill, Ryde and Lane Cove councils. They have together approached the Government with a vision of regional planning being performed by a joint organisation comprising two councillors from each council. Those councillors would be democratically accountable to their councils and through them to their residents. The joint organisation would determine the tough regional questions, such as where to allocate additional housing and strategic resource allocation. It could readily undertake most of the roles proposed for the GSC. The crucial difference would be its accountability. Of course this model could be used for an area of increased size.

We do need sustainable, coordinated and strategic planning. In our view this need will not be met by the top-down, bureaucratic approach proposed by the Greater Sydney Commission. The Greater Sydney Commission is an extremely long way from the Coalition's promise to return planning powers to local communities. The Greater Sydney Commission will consist of 13 members, who are in no way democratically elected or accountable but instead appointed by the Minister for Planning. Four members will be appointed entirely by the Minister, including the chair, the environment commissioner, the economic commissioner and the social commissioner. Councils will then nominate six district commissioners. It is my understanding that the Minister retains the right to approve or refuse these nominations.

The Greens acknowledge that Sydney does need a far more comprehensive strategic planning approach, but our view is that it should be democratic and reflect the views of the people who will feel the effects of its decisions. In our view the GSC fails the test of democratic accountability. Our current planning system is flawed. But at least we have a model where the planning Minister and the Joint Regional Planning Panels are in some way accountable for the planning decisions that affect Sydney and the State. The Greater Sydney Commission will not be accountable to anyone and will be responsible for making some of the most controversial planning decisions in our biggest city, including local environment plans and State significant projects.

When I say "anyone" I mean the residents, the people who elect their councils and hope their State Government will support their local communities when it comes to the important strategic decisions which will affect the future of this State. We support a democratic model where regional planning is undertaken by joint organisations of councils backed up with fresh statutory powers to ensure that they are democratically accountable. Under the Greater Sydney Commission model community consultation will be bypassed and development potentially fast-tracked.

I am advised that the Better Planning Network has raised serious concerns that the Greater Sydney Commission "has no community representation and instead uses a top-down bureaucratic approach". From my experience on Leichhardt council I know that the community can be brought with you. When work is done on developments, investment in infrastructure and support services, and new residential and business dwellings, communities do respond to accountable and direct engagement with them about the issues of the future and, in particular, how we grapple with increasing populations. We are concerned that this top-down approach, which excludes health, the direct engagement of councils and, in particular, the appointment process, will undermine confidence in the system.

When it comes to UrbanGrowth we have heard a lot of talk about engagement but when the Premier needs a speech point it flies out the window. Indeed, the important work of groups like UrbanGrowth takes a backseat. The Greens do not support this bill. We encourage the Government to introduce more democratic engagement with local communities to make sure that we do not impose change on them but that we work with them to deliver a more sustainable Sydney.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [12.40 p.m.]: I make a contribution to the Greater Sydney Commission Bill 2015. The bill will constitute the Greater Sydney Commission as a New South Wales Government agency. The commission will have functions relating to planning and development in the Greater Sydney region and will provide for the constitution of Sydney planning panels for the region. Further, this legislation will amend the Planning Act to authorise the commission to make local

environmental plans [LEPs] under that Act for the Greater Sydney region.

The primary reason for establishing the commission was to have a coordinated body to ensure that a reasonable amount of planning takes place in preparation for the inevitable development that will occur throughout the Greater Sydney region. We need to ensure that as Sydney expands we do not only grow larger in size but that we have a coherent plan that will help to improve the lives of people in the process. The needs of our growing population are of paramount importance; our future must be planned. Over the years a wide range of uncoordinated development has occurred throughout the region. This has resulted in an incoherent approach to solving the growing issue of crowding and congestion. This has presented its own challenges and struggles. I will touch on this further, particularly as it affects the electorate of Fairfield.

The Greater Sydney Commission will be comparable to other citywide planning authorities such as the Greater London Authority, Metro Vancouver and the Victorian Metropolitan Planning Authority. This is not a new concept; it has been done before. Who would have guessed that planning our major infrastructure with a coherent plan was so important? Over the past century there has been a significant increase in the global population who live in cities. In 1900 only 10 per cent of the global population lived in cities. Today's figures show that approximately 50 per cent of global population lives in cities, and by 2050 that is projected to exceed 70 per cent. It is expected that in Sydney the number of residents will increase by 1.6 million, and more than half of that growth is expected to occur in Western Sydney. This is an alarming figure, particularly if we are to continue down the same path we have been following to date.

Since the 1890s there has been a call for a Greater Sydney Commission because Sydney has essentially been an accidental city. Construction has occurred in Sydney without any cohesive plan. Structures have continued to pop up without consideration being given to supporting infrastructure. We are now in a bit of a mess. It is time to clean things up and form sensible solutions for the future. My colleagues have discussed the intricacies of this bill at great length so I will not repeat those comments. But it is great to see that both sides of this House are working in a similar way towards achieving a common goal. Labor has publicly supported the Greater Sydney Commission—it was a key part of our 2015 election policy. The Greater Sydney region is in dire need of some direction and a coordinated approach by the various government departments.

Although there is a distinct lack of community consultation or parliamentary oversight, the proposed legislation still has merit and should yield greater benefits for the Greater Sydney region. As I said earlier, I want to focus on three areas that have been developed in my electorate. I will also address Badgerys Creek. In my electorate developments have been popping up left, right and centre without matching infrastructure. For example, the development on the corner of Tasman Parade and Hamilton Road, Fairfield West, and the impact it will have on Fairfield West Public School and Westfields Sports High School. Both schools are full. Where will the students from the towers being constructed at Fairfield West go? I have had considerable discussions with Ms Genelle Goldfinch, the principal of Fairfield West Public School, and Mr Roger Davis, the principal of Westfields Sports High School, about this. Westfields Sports High School currently has approximately 1,400 students. It is bursting at the seams and cannot take any more students.

The Fairfield West development has put pressure on not only those local schools but also on local roads and the poor public transport in that area. At Villawood, on the other side of my electorate, the old Franklins' site is being redeveloped into a multistorey development. It looks good on paper but the prices of these lots and apartments are astronomical. The public transport infrastructure in this area is also poor. Not only is the bus service poor but Villawood railway station does not have easy access. I expect the Greater Sydney Commission will look at these issues, but I am giving these examples in my electorate to highlight how these developments have been built without matching infrastructure.

Two developments are proposed for the Aldi/McDonald's site at Court Road in the Fairfield central business district but, again, with no matching infrastructure. Already of a morning and afternoon

Court Road cannot cope with the traffic coming from Fairfield railway station and The Horsley Drive. Fairfield Public School is located 200 metres to the left of these proposed towers and Fairfield High School is just across the road. Both those schools are full. No consideration has been given to ensuring that the local schools can accommodate the children or that the hospitals and local roads can support the developments. Towers are also going up on the old Tip Top site on The Horsley Drive. Thus traffic will increase on The Horsley Drive, which is already difficult to get onto if you are travelling from Carramar.

If one needs to go the other way into the central business district of Fairfield, there is no matching infrastructure for road access. That causes problems for people who want to access the proposed site. There are issues with placements in schools not being taken into consideration. Once again, there are new developments but the same old infrastructure. The necessary infrastructure is not being put in place to meet the demands of the population. I turn to Badgerys Creek. The Opposition supports the proposed airport at Badgerys Creek. It is important for south-west Sydney and Sydney as a whole. The infrastructure that will be put in place must meet the needs of the growing population in outlying areas, including Narellan, Camden, Oran Park and Leppington. At the moment, Elizabeth Drive is struggling to cope with traffic. Cowpasture Road, in the mornings and afternoons, is barely coping. Add to that Fifteenth Avenue and Hoxton Park Road at Hoxton Park, which will need to deal with the cars and freight going in and out of the precinct. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

It is vital that an overarching body like the Greater Sydney Commission look in detail at the development proposals for that area. There are questions about the expansion of the South West Rail Link, as well as the proposed M9 link. These are serious questions that need to be answered because we want this development to be successful from the word go. It is vital for the economy not only of south-west Sydney but New South Wales that we get this right, and I have given examples from the electorate of Fairfield of developments going ahead without the necessary infrastructure in place. The Opposition does not oppose the bill.

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) [12.52 p.m.]: I speak in debate on the Greater Sydney Commission Bill 2015. I echo the comments made by the Leader of the Opposition yesterday about Labor's longstanding commitment to the creation of a single authority to plan for the sustainable growth of Sydney. The Opposition went to the last election with the policy that a Labor Government would create a powerful Greater Sydney Commission, sitting at the centre of government, reporting to the Premier and both Houses of Parliament annually. This bill creates the Greater Sydney Commission. It is perhaps not on the scale that the Opposition would like, but it is a start. Labor supports the bill. I look forward to seeing the rollout of this much-needed new approach to planning in Sydney.

This bill will create a New South Wales Government agency that will be tasked with planning and development in the Sydney region. The bill will provide for the constitution of joint planning panels for the greater Sydney region, under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. As a member from the greater Western Sydney region, I believe there is the potential for the commission to have a positive impact on the region. I come from and represent a part of Sydney where growth is happening every day. That is a huge opportunity for our economy, but it is also a challenge that must be acknowledged and addressed by the Government.

We must get the planning right to see the benefits flow accordingly. The Minister has said that the establishment of the Greater Sydney Commission recognises the importance of getting planning right in Sydney. This commission will ensure that, as our city grows, growth is managed in a holistic way so that we can extract all the possible benefits that Sydney has to offer as a global city. Our approach to planning must be comparable to that of other global cities, and that is what this commission will aim to achieve. The body will be similar to other worldwide planning authorities, such as the Greater London Authority.

In the next 20 years, Sydney's population is projected to grow by more than 1.6 million; one million of which is projected to occur in Western Sydney. That has implications for public policy in housing, education, transport and planning. As I have said many times in my six months in this Chamber,

one of the largest public policy challenges facing Sydney is how best to manage the population and housing growth explosion that is happening in greater Western Sydney. We must ensure that where new houses are being developed the Government is matching that growth with services. We must ensure that, where we are seeing tens of thousands of people move into one area, government agencies are equipped to handle the growing demand.

I note the comment in the Minister's speech that the commission will integrate planning decisions with local government. I look forward to seeing how this will be implemented in practice. Jordan Springs, a suburb in my electorate that might be well known to members of this place, is a microcosm of the challenges that we are discussing in debate on this bill. It is an example of the growth taking place in some parts of Sydney. It is estimated that when construction of every dwelling is complete, the suburb will be home to 6,500 residents. Jordan Springs is one of Western Sydney's fastest selling suburbs. I have come to know it well. One of my biggest priorities as the local member is to hold the Government to account on its promise to deliver ahead of schedule the public school in Jordan Springs. Both major parties promised during the election campaign that it would be delivered in this term of Government.

I hope, as does my community, that the Greater Sydney Commission will look at these types of issues so that New South Wales Government agencies can work holistically to ensure that development is adequately met with services. It is no good when the left hand of government does not communicate with the right. We need to make sure that the commission is able to meet these challenges and bring government agencies together to ensure sustainable and liveable development for greater Sydney. The Minister has said that it is critical to the commission's success to ensure it engages and collaborates with government departments and agencies. I cannot emphasise enough how important that is for greater Western Sydney.

Land use and infrastructure planning is going to be important to this commission. I hope that this strategy also includes planning for services that families desperately need, including education and health services. Silo departments that do not work together must be forced to acknowledge the long-term challenges faced by this city. That is why I believe there is uniform consensus on the creation of this commission. For too long the whole-of-government approach to Sydney has been lacking, and that is being felt in our communities. All interests and needs must be recognised when it comes to planning.

The most important thing that can be done to sustainably grow Sydney must surely be the creation of jobs in Western Sydney. In my inaugural speech I spoke about the ever-increasing deficit in jobs that is so palpably felt on the outskirts of Sydney. The reality is that tens of thousands of people from our city's outer suburban fringe travel from west to east for work and then back again to get home. They do that to feed their families and pay the mortgage. That is not a sustainable way for a global city to operate. In the City of Penrith alone, the number of people who make that commute is estimated to be a staggering 65,000. As the Leader of the Opposition, Luke Foley, said it is a threat to Sydney's liveability and a drain on our productivity. Every Sydneysider knows what that means for our roads and public transport infrastructure. Centres such as Penrith and Blacktown must become employment hubs. The Greater Sydney Commission must enable that to happen. It must happen to ensure Sydney's future.

When talking about Sydney's long-term planning we must address the dual issues of housing supply and housing affordability. While the Government must be commended for aiming to increase housing supply and, therefore, opportunities for thousands of more people to live in New South Wales, we must see a genuine attempt to ensure that infrastructure is matched with this growth. Of course, it cannot go unacknowledged by me as the member for Londonderry that the lion's share of new housing approvals are, and will continue to be, in the outer suburbs—places that traditionally are not planned strategically—leaving residents living hours and hours from work, with poor public transport options, to say the least, and subsequently suffering time away from their families and even poorer health outcomes. Very serious impacts are being felt in many of our communities.

Like many other members, I believe the Greater Sydney Commission will be a welcome step in

the move towards proper strategic planning for a growing, global Sydney and for the rapidly growing Western suburbs, which is in my interests and those of my community. Let us see how it works. A shared vision that both the Government and the Opposition have signed up to is an opportune beginning—a rare thing—and it will have my continued scrutiny on behalf of my community.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) [1.00 p.m.]: The Greater Sydney Commission Bill 2015 creates a new commission that will coordinate planning across the Sydney metropolitan area, including through the preparation of district plans for the six Sydney districts in partnership with councils, a review of the metropolitan plan and the provision of annual infrastructure priority lists. We need to plan for expected population growth in a way that is coordinated and holistic. Focusing development on the fringes of the city, on agricultural and biodiverse-rich land without transport, infrastructure, services or jobs, has had significant social and environmental impacts.

Similarly, city infill development has produced impacts from the lack of infrastructure and services such as schools, transport and open space, the lack of affordable and social housing, the excessive provision of car parking, the loss of heritage, and amenity impacts on neighbours. There is a cynical sense in the community that Sydney planning is really about opportunities for developers to make money while delivering for government coffers, at the expense of long-term public outcomes. I hope the Greater Sydney Commission will change this and create a new approach with social and environmental needs at the forefront.

The bill clearly sets out very positive objectives that cover the integration of social, environmental and economic considerations with regard to ecologically sustainable development, integrated planning, resilient planning, affordable housing, productivity, liveability and environmental quality. There will be three commissioners, each with responsibility for social matters, environmental matters and economic matters. I support integrated long-term planning, but is this bill enough to produce the outcomes that are needed? Bureaucratic planning bodies often produce little more than colour-coded maps identifying how many residential lots and commercial spaces can fit in an area, with needs such as infrastructure and services mentioned in short corresponding paragraphs.

For this process to work, infrastructure lists must identify specific locations, including land for rail corridors, stations and schools. This has not happened in the past. Pyrmont, for example, is the most densely populated suburb in the country and most apartments there were built in the past 20 years, yet it received no new education facilities and little open space. Thanks to the City of Sydney, Pyrmont was recently delivered a beautiful waterfront park. Green Square will house an extra 40,000 new residents by 2030, but it does not have new public transport planned and there was a surcharge on its train station, thanks to a government contract signed in the 1990s. Without the political will and budget commitments, nothing will change. We do not just want a list of necessary infrastructure without any mechanism to make it happen.

New schools, new parks, new public transport and new hospitals will be needed. Existing education facilities, open space and public transport already cannot cope with the demand. The commission should be planning for infrastructure that is already needed across Sydney, not just dealing with new development. For example, in the inner city changing demographics and lack of forward planning has led to a shortage of education infrastructure and the need for a new high school. I hope the priority given to social matters and the inclusion of affordable housing in the commission's objectives will result in a better approach to affordable housing. Increasing the housing supply is not enough to create affordability, particularly in areas of high demand and high value like the inner city, which is getting too expensive for the key workers who are needed to make it function. This has wider economic impacts on business, tourism and liveability.

We are also seeing the sale of inner-city social housing to reinvest in properties further from the city, where there are fewer job opportunities, services and infrastructure. Major projects such as Barangaroo have small affordable housing targets but the focus has been on luxury apartments, and it is

not even clear whether the small proportion of affordable housing required by government will be delivered on site. The Government has not released social and affordable housing targets for other inner-city redevelopments such as The Bays Precinct and Central to Eveleigh. The city's diversity is at risk and I hope the Greater Sydney Commission will promote a Sydney that is diverse across the metropolitan area, with social and affordable housing targets in all areas of development not just on the fringes.

We want Sydney to be a healthy and environmentally sustainable place. This means ensuring that people can walk, cycle or catch fast, affordable and efficient public transport to and from work and to take their kids to school. Active and public transport must be a priority for the commission. It must also consider the best way to power new developments and require green energy, such as solar-only redevelopments. Cities also need to provide opportunities for social connections in people's day-to-day lives, and public space must be a major part of future planning. We have heard a lot about councils' failure to incorporate district plans in their local environment plans and how this prevents integrated planning. But often ad hoc planning is the result of developer applications for proposals that are contrary to strategically established plans, which the current planning process allows for.

Developers can get a spot rezoning approved for non-compliant development by applying to a regional planning body or sometimes to the Planning Assessment Commission. At the State planning level we see developers changing approvals all the time—Barangaroo is a classic example. An initial competition was held, with the winning design receiving broad community support. As the process advanced, modifications were made at the request of the developer to expand height and bulk, and the floor space ratio has now more than doubled since the initial approval. This is not strategic planning; this is ad hoc planning for private profit at its worst. Will the Greater Sydney Commission process prevent such ad hoc planning? Will developers have greater influence on the commission's planning process from the beginning? It is unclear, and the community will watch closely.

People want to know whether the Greater Sydney Commission will really produce public benefits. Scepticism remains because, unlike the Greater London Authority, it is an unelected body and will not be answerable to the public. I share this concern. The commission will likely preside over major changes to the Sydney landscape, creating new neighbourhoods and changing existing ones. Community involvement and public transparency are vital to preventing significant impacts. Under the bill there are no requirements for the commission to meet in public and meeting minutes do not have to be published until three months after a meeting. This is not best practice—achieving transparency requires public meetings that follow procedures such as the publication of agendas and papers in advance and minutes within days of a meeting. Councils do this already.

Draft district plans must go on public exhibition within 12 months. This period may be too short given the commission needs to develop draft plans in partnership with all councils in a district. Drafting plans is time-consuming and requires lengthy assessments and a level of early community feedback. The risk is that the collaborative approach will suffer, reducing council input as the commission attempts to meet the timetable. The Government must monitor this situation closely. The bill gives the commission the power to delegate directly to council staff. This is contrary to the approach taken in the Local Government Act, which set up a structure for staff. There does not seem to be any limits on the commission's ability to bypass the general manager or council to direct council staff, and it is not clear how this would work. Councils should receive compensation for the loss of staff to commission duties and I ask the Minister to address that issue in reply. I hope that with this bill we will see a new, holistic and integrated approach to planning that ensures the delivery of infrastructure, services, diversity across the metropolitan area and vital public outcomes.

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) [1.08 p.m.]: In discussing the Greater Sydney Commission Bill 2015 I will echo many comments I have made regarding the draft Sydenham to Bankstown corridor plan that was announced last week. I do that because I believe the corridor plan provides a good example of why we need an independent and accountable body such as the Greater Sydney Commission and why we

need it to be established properly. A big-picture proposal that looks to bring together all the leaders is brilliant in theory; our challenge is to transform that into a reality. We live in an amazing city, a growing global city that continues to welcome newcomers. But as people travel around our city they can see living proof of the various planning decisions that have been made over the years—some have been done well and some have been botched. The projected population growth of 1.6 million—900,000 in Western Sydney alone—is phenomenal. We have a once-in-a-generation—if not a once-in-a-century—chance to get this right. But today I do not want to talk only about the traditional outcomes of the planning process.

I believe the commission ought to have a much greater mandate and be held to account for some significant outcomes. The authority, independence and accountability of the commission is fundamental to its ability to get the job done in the way that it must be done. Yesterday the Leader of the Opposition noted the need for the commission to be powerful enough to be effective, committed to and accountable for true integrated long-term planning and to be cognisant of its full range of goals. I support that call and will explain why this is important to the people of my electorate. I will not be the first or the last to say that density done well can lead to meaningful urban renewal. However, what does "done well" mean? It means that the burden of density is distributed fairly across Sydney and that population growth is matched with adequate roads, public transport, health and school infrastructure, and the creation of new cultural and urban spaces to support the influx of residents. It means that we find ways for those who cannot afford housing to be assisted, through social and affordable housing.

The recently announced Sydenham to Bankstown Urban Renewal Corridor is a clear demonstration of the need for strategic infrastructure. It makes no sense to release a major urban development plan before a schools plan and without a health plan. If members want a visual image for what a lagging education plan looks like, think of demountable buildings that eat up school playground space. We should require that the Greater Sydney Commission include secretaries of health and education on its infrastructure delivery committee. Without that type of high-level input we will continue to see health and education planning lagging behind population growth. Like the Leader of the Opposition, I believe the commission ought to be powerful and held accountable for very substantial goals. It sounds as though we are in furious agreement with the Minister for Planning. This is fundamentally a great idea and any great global city needs big-picture planning.

During September the Minister noted in this House that the commission will ensure that as Sydney grows it will become a more liveable, more productive and more just city. It is encouraging to hear those opposite talk about the notion of justice, especially when it comes to planning. It is an idea that my colleagues and I applaud and would like to explore and reinforce further. In May this year Fairfax Media published an analysis of the distribution of wealth and opportunity across the city. It described a disturbing picture of a city increasingly divided in two, between rich and poor. It noted that, after taking into account inflation, the top 10 poorest postcodes went backwards over the past decade, while the city's richest ten postcodes all enjoyed disproportionate income gains. As the representative of the electorate of Lakemba, I find those statistics disturbing and worrying. Most of my electorate was identified as being in the list of the poorest suburbs. Poverty is one thing but inequality is another. Poverty compounded by inequality within the same city eats away at cohesion and undermines the confidence and hope of communities, especially for young people.

I spoke recently about building cohesive communities and about how justice, equity and opportunity sit at the very core of community building. Those opposite talk about a New South Wales unemployment rate of 5.9 per cent; however electorates such as Lakemba suffer under an unemployment rate of approximately 10.3 per cent. Meanwhile, the jobs forecast for the Sydenham to Bankstown Urban Renewal Corridor project falls a long way short of population growth. The commission must care about that kind of discrepancy. It must not succumb to that killer of achievement—low expectation and low ambition. I hope that the Greater Sydney Commission, with its focus on various districts, will pay attention to the specific make-up and needs of the full range of districts. If this commission does its job properly, it will creatively tease out opportunities for long-term job creation—jobs that are highly skilled, well paid and close to where people live. People should not have to effectively migrate on a daily basis, travelling long

distances to work. Job creation should be another major focus of the commission.

Planning is not just about buildings; it is also about planning for communities and the creation of better communities. When I reviewed the Sydenham to Bankstown corridor plan it was obvious to me that the silo approach to government planning was, sadly, still alive and well. Planning cannot be clumsy; we must get beyond the bandaid solution. People living in my electorate—especially those who live along the corridor—do not care about the demarcations between government departments or even levels of government. For them, it comes together in the lived experience. They need government to drive integrated planning and implementation that keeps their wellbeing front of mind.

People in my electorate are no different from those in any other electorate: They want good roads, schools, transport, parks and a pleasant environment. They want their piece of paradise to be just that—a place to call home. I support the establishment of the Greater Sydney Commission but I recommend that it be held to account by Parliament for the higher goals articulated by the Minister: a more liveable, more productive and more just society, with a rigorous set of goals that are transparently reported. Anything less than this sells short not only our great city but also our great people.

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

CRIMINAL PROCEDURE AMENDMENT (CHILD SEXUAL OFFENCE EVIDENCE PILOT) BILL 2015

TREASURY CORPORATION AMENDMENT BILL 2015

SUPERANNUATION ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT (INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT AND OTHER MATTERS) BILL 2015

STATE INSURANCE AND CARE GOVERNANCE AMENDMENT (INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT) BILL 2015

Messages received from the Legislative Council returning the bills without amendment.

Pursuant to sessional order community recognition statements proceeded with.

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION STATEMENTS

ABORIGINAL HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY

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) [1.15 p.m.]: I respectfully acknowledge the Gadigal people who are the traditional owners of the land on which we meet. I pay my respects to the elders past and present, and I extend my respect to all Aboriginal community members, colleagues and staff who are present today. Today I am honoured to commemorate two important events. The first is to mark 30 years since the establishment of the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of New South Wales [AH&MRC].

The second is to formally acknowledge the ongoing partnership between the New South Wales Government and the AH&MRC. I am delighted that board chair, Ms Christine Corby, and the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of New South Wales Chief Executive Officer, Ms Sandra Bailey, could join me today. The AH&MRC is the peak representative body and the voice of Aboriginal communities on health in New South Wales. It represents its members and the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services that deliver culturally appropriate comprehensive primary health care to their communities, and it complements the Aboriginal health strategy. It gives me great joy to be part of this

historic and significant moment.

NATIONAL GALLERIES OF SCOTLAND ART EXHIBITION

Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend) [1.16 p.m.]: I congratulate the Art Gallery of New South Wales and its director, Dr Michael Brand, on bringing the masterpieces from the National Galleries of Scotland to the gallery. I am a member of the art gallery and on Monday 23 October I was thoroughly engaged by the splendid selection of enthralling work so skilfully presented. I particularly enjoyed seeing *Poplars on the Epte* by Monet. I again thank the Art Gallery of New South Wales and congratulate it on doing a wonderful job in presenting artworks for the enjoyment of the people of this State.

MANNING VALLEY DRESSAGE AND HACKING CLUB

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [1.17 p.m.]: I inform the House that the Manning Valley Dressage and Hacking Club has emerged as a leader in para-equestrian events in regional New South Wales following the recent installation of a new mounting ramp and judging clinic. A second stage of the ramp is currently in planning, with a new facility that will enable wheelchair-bound riders to access the mounting station. The club has been a leader in para-equestrian activities in regional New South Wales. It was one of the first clubs to offer para-equestrian tests. Previously riders needed to travel to get the experience required to compete at State or national levels. In September the club held a para-equestrian judges seminar—the first time this type of seminar had been held outside metropolitan Sydney. Riders from the club will be performing in front of Prince Charles and the Duchess of Cornwall when they visit Australia later in the year.

NSW CARERS AWARD RECIPIENT KATE GRANT

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) [1.18 p.m.]: I congratulate Kate Grant, a constituent of the Miranda electorate, who is the recipient of a Local Carers Award as part of the NSW Carers Awards 2015. More than one in 10 people in New South Wales are carers. The NSW Carers Awards acknowledge and celebrate the significant contribution that unpaid or informal carers make to the person, or people, they care for and our community. Kate is the full-time carer for her husband, Andrew, who was diagnosed with motor neurone disease six years ago. Kate is a remarkable woman, being responsible for daily requirements and sometimes even speaking for Andrew as he is now at a stage where his speech is severely impaired along with all other motor skills. Andrew is permanently in a wheelchair and requires assistance for every transition. They have an extremely active two-year-old and another child on the way. I congratulate Kate on her NSW Carer's Award and thank her for her invaluable contribution to caring in our local community.

CENTRAL COAST ACADEMY OF SPORT

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) [1.19 p.m.]: Founded in 2004 by its managing director, Ian Robilliard, the Central Coast Academy of Sport [CCAS] is a non-profit sporting organisation that exists to provide locally based sports development opportunities for athletes, coaches, officials and administrators on the Central Coast. It has a fine reputation and is headquartered at the Mingara Athletics Centre located in The Entrance electorate. The CCAS is one of the 11 regional academies in New South Wales. The CCAS currently offers a total of 15 high-performance sporting programs including Australian Football League, archery, athletics, basketball, football, golf, lawn bowls, netball, rugby league, rugby union, surfing, swimming, triathlon, women's sevens and future stars, which is an individual program for sports not covered by the other 14 programs. CCAS receives funding from the Government, as well as funding from major business partners on the coast, community partners and the sponsors aligned with each sport. Ian Robilliard has done a fantastic job for the Central Coast. I acknowledge the work of Ian, the Academy Director, Mark Holton, and the board of directors.

NSW GRANDPARENT OF THE YEAR VIOLET LORD

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—The Speaker) [1.20 p.m.]: I congratulate the remarkable Mrs Violet Lord in my community on winning the NSW Grandparent of the Year award. She has fostered a total of 100 children—15 of whom she received from infancy to adulthood—in 40 years. Mrs Lord—whom I have known for a long time—is in her eighties but she still provides breakfast for the students of Nowra East Public School. She is dedicated and, like so many of our volunteers, does not seek any kind of recognition for what she does. I am so pleased that she has won this award because I have nominated her previously for other local awards. She is very shy and does not like recognition, but this was a big award for her. Mrs Lord was interviewed on radio a couple of days ago. I congratulate Mrs Lord and her husband because it has been a team effort by both of them. Well done also to the students at Nowra East Public School who regard her as their grandmother and who love her, as she loves all of them.

ETHNIC COMMUNITIES COUNCIL OF NSW FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) [1.21 p.m.]: I draw the attention of the House to the work of the Ethnic Communities Council of NSW. Established in 1975, the council is the peak body for culturally and linguistically diverse communities in New South Wales. Recently I celebrated the council's fortieth anniversary at its annual general meeting, along with The Greens member of the Legislative Council Mehreen Faruqi. I thank the outgoing board members for their service: Aziz Akbar, Phoebe Alexander, Indrajit Khuman, Arnir Salem and Jon Soemarjono. I congratulate also the newly elected and continuing members of the new board: Chair Peter Doukas, Deputy Chair Jack Passaris, Marta Aquino, Siddique Panwala, Fiona Passaris, Emanuel Valageorgiou, Tasha Vanos, George Varughese, Maria Passaris, Padmanabhan Karamil, Glen Falkenstein, Cen Amores, Josie Musa, Suellyn Lin, Christine Lynch, Abbas Alvi and Executive Officer Mary Karras. I congratulate and welcome the new board, and wish members every success.

BOWRAL LONG LUNCH

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) [1.22 p.m.]: I recognise the efforts of the Southern Highlands community for their organisation and generous support of the Bowral Long Lunch. The local community, under the guidance of the BDCU Children's Foundation, raised roughly \$75,000 for mental health support for local youth. I especially recognise Ross Stone, the BDCU Children's Foundation Vice-President, and President Catherine Brennan for their countless hours of effort and dedication in making this event a success. We must also acknowledge the Southern Highlands Private Hospital and Cancer Centre, and its Chief Executive Officer, Jenny Harper, Harbison Care and its Chief Executive Officer, Don Ross; as well as Thompson Health Care and its Communications Manager, Kate Mafoa.

Special mentions must also go to Gumnut Patisserie, Centennial Vineyards Restaurant, BDCU Alliance Bank, Coffee Culture, Yes: Your Event Solution, Cookability Cooking School, Anchors Fresh Fruit and Vegetables, Gai's Gazette, Iceblink Creative, Tyrrell's Wines, Baiada Select Poultry, Vixpix Photography, CocaCola, Highlife Magazine, Distinctive Ciders, Aquamann Irrigation, Sutton Forest Olives and Ace Internet Services for their support of the lunch. We must also thank the 87 volunteers who came from across the community, especially students from primary schools, students and apprentices from TAFE and locals who all dedicated their time to raise this significant amount of money to employ mental health nurse Kim Millard.

INGLEBURN MOTOR REGISTRY CLOSURE

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) [1.23 p.m.]: I thank and recognise the many thousands of people in my electorate who have spoken up and raised their voice in opposition to the closure of the Ingleburn Motor Registry. They took the time to sign my petition and to return their response to my office. The decision to close the Ingleburn Motor Registry, along with the one at Campbelltown, now means that the entire Campbelltown local government area of 155,000-plus people is

without this basic service. Despite all the Government spin, my community know a service cut when they see one.

There is no denying that the Ingleburn Motor Registry closure is a service cut. The corporate takeover of our local motor registry sees all its services spirited away to Gregory Hills—a suburb few can find on the map. It is more than 20 kilometres away, without adequate public transport connections, and some people do not have the physical means to attend. Of course, the Government has given no thought to the elderly or those on restricted licences. The Ingleburn Motor Registry is a basic service. By taking it away we are continuing the divide between the haves and the have-nots in New South Wales.

CULTURE ON THE CLARENCE

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence—Parliamentary Secretary) [1.24 p.m.]: I offer my congratulations to the organising committee of Culture on the Clarence, especially Casey Challacombe. Culture on the Clarence is one of the first events in the eighty-first Grafton Jacaranda Festival that showcases the many talented people who call the Clarence Valley their home. It was held this past Sunday in the centre of the historic South Grafton central business district. The South Grafton central business district was at it is best under a fabulously clear blue sky. Many locals and visitors enjoyed the experience put on by a variety of musicians and performing artists and had the opportunity to sample the best local produce presented in the valley's own pop-up Eat Street. This year some 95 businesses and stallholders participated, which is about double the number compared with last year. This event is becoming an integral part of the annual floral festival and ensures the event kicks off in a fun-filled, exciting manner.

TRIBUTE TO ALF CARPENTER

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) [1.25 p.m.]: I recognise one of Australia's last surviving Anzacs, Alf Carpenter of Newcastle. While the Battle of Crete in 1941 may not be as well remembered by Australians as the Gallipoli campaign, it is a time in history that the Greeks will never forget. In recognition of Australia's contribution to the battle, Greek Government officials will today honour Mr Carpenter, now aged 98, in its commemorative ceremony to mark Oxi Day. Oxi is the Greek word for "No", which was the answer Greece firmly gave to the Italians on 28 October 1940 in response to their request for free passage through Greece. Churchill sent the Anzacs into Greece to defend the country against the Nazis. Six hundred and forty-six Australians were killed during that battle and are lying in Greece. Mr Carpenter enlisted in the 2nd Australian Imperial Force in 1939 and left Australia to go to war just a month after he married his wife, Marjorie, in 1940. He fought in Bardia and Tobruk before being sent to Greece. He suffered a head wound in the battle at Heraklion and later fought in Syria. He then returned to home to defend Australia against the Japanese. I honour Alf Carpenter on this day, Oxi Day.

WORLD PHARMACISTS DAY

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) [1.26 p.m.]: I thank Jonothan and Lillian Chen for their invitation to celebrate World Pharmacists Day with them at their Hammondville Pharmacy on Friday 25 September. This year World Pharmacists Day focused on the theme "Pharmacists—Your Health Partners". Nowadays people go to the pharmacy for more than just medicine; they also go for health check-ups, which may prompt them to seek further advice from their general practitioners. The Chens embody this year's theme, and regularly promote additional services they offer in their pharmacy, such as blood pressure tests, diabetes tests and the ability for people to talk to them about mental health. I again thank the Chens and other pharmacists across the Holsworthy electorate for their professionalism and the assistance they provide to the community. I particularly thank the Chens for their fundraising efforts on behalf of the homeless, and for caring for people.

WRAP WITH LOVE

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [1.27 p.m.]: I commend Patrician Brothers' College, Fairfield, for recently hosting a knit-in for Wrap With Love. The event was well organised and encouraged local community members and organisations to get involved and help put together blankets that will go to those in need. The day was a great success, with parents, grandparents, extended family members, local community groups, Auburn Girls High School and knitters from the Cabramatta Library coming along to lend a helping hand. Wrap With Love was formed in 1992 and for the past 20 years has provided more than 300,000 blankets to people in need across 75 different countries. Congratulations to everyone involved for working towards such a worthwhile cause.

NORTH SHORE SYNAGOGUE SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson—Parliamentary Secretary) [1.28 p.m.]: The North Shore Synagogue, which was originally known as Northern Sydney Hebrew Congregation, was established in 1947 by Reverend William Katz. Reverend Katz held services for a small group of Holocaust survivors and immigrants in private homes until 1950, when the synagogue at Lindfield was established. In 1952 the foundation stone was laid by the Chief Rabbi of the British Commonwealth, Rabbi Israel Brodie. I acknowledge all those who have contributed to the North Shore Synagogue over more than 75 years. The current senior minister, Rabbi Paul Lewin, together with the cantor, Zvi Teichtahl, and the broader team, continue to contribute greatly to the growth and stature of the community, making it one of Sydney's premier synagogues. The North Shore Synagogue will celebrate its seventy-fifth anniversary with a gala concert this Sunday, 1 November, featuring Simon Tedeschi, who is one of the finest pianists of his generation. I look forward to marking the occasion with all concerned, and congratulate the synagogue on its seventy-fifth anniversary.

DURGA PUJA

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) [1.29 p.m.]: On 18 October I again joined the Australian Bengali Hindu Association's celebrations of Durga Puja at Granville Town Hall. The celebration signifies the goddess Durga's triumph over the evil demon Mahishasur and is one of the most significant festivals for Bengali Hindus from both West Bengal and Bangladesh. The celebrations continue over the entire weekend. Each year, hundreds of people from across Sydney come together to rekindle the bonds of culture, fraternity and friendship at Granville in honour of the goddess.

Dozens of volunteers prepare food, musical performances and of course, prepare the stage with the statues of Durga's triumph and the other gods. It is also a timely and sad reminder of the ongoing persecution of Hindus in Bangladesh, along with other ethnic and religious minorities, which have worsened after the most recent national elections. I congratulate the President Samir Sarkar, Secretary Shantanu Kar and all the committee on their tireless work in putting on such a wonderful festival.

MATTHEW COOK SCOUT MEDAL RECIPIENT

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) [1.30 p.m.]: I congratulate Matthew Cook of Singleton who was recently awarded the prestigious Australian Scout Medallion. Matthew is the first member of the Singleton Scout Group in its nearly 100 years of existence to have received this award. The Australian Scout Medallion is the highest award a scout can achieve and Matthew has been working for the past four years to achieve this goal. Matthew's commitment to the scouting movement is exemplary. His next endeavour is the Queen's Scout Award and I wish him all the best for his future success.

EASTERN CREEK PIONEERS SOCCER CLUB

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) [1.31 p.m.]: I acknowledge the executive committee and committee members of the Eastern Creek Pioneers Soccer Club for their hard work and dedication to the young people of my electorate, where they have operated at Moreau Reserve for many years. In particular, I ask the House to acknowledge the efforts of Ms Karen Hunt, who is currently stepping down

as the club secretary after many years in the position. Karen joined the Eastern Creek Pioneers as a committee member in 2002 and took on the role of secretary in 2012. I thank her on behalf of all the players past and present for her commitment and efforts during her time in this important position.

CAMILLA JANSEN BRAID

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie—Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education) [1.32 p.m.]: I draw the attention of the House to the great work of Camilla Jansen. We do not often think further than food, water, shelter, health and schooling when we think about donating aid to developing countries, such as Vanuatu. However, Camilla Jansen does. BrAid stands for bra aid. Bras are considered a luxury in places like Vanuatu. However, it is quite sad that all the women in one village share one community-owned bra. That bra has to be pre-booked by hopeful women wanting a trip to town, or for important events or visits.

This need is being quietly filled by some, including Alan Rosendahl, who in the past has taken a few hundred new bras from Port Macquarie to Vanuatu. He is now helping Camilla to save shipping costs by taking bras in his personal luggage on his regular Vanuatu visits. Camilla has set up donation places for pre-loved bras in good condition at many Port Macquarie businesses. I thank Camilla for raising the community's awareness of the diversity of needs for disadvantaged women such as those in Vanuatu. I hope other communities will follow her example.

TASTE OF MASCOT FOOD AND WINE FAIR

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) [1.33 p.m.]: Last Sunday I attended the Taste of Mascot Food and Wine Fair, an annual community festival put on by Botany Bay City Council to showcase the culinary diversity of the local area. The festival is in its second year and attracted crowds of 8,000 people. Bourke Street, outside Mascot station, was closed to traffic for this event and there was a wonderful community feel. The event featured delicious produce as well as food stalls, food trucks, local cafes and restaurants. There was a licensed bar selling craft beers—including one named Albo—and boutique wines. There were live cooking demonstrations by *MasterChef* winner Andy Allen and live entertainment. I congratulate Botany Bay City Council, its mayor and councillors on this outstanding event that brought a sense of community to this relatively new community. I know this is a personal initiative of Mayor Ben Keneally. Together with the professionalism of council staff it has resulted in quite a magnificent event.

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL FIELD DAYS

Mr ANDREW GEE (Orange—Parliamentary Secretary) [1.34 p.m.]: For 64 years the Australian National Field Days has been organised by a voluntary committee of local farmers, graziers, orchardists, machinery agents, government officers and other volunteers along with a dedicated team of staff committed to ensuring the ongoing viability and vibrancy of our region's agricultural sector. This year an estimated 18,000 people passed through the gates during the three-day event, which makes an invaluable contribution to the local economy. There were more than 600 exhibitors, and world champion axeman David Foster officially opened the Field Days this year. This year the feature exhibit was eFarm—looking at new technologies that are changing how we farm.

I acknowledge and thank the committee: chairman, Dan Toovey; deputy chairman, Keiran Renshaw; administration manager, Jayne West; grounds, Geoff Brabrook; accounts, Bree McMinn; and administration events, Teiya Thornberry and Mandy Emms. I thank the subcommittee chairs: logistics, Chris Lennon; ground, Allan Watts; promotion, Chris Soloman; cattle, Sam Connell; sheep, Brett Douglas; education, Andrew Norton; finance, Rob Armstrong; and non-ag activities, Rob Hewett. I thank Reg Kidd for being the master of ceremonies at the opening. I congratulate all the volunteers and committee members on the outstanding success of Australian National Field Days 2015.

TRIBUTE TO JIMMY THOMPSON

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) [1.35. p.m.]: I was saddened when I heard of the recent passing of Jimmy Thompson, who was a good friend of mine. We worked together in the 1960s at Johnson and Phillips. Jimmy did a lot for our community. He was a long-time Director of the Cabra-Vale Diggers Club. He joined the club in 1982 and had been a director since 1996. Jimmy was responsible for the installation and preparation of plaques of the district's World War II veterans. He was previously president of the East Mount Pritchard Junior Rugby League Football Club, past secretary and delegate to NSW Rugby League for the Liverpool Bulls Rugby League Club second division, and assistant treasurer for the Dawn Service Trust. I know Jimmy will be sorely missed by the community, especially members of the diggers club. On behalf of the community, I pass on our condolences to Jimmy's widow, Doreen, and their family. Jimmy, rest in peace.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Marshall): Order! I draw members' attention to the standing orders that govern community recognition statements. Standing Order 108A (5) (c) states:

- (c) Criticisms or negative reflections on any person, including Members, Office Holders, the Government, the Opposition or a third party.

The content of the community recognition statement given by member for Macquarie Fields went very close to breaching that particular clause. He is a relatively new member of the House, so with all due courtesy I did not raise the issue at the time. For the benefit of members in the future, community recognition statements are an opportunity to recognise people in their electorate, not to raise a matter of substantive policy or criticism of the Government, the Opposition or any third party. I ask future occupants of the chair to keep that in mind when dealing with community recognition statements.

Community recognition statements concluded.

[Temporary Speaker (Mr Adam Marshall) left the chair at 1.37 p.m. The House resumed at 2.15 p.m.]

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I welcome to the gallery principals, staff and school leaders from Balgowlah Boys High School, Freshwater Senior Campus, Mackellar Girls High School, Manly Selective Campus, St Luke's Grammar School and St Paul's College, guests of the Premier, and member for Manly. I welcome Mrs Robyn Young, president of the Beacon Hill branch of the Liberal Party, guest of the Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Social Housing, and member for Wakehurst. I welcome also 16 philosophy students and their teacher from Our Lady of Mercy Catholic College in Burraneer, guests of the Minister for the Environment, Minister for Heritage, and Assistant Minister for Planning, and member for Cronulla, and the member for Oatley.

I extend a warm welcome to Liz and Mike Sutton-Smith from Swansea, Wales, who are visiting Australia for the wedding last Saturday, of the daughter of the member for Albury, guests of the member for Albury. I welcome Mr Glen Crump of Moree to the gallery today, guest of the member for Northern Tablelands. I welcome Xanthe Addison from Gresford, guest of the member for Upper Hunter. I welcome Michael Owen and Darren Potts, guests of the member for Wallsend. I welcome also Mr Peter and Mrs Robyn Wickham of Telarah, guests of the member for Maitland. Finally, I welcome to the gallery 53 public sector officers who are participating in a seminar on the procedures of the Legislative Assembly.

REPRESENTATION OF MINISTERS ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I advise members that the Attorney General will answer questions today in the absence of the Deputy Premier, Minister for Justice and Police, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Racing. The Attorney General will also answer questions today in the absence of the Minister for Corrections, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Veterans Affairs.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Notices of Motions

Private Members' Business Notices of Motions (for bills) given.

[During the giving of notices of motions.]

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

QUESTION TIME

[Question time commenced at 2.25 p.m.]

CROSS CITY TUNNEL

Mr LUKE FOLEY: My question is directed to the Treasurer. How much taxpayers' money is the Government prepared to pay to private company Transurban for changes to the operation of the Cross City Tunnel?

Ms GLADYS BEREJKLIAN: As a government, we have prided ourselves on ensuring we work with all stakeholders, including the private sector, when it comes to delivering and maintaining infrastructure; and that is what all good governments do. What this Government has also done is to establish a process of unsolicited proposals whereby the private sector can bring forward proposals for the Government to consider. As a government, we consider those proposals; and we will do what is in the best interest of the community. But what we will not do is what Labor governments do. I was very interested to read today, and this is relevant to this question, that the biggest factor inhibiting investment in infrastructure is lack of confidence in Labor governments. There was a report today which stated that, because of the Labor Governments' actions in cancelling infrastructure projects—

Mr Chris Minns: Table it.

Ms GLADYS BEREJKLIAN: The report is publicly available so Opposition members can look it up. The report said that, because of the Labor Party's axing of road projects in Victoria and the Queensland Government's lack of asset recycling, business confidence in those states was declining. I say this to the people of New South Wales: We are proud of our record on infrastructure. We are proud of our efforts to reduce congestion. What we do not appreciate is a Labor Opposition that does not support road projects, that does not support public transport, and that has no solutions for decongesting our cities and providing infrastructure in rural and regional areas. I say to those opposite—

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: What the taxpayers want to know is the cap. How much cash is the Government going to give this private company?

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The member for Maroubra did not even try to take a valid point of order. I call the member for Maroubra to order for the first time.

Ms GLADYS BEREJKLIAN: I think what taxpayers appreciate is that, unlike those opposite, this Government is putting resources where people need them most. I am pleased to say that in the next four years we are spending \$68 billion in the total State sector on infrastructure.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJKLIAN: I call out the Leader of the Opposition and the member for

Maroubra. I say to them on this point: They promised us, and indeed the Leader of the Opposition has said this publicly a number of times, that they would be "new Labor"—that they would consider relationships with the private sector, that they would actually support infrastructure projects and that they would actually support investment in existing infrastructure to make sure that everyone who lives in and moves around this State can do so in the most efficient way. Have we heard a single policy contribution from them as to how to do that? Have we heard a single policy contribution from them as to how they would fund any of this infrastructure? No. The community and the taxpayers of this State can rest assured that when we receive proposals from the private sector or when we put tenders out for infrastructure this Government will always do the right thing by them. I note that a lot of students and members of the public are seated in the gallery. You do not need to believe what I say—

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! I hope the member has a point of order this time.

Mr Michael Daley: I do.

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

Mr Michael Daley: My point of order is Standing Order 129. Why is this such a big secret?

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I say to everybody who cares about infrastructure investment and who cares about reducing congestion, that this Government will always do the right thing by the community and the taxpayers of this State. This will mean doing things by the book but it also will mean looking for opportunities to make things better for the people of this State.

STATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr ADAM CROUCH: My question is addressed to the Premier. How is the New South Wales Government rebuilding New South Wales and are there any alternative approaches?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I thank the member for his question. He is a great advocate for the Central Coast. As part of the Government's infrastructure plan we are allocating funding of \$400 million to upgrade roads on the Central Coast, funding of \$386 million for the redevelopment of Gosford Hospital, and Wyong Hospital will also be upgraded. Infrastructure plays a critical part in the life of every person in this State.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: At the last election we said we wanted to get infrastructure moving in this State. Indeed, we told the people of New South Wales about our \$20 billion rebuilding package to build the infrastructure those opposite spoke about but never delivered. This Government is proud of that. Indeed, one can see infrastructure everywhere when one travels across this State. Our new convention centre is underway, Barangaroo is underway, the WestConnex Motorway is underway, the NorthConnex, the Pacific Highway—

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: —the Princess Highway, everywhere one turns.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Even the Albion Park Rail Bypass is underway. Those opposite are not interested. We have allocated funding for the long-awaited metro for this city. Those opposite did not build it; we are building it. The light rail is underway, and we are happy to be supporting a project that will transform this city. Everywhere you turn in this State you find Jillian Skinner at a hospital. She is putting walls up and windows in. She is delivering hospitals for the people of this State. In delivering that infrastructure we are also taking away congestion from the people of this State.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I have been watching the Leader of the Opposition for a while now—

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: —and I have never seen anyone in this State who is more for congestion than he is.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! If this level of interjection continues for the remainder of question time very few members will be left in the Chamber.

Ms Yasmin Catley: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129.

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

Ms Yasmin Catley: Premier, why did the electorate of Swansea get zero in the budget?

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Swansea will resume her seat. I call the member for Prospect to order for the first time.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: How is Chris Bowen going? Do you like him?

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Those opposite may stand for congestion. In fact, the Leader of the Opposition is Captain Congestion because that is what he wants.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: What has he stood up for? It is very clear that the Leader of the Opposition is against two things. He is against the socialist objective—not so important to the people of New South Wales—and he is against public transport.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I have never seen a Labor Party more against public transport than those opposite.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: What have you lot got against public transport? Why on earth are you against public transport? It does not matter whether it is Newcastle or—

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! If the member is taking a point of order about the level of noise in the Chamber I will accept that. I do not know how the member could hear what the Premier was saying with the number of interjections coming from Opposition members.

Mr Michael Daley: I could hear the Premier because he was screaming so loudly.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra is an expert at that.

Mr Michael Daley: I am not bad.

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

Mr Michael Daley: The Premier cannot even answer his own Dorothy Dixier. This is not about the Opposition.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Only the Leader of the Opposition can say why he is so against public transport. Why is he against public transport? One needs to be careful when one looks at the infrastructure plan of those opposite before the election because on the same page it says "Labor" and "fully funded". They do not normally go together, so you know you will be in trouble when you read that document.

Mr Ryan Park: It is a serious report.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The member for Keira would have loved reading this.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: There are lots of pictures. That would have made it easy for you.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Keira to order for the second time. I call the member for Rockdale to order for the first time. I call the member for Maroubra to order for the third time. Members who are on one or two calls to order are now deemed to be on three calls to order. Standing Order 249A does not require members to be on three calls to order to be excluded from the Chamber; it is consistent and continuous interjection. Opposition members are continuing to make noise. I note that the member for Terrigal was on his feet before the two-minute time limit.

Pursuant to standing order additional information provided.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Only those opposite can answer the question. They went to the election with an infrastructure plan and CBD light rail was part of it. They were all for it. This document contains a comedy sketch where they talk about their track record—that is worth a read for those who want a bit of a laugh. But what is not a joke to the people of this State is the delivery of infrastructure that makes a difference to their lives. Those on this side of the House are happy to make decisions in the best interests of the people of this city and the people of New South Wales.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: We heard those opposite talk about jobs. Under this Government there are more jobs being created than in any other State and Territory, full stop, end of story. How do we deliver more jobs? This Leader of the Opposition will go down in history because he opposed Rebuilding

NSW—more than 100,000 additional jobs. That is what he stands for.

Mr Luke Foley: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! Government members will come to order. The Leader of the Opposition may have a point of order.

Mr Luke Foley: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. I invite the Premier to move a substantive motion—five minutes for him, five minutes for me. Don't let fear hold you back.

The SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: We had that debate on 28 March. Take a look at who is seated on this side of the House. We are going to continue to deliver for the people of New South Wales.

The SPEAKER: Order! I did say that Wednesday is usually not as bad as Thursday, but I was wrong. If members of the public who are seated in the gallery wish to stay a little longer they will shortly see some members being removed from the Chamber. The House will come to order. I remind the member for Drummoyne that I have asked the House to come to order.

CBD AND SOUTH EAST LIGHT RAIL PROJECT

Ms JODI McKAY: My question is directed to the Treasurer. In response to a recent question the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure dismissed cheaper public transport in return for the disruption caused by the works on George Street. Why, then, is the Government willing to give tens of millions of dollars to the private operator of a toll road? It is great that the Premier is giving the Minister the answer. Nice work.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member does not need to add information.

Ms GLADYS BEREJKLIAN: Let me get this right: The Labor Party is trying to tell the Government how to run public transport infrastructure. The Labor Party is trying to talk about fares. From memory, when Labor was in government the consumer price index rose by about 38 per cent but fares rose by about 60 per cent.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJKLIAN: The bottom line is that members opposite have no transport infrastructure solutions for New South Wales or any way in which to improve this State. I say to members opposite that it is necessary to invest in infrastructure to improve the lives of people in the community. The Government makes sure that things happen in this State. When Labor was in government, not only did it cancel projects, but New South Wales was the worst performing State. Labor wasted money—

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind Opposition members that a number of them are on three calls to order. Members do not need to be on three calls to order to be ejected under Standing Order 249A.

Ms GLADYS BEREJKLIAN: Labor wasted money, with nothing to show for it. Given that the member for Strathfield has raised the issue, I take this opportunity to congratulate the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. The delivery of the CBD and South East Light Rail project to date has been outstanding. He deserves credit from all members of this place. I say to the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Strathfield: Your constituents deserve and want better infrastructure. Why will you not stand by them?

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Canterbury will remove herself from the Chamber for a

period of one hour.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Canterbury left the Chamber at 2.41 p.m.]

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Members opposite do not support a single infrastructure project that the Government is investing in. I say shame on them. The only one who supports WestConnex is the member for Rockdale. Three cheers for the member for Rockdale. He is the only one who has had the courage to say that good infrastructure delivers better outcomes for our constituents. I say good on that member. The Opposition should hold the Government to account on how it delivers things, not question the fact that the Government is delivering.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. This is about giving tens of millions of dollars of taxpayers' money to the private operator of a toll road. Shame on the Treasurer for not answering the question.

The SPEAKER: Order! I heard the question. There is no point of order. The member will resume her seat. This is not an opportunity for her to have a second bite at the cherry.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Members opposite talk about the allocation of resources. They should tell the taxpayers where the half a billion dollars for the CBD to Rozelle metro went. They should tell the taxpayers where all the money went from the failed projects. The Opposition should not even go near the experience of somebody using the road network or public transport today compared with what it was 4½ years ago. Opposition members should hang their heads in shame. On this side of the House it is not our practice to gloat.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: If I am given more time I will tell the House more about what the Government is doing.

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Maroubra that he is on three calls to order

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: During and post the election, Labor told us it was New Labor. It told us it was willing to do what was right for taxpayers and communities. Why will Labor not support the Government's infrastructure program? I say to members opposite that it gives Government members a great sense of pride when other jurisdictions, not just from around Australia but from around the world, come to ask us how it is done. That is something we can all be proud of. We will not be lectured to by members opposite on how to provide the infrastructure that people need.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Kogarah will remove himself from the Chamber for a period of two hours. The House will come to order.

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

STATE ECONOMY

Mr JAI ROWELL: My question is addressed to my great friend the Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations.

The SPEAKER: Order! I cannot hear the question because of the noise coming from Opposition members. I ask the member for Wollondilly to start his question again.

Mr JAI ROWELL: My question is addressed to my great friend the Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations. How has the Government made New South Wales number one again, and are there

any alternative approaches?

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I thank the member for Wollondilly for his question. I appreciate how hard he works for his community.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: His constituents know what a growing community needs. This Government is proactive in supporting growing communities. As I alluded to in my previous answer, the Government is very proud of its repair of the economy in the past 4½ years. I pay tribute to my predecessors and to every member of the Government because we have worked very hard to ensure that four surpluses are projected. At the same time, the Government is spending record amounts on infrastructure in the areas of service delivery that matter most to our constituents. The Education budget has increased by 22 per cent since Labor was in government. The Health budget is 27 per cent higher than when Labor was in government. The Government is proud of these achievements. We could not have done it without maintaining our fiscal discipline and repairing the budget hole left by members opposite.

Unfortunately, we know that Labor has no credibility in economic management. The fiscal discipline that has turned our budget around and made New South Wales number one in the nation has not happened by accident. It was very pleasing to see our triple-A credit rating reaffirmed recently. Our credentials have also been reaffirmed in various reports on how well New South Wales is doing. I take exception to the motion accorded priority proposed by the member for Maroubra today and supported by the Leader of the Opposition. It shows what Labor does best, and that is fudge the figures. The Government has created more than 250,000 jobs in four years. The motion fails to say that in the past 48 months that Labor was in government—

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The Treasurer is arguing for a motion to be accorded priority. If she would like to wait until after question time perhaps the Treasurer could debate the Leader of the Opposition, I will debate her and we will have a good afternoon.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The Treasurer has the call.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I am happy to uphold the point of order. The Opposition is clearly embarrassed by its record. We stand by our record. The people of New South Wales will judge us on our record. What would life look like under a Foley Government, one wonders? We had a glimpse of it during the election period, when the Leader of the Opposition said he would tax businesses and jobs to pay for infrastructure that he would then cancel. Labor will tax businesses and jobs to part pay for projects that they will then cancel.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 130.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order. The member has the right to be heard in silence.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: The standing order says that when answering a question members are not to debate matters. Obviously, drawing attention to Labor's record is engaging in a debate because it assumes that we would have the right of reply. The question is directed to the Treasurer about her Government; it is not an invitation to engage in a debate with the Opposition.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maitland did not listen closely enough. The question asked by the member for Wollondilly was how has the Government made New South Wales number one again and are there any alternative approaches. There is no point of order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I am pleased to have had the opportunity early in question time to talk about infrastructure, so I will not speak about that. I will talk about housing affordability, which is a big challenge facing many people. Labor's solution was to announce a policy that it cancelled on the same day.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will cease interjecting.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: "Luke Foley's stamp duty folly" shows that Labor is clueless when it comes to very serious issues facing our community, such as housing affordability. Within 24 hours of the announcement made by the Leader of the Opposition, it was shown that house prices would rise as a result of Labor's policy.

Pursuant to standing order additional information provided.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I will summarise what I want to say because I think everyone has heard enough from me today. The Leader of the Opposition will tax business to part pay for infrastructure, which he will then cancel.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Lakemba will resume his seat. It is very disorderly to wander around the Chamber.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Under Labor we would see wages go out of control, we would see frontline services axed, we would see business confidence plummet and it would be a race to the bottom in relation to our economic indicators. We are proud of our record.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: It is very regrettable that those opposite, led by the Leader of the Opposition, have no idea what it takes to build a strong budget position and a strong economy.

SYDNEY MOTORWAY CORPORATION

Ms JULIA FINN: My question is directed to the Treasurer. As a shareholding Minister, why is the Sydney Motorway Corporation, which is 100 per cent government-owned, not subject to the Government Information (Public Access) Act?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: As Treasurer and in my role as Minister I inform the House that we pride ourselves on ensuring that the public has information every step of the way when it comes to major projects. Those opposite can come to us and ask us those questions the day that any of them are involved in building a major project for this State. The shadow Treasurer, who was finance Minister and, for a time, roads Minister in the former Labor Government, would appreciate what it takes to build major infrastructure. Regrettably, he is not aware of what it takes to be good at building infrastructure.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: It is Standing Order 129. Opposition members have asked these questions and have been told that Sydney Motorway Corporation is not amenable to the Government Information (Public Access) Act [GIPA]. We cannot even find out how much the chief executive officer is being paid because the Treasurer tells us it is a secret. It is taxpayer dollars. Why cannot taxpayers find out?

The SPEAKER: Order! The Treasurer is answering the question. The Treasurer remains

relevant.

Ms GLADYS BEREJKLIAN: I say to those opposite that they should look at the record of delivery. I still want to ask the member for Granville and the member for Strathfield and all those members whose constituents will benefit from the WestConnex project why they will not support that project.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: It is Standing Order 129. This is a \$15.4 billion project that is currently occurring in absolute secrecy. Will the Treasurer release information?

The SPEAKER: Order! I have just ruled that the Treasurer remains relevant.

Ms GLADYS BEREJKLIAN: As anybody who has been involved in a major infrastructure project would know, there are very strict probity requirements, very strict public disclosure requirements and very strict processes that are audited on an ongoing basis. We stand to be held to account on every single project we deliver on behalf of the people of this State. When any of those opposite have a bright idea on how they can improve the lives of their constituents they should come and talk to us.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! I have ruled that the Treasurer remains relevant. What is the member's point of order this time?

Ms Jodi McKay: It is Standing Order 129.

The SPEAKER: Order! I just ruled that the Treasurer remains relevant and that there was no point of order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJKLIAN: If the Opposition wants to support major infrastructure I suggest that it comes up with policies that support promoting infrastructure in this State. We stand to account by the people of this State. We stand to account on what we deliver. When the Coalition was elected in 2011 it promised the people of this State that it would turn this State around when it came to infrastructure and when it came to being upfront with the public—

The SPEAKER: Order! I direct the member for Cessnock to remove himself from the Chamber for a period of two hours.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Cessnock left the Chamber at 2.55 p.m.]

Ms GLADYS BEREJKLIAN: We stand by our philosophy of always having an upfront conversation with the public on what we are doing and why we are doing it. We say to those opposite: Help make New South Wales not just the best place in Australia but the best place in the world. That is what we are doing. We also say to those opposite: Be constructive, support those major projects that, at the end of the day, will make life better for the people of this great State.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS: My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. How is the New South Wales Government improving public transport and are there any alternative approaches?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I thank my great friend for her question. I particularly point out again that this Government is getting on with the job—setting a cracking pace and building the projects that matter to the people of this State, including Sydney, with projects such as the Sydney Metro North West, the Sydney Metro South West, the CBD light rail, Wynyard Walk, Barangaroo Ferry Hub, the International

Convention Centre Sydney, Newcastle light rail, Parramatta light rail, and the list goes on. We have also delivered the Opal card. I am pleased to report to the House that more than four million Opal cards have been issued, with more than half a million Gold Opal cards issued to the seniors community.

Since coming to government we have delivered 14,000 extra weekly public transport services across the State including 12,000 extra bus services, 1,700 extra train services and 220 extra ferry services. It has not happened by accident. If the past 4½ years show anything, it is that the challenges that this State faces cannot be solved without taking some courageous decisions. Whilst we are delivering world-class public transport infrastructure and services, everything those opposite come up with is full of holes. In fact, the Leader of the Opposition would be better known as "Luke Holey". Let us run through some of those Opposition plans.

Luke Holey fail number one: CBD light rail. He went to an election supporting it, then announced he would cancel it, and now he says he is going to build it—he thinks it is the Berlin Wall, but he says he is going to build it. He is all geed-up for this sort of nightmare on George Street with his mate Ryan Park, encouraging members to tell their stories on the Facebook site "Share your nightmare on George Street. How does the closure of George St affect you?" I was intrigued to read some of the comments on this Facebook site and I will run through them: "Dear Labor, you are a disgrace"; "Dear Labor, it doesn't impact on me at all"; "Dear Labor, to run this pathetic, short-sighted, fearmongering campaign is something you should be very ashamed of". My favourite comment appears on Labor's Facebook page.

The SPEAKER: Order! I direct the member for Keira to remove himself from the Chamber for a period of two hours.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Keira left the Chamber at 2.59 p.m.]

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: It says: The Baird Government in terms of transport they are a godsend". Let us go back to Luke Holey. Luke Holey fail number two.

The SPEAKER: Order! Government members will be removed from the Chamber if they continue to interject.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Luke Holey fail number two is a proposal for a bus tunnel under George Street, which, according to Transport for NSW, would "not improve access within the CBD". The advice on the project goes on to say:

Complications associated with ventilation, access, incident management, fire and life safety constitute very real threats to viability.

That is their alternative policy to CBD light rail. Let us go to Luke Holey fail number three—Sydney Metro. Whilst this Government is getting on—

Mr David Harris: Point of order—

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Smart and Skilled is going to give us a lecture, is he? I would be sitting quietly after yesterday.

Mr David Harris: My point of order relates to Standing Order No. 75. Whilst the Minister may think it is funny, he should call the Leader of the Opposition by his correct title and not use derogatory terms.

The SPEAKER: Order! The point of order is upheld. I ask the Minister to refer to the Leader of the Opposition by his correct title.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: We continue to see an alternative policy that has holes all through it. We have the holey fail number three, the Sydney Metro. Whilst this Government is getting on with building it, at the State election those opposite said they would fund it—but only half way across the harbour. Ryan Park is now going to build a scuba interchange and commuters will have to get out and swim the rest of the way. He will be there with snorkels, handing them out to commuters so that they can swim the rest of the way across the harbour. We also have the WestConnex or, under Labor, it should be known as WestDisconnex.

Pursuant to standing order additional information provided.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Labor indicated that it would build a tunnel, but it has not said where. Will it be Hyde Park, Sussex Street, or maybe to the bus tunnel? Who would know? The fifth holey fail is the Parramatta light rail. This Government is getting on with doing its homework. Labor did not even bother to include it in its infrastructure plan at the election. The truth is that after five years it has done nothing, but said everything. On any given project, Labor was in favour of it before it opposed it. That is after Labor agreed to think about it. The problem is that the Labor Party now represents a party of protest—it is the protest party. The bottom line is that the people of this State have had an absolute gutful of Labor which, for 16 years, failed them in every sense instead of building the necessary infrastructure.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will be removed from the Chamber if they continue to interject.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Now in Opposition Labor members carp from the sideline when it comes to construction disruption. It is nice to see the member for Maroubra with a spring in his step. One has to wonder what is going on. He has fixed up the hair, he has a jump in his step, he is hitting the media. Every day at 10.00 a.m. he is on 2SM. Michael Daley is cutting it through. It is going to be interesting.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Those opposite are divided right down the middle in their shadow Cabinet when it comes to central business district [CBD] light rail. I hear every day about their reported strategy, where Luke Foley is out on a limb when it comes to that project. It is time the Opposition got on board and backed what the Government is doing so that we can build this State for the people of New South Wales.

SYDNEY MOTORWAY CORPORATION

Ms JO HAYLEN: My question is directed to the Treasurer. As a shareholding Minister, why is the Sydney Motorway Corporation exempt from the provisions of the Public Authorities Financial Arrangements Act?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I place on record, as has been previously done by the Minister for Roads in the other place, that the Sydney Motorway Corporation [SMC] has unique structures. Members opposite should try to understand what they are. They are subject both to internal and external governance checks and balances.

Mr Michael Daley: That wasn't the question.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: If the member for Maroubra let me answer the question, he might begin to understand what he is actually asking. In relation to SMC, the unique model allows us to fund what is Australia's largest infrastructure project. There is no doubt that the delivery method is in the best interests of taxpayers and of the Government's balance sheet.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJKLIAN: It is an example of what governments can achieve when they look around the world to see what is best practice and implement that in New South Wales. I assure everybody that, whether it is that project and that governance or any other project, we will ensure that all internal and external auditing requirements and corporate governance provisions and public disclosure requirements are made every step of the way. That is very different to the deal that the member for Maroubra signed off with the gentraders when he was finance Minister. Remember that one: signings at the last minute; appointing new mates to boards; and trying to rush everything through at the eleventh hour? We will not be lectured to by those opposite about what is in the best interests of public disclosure or in the best interests of the public.

I say to those opposite that whether it is external reports, external experts, or internal corporate governance provisions, the public can be assured that this is a government that does things openly and transparently—unlike the record of those opposite, especially in the dying years of the Labor Government. Let us not forget the secret deals those opposite signed, without any care or consideration for what was in the public's best interest. It was all about the Labor Party. I have been pleased to be able to articulate a number of times during this question time what it takes for us to turn the State around and to do what is in the best interests of the public. That is what we will continue to do, unlike those opposite who left us with a mess. And now that New South Wales is the strongest State in Australia, those opposite should give us constructive policy suggestions, rather than talk down New South Wales.

HEALTH BUDGET

Mr DARYL MAGUIRE: My question is addressed to the Minister for Health. How is the New South Wales Government improving the health system and are there any alternative approaches?

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: I thank the member for Wagga Wagga for his question.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! Stop the clock. There may be a point of order and I need to hear it.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: I have the right to take a point of order. There is another point of order and I can make that. Questions should not contain argument, inference, imputation, nor should they be an expression of opinion or confirmation of—

The SPEAKER: Order! Who wrote that?

Ms Jenny Aitchison: I am reading this out because those opposite do not know the standing orders. I am giving it to you in case you missed the number.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The question did not contain any inferences or imputations under the standing order. Whoever gave the member that advice, I suggest she not take it in the future. The member for Maitland will resume her seat.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: I thank the member for Wagga Wagga for the question. As he would recall, the recurrent budget in Health has grown by \$4 billion, 27 per cent since we have been in office. To be specific, it was \$15.4 billion in the last budget brought down by Labor, \$19.6 billion this year—a \$4 billion increase. It is not a \$3 billion cut that those opposite have been conned into believing is the truth—wrong, wrong, wrong. Furthermore, the Government has increased frontline staff. We now have 4,200 full-time equivalent extra nurses, a record 49,000; 1,800 full-time equivalent additional doctors; 980 intern positions just this year alone; 273 extra paramedics since March 2011; and this year I am pleased to tell the House that 1,800 new nurse graduates took up positions in our public hospitals.

Therefore we have been able to treat more patients. In the last financial year there has been a 15 per cent increase in admissions, with 1.8 million admissions to our hospitals, and a 32 per cent increase in admissions in the emergency department, with 637 million attendances. The number of people being seen within appropriate time frames in elective surgery, according to clinician rules, has greatly improved. For example, 89 per cent were seen on time for cataract surgery in the first quarter of 2010, when Labor was last in office; now 98 per cent are seen on time. In the emergency department, when Labor was last in office 60 per cent were seen within four hours; it is now up to 73 per cent. The biggest contrast of all is in infrastructure investment. I am proud that last term this Government spent \$4.8 billion on infrastructure redeveloping hospitals. We have promised \$5 billion this term, making it a record of nearly \$10 billion.

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

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: In contrast, Labor spent \$9 billion in 16 years. In half that time this Government has spent \$10 billion, so double the spend. When I became the Minister for Health in 2011, 40 per cent of our hospitals were over 50 years old. At the last election the Government promised Westmead Hospital \$900 million for upgrades and Labor promised \$430 million, for Campbelltown Hospital we promised \$300 million and they promised \$100 million, and for Shellharbour Hospital we promised \$251 million and they promised \$30 million.

The SPEAKER: Order! I direct the member for Maitland to remove herself from the Chamber for a period of one hour.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Maitland left the Chamber at 3.11 p.m.]

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: Rouse Hill Hospital was promised zip from them; we promised a new hospital. This Government promised \$300 million towards the Multipurpose Service Program; zip from Labor, which shows their total lack of interest in the country regions. I am showing the contrast between what we do and what they say. This Government has have never failed to deliver any of the promises we made in relation to health infrastructure. Every single hospital upgrade we promised we have delivered. I compare that to Labor's record over 16 years.

The SPEAKER: Order! I direct the member for Prospect to remove himself from the Chamber for a period of three hours.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Prospect left the Chamber at 3.12 p.m.]

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: Labor promised hospitals at Dubbo, Parkes, Forbes, Tamworth, Port Macquarie, Bega, Blacktown, Campbelltown and Wagga Wagga but delivered nothing—empty promises. The best example is in the electorate of the member for Wagga Wagga. We have almost completely redeveloped Wagga Wagga Hospital at a cost of \$450 million, with a new mental health facility and stage 1, and we are going on to stage 2. On Thursday 25 June 2009 the *Daily Advertiser* headline was, "Trust Us", and it had a picture of six Labor Ministers, including Premiers. It stated, "That's what a procession of State Government premiers and health Ministers have kept telling us, but here are 10 reasons why we shouldn't."

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will cease interjecting. I remind the member for Rockdale that he is on three calls to order.

Mr Jihad Dib: Point of order: The Minister is using a prop.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is citing a newspaper article. The member for Lakemba should read the standing orders. The member will not waste the time of the House.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: I will table the article so that all members can read it. Wagga Wagga

hospital was typical of the hospitals that were promised by Labor for years.

Pursuant to standing order additional information provided.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: Nearly 20 years ago I first saw the disgraceful state of Wagga Wagga Hospital, particularly the paediatric ward, part of which we had upgraded. Labor promised to deliver money for it but the hospital did not get a cent from them. In Tamworth, Labor promised \$40 million to upgrade a maternity department. This Government pulled down the totally dysfunctional maternity department and built a new hospital. That is the difference between them and us. I could show a newspaper clipping dated 2007 in which Premier Morris Iemma committed to build Parkes and Forbes hospitals, but they did nothing. We have almost completed two beautiful hospitals, one at Parkes and one at Forbes. Labor promised an extra pod at Port Macquarie Hospital; we delivered. Labor promised an insufficient amount for Dubbo Hospital. We upped the ante and have now almost finished stage 1 and are on to stage 2. That hospital is fabulous and is attracting more doctors than ever before. This is a very good example of what this State would get if they were ever re-elected: absolutely nothing and health going backwards.

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

BAYS PRECINCT PLAN

Mr ALEX GREENWICH: My question is directed to the Premier. Given the Premier's comments about the Bays Precinct becoming a tech hub or silicone harbour, will he ensure the site provides affordable commercial space for Australian-based start-ups?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: That is how to ask a sensible question on a sensible issue. I wish that other members would pay attention.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I acknowledge in the public gallery the many students, indeed some of the future leaders in my electorate. It is great to be talking about the future with our future leaders. Our future leaders understand the importance of the digital economy. They do not see it as a threat but as a great opportunity. Statistics show that the digital economy will grow from just over the current 5 per cent to 22 per cent by 2040. New South Wales will be participating in the digital economy and we are determined to lead not only this nation and the Asia-Pacific but also the world. The digital economy will grow seven times more than the rest of the economy, which is very significant. If we want our future jobs to be central to this economy, obviously we have to participate in the digital economy.

Around the world people are competing for these jobs. The leading precinct of Roosevelt Island in New York is creating future skills and capabilities in order to participate in the digital economy. I also refer to Tech City in London and Startup City in Berlin. The world is after the best minds, including from Australia. We can say to the world that not only are we paying attention but we will be participating and leading, so the best minds may as well come here. That is what we are about in New South Wales. The Bays Precinct power station site is a place where we want a digital future. The formal process will start next week and we are providing opportunities for the best companies in the world to come and participate. This project will provide a great opportunity for this city.

This Government wants to build on the State's current capabilities. The information technology sector already is significant, with close to 45 per cent of the leading Australian information technology companies headquartered here. We want to build on that by connecting the Bays Precinct with an innovation and technology campus. There are great opportunities for start-ups in this process. Our technology park will facilitate and play a role in the digital economy. All of that collectively provides an opportunity for this city to be a key participant in the digital economy. While we look to the future, it is

advisable not to look backwards. I thought the Opposition would embrace this process but, unfortunately, it has not. The Leader of the Opposition said, "I think we should look at the feasibility of the Rozelle metro." We all understand the problems with that project. I will not tell the Leader of the Opposition how to do his job but I certainly would not talk about the Rozelle Metro.

This Government is determined to make sure that we have the appropriate transport at the right time to ensure that the Bays Precinct succeeds and thrives. The member for Sydney gets it. He understands the importance of the digital economy and the Bays Precinct is a part of it. He is challenging the Government to do this in the best possible way, which is entirely appropriate for a member to do. I thank him for his support and I assure him that we will do everything possible to make sure Sydney and New South Wales are leading the digital economy, because our future generations depend on the decisions we make today. We will do everything we can to ensure that Sydney leads the digital economy. The power station site at the Bays Precinct is an important part of that. I again thank the member for his question.

NSW GAS PLAN

Mrs TANYA DAVIES: My question is addressed to my very good friend the Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy. How is the Government securing gas supplies for New South Wales families and businesses, and are there any alternative approaches?

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I thank the member, who is indeed a very dear and loyal friend, for her question. Members on this side of the House have a plan that is working. While members opposite ran a campaign stunt that fell flat on its face, our NSW Gas Plan is a clear strategic framework to deliver world's best practice regulation of the gas industry. Our plan secures vital gas supplies for the State's 1.3 million families, 33,000 businesses and 500 industrial users that rely on a secure gas supply each and every day. What was the Leader of the Opposition's alternative? After leaving a coal seam gas [CSG] footprint covering more than 60 per cent of the State, just about anything would have been an improvement.

But, again, the Leader of the Opposition fell short. He did not come up with a gas strategy for New South Wales; he dreamed up an election campaign stunt instead. It was a cynical attempt to steal Greens votes in the Northern Rivers. Despite issuing every single CSG licence in that region, he declared that he would make the Northern Rivers gas free. To quote the Leader of the Opposition, "The CSG industry will never have a place in the Northern Rivers under a Labor government." But what did he deliver? He delivered a Labor-free zone in the Northern Rivers and the Labor Party's second worst result in history.

The Leader of the Opposition is the same policy genius who sneakily announced during the election campaign that he would tear up Santos's licence for its multibillion dollar project. Once again Labor has a stopgap leader whose policies open up New South Wales taxpayers to billions of dollars in compensation claims, not to mention threaten to cancel a potential project that could supply half the State's gas needs. He did not even bother to find out that the project could employ 1,200 workers during construction and provide around 200 permanent positions. Gobsnacked Narrabri mayor Conrad Bolton said at the time, "Fair dinkum. Santos hasn't even put in a development application or environmental impact statement yet."

The mayor correctly pointed out, "There's a process in place"—that we put in place—"that's supposed to be above politics so that you've got surety of investment in regional NSW." Members on this side of the House agree with the mayor. The invisible Leader of the Opposition has not even been there or spoken to that community. Even worse, he voted against our \$6 billion regional infrastructure plan for New South Wales. It is clear that the Leader of the Opposition is all spin and no substance. Government members know that without a secure gas supply businesses and manufacturers will shut down. Without a secure gas supply hundreds of thousands of people will be out of work in New South Wales. That is

hundreds of thousands of mums and dads who can no longer support their families.

That is the Foley plan. That is the alternative he put to the people of New South Wales. No wonder they punted him over the ranges. How does the Leader of the Opposition come up with these dangerous ideas to destroy jobs, investment and prosperity? In fairness, most of them seem to come from Jeremy Buckingham's Facebook page. But it appears that Labor members do have the occasional policy brainstorm. I have been lucky enough to come across the agenda and minutes from their latest policy meeting. It could have been handed to me by a disgruntled member of Team Foley or someone from Team Daley or perhaps from Team Minns or Team Crackers. I am just joking—there is no Team Crackers. Item 1 on the agenda—

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order: I refer to Standing Order 75. If the Minister wants to carry on like this he must refer to the member for Newcastle by his proper title.

The SPEAKER: Order! I uphold the point of order.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: There is not yet a Team Liverpool but I wish the member luck. The minutes read, "Item 1: Forward planning. Proposal by the member for Kogarah for a reserve sitting week tentatively titled 'Leadership Coup'. Matter deferred by L. Foley until catering is arranged."

Pursuant to standing order additional information provided.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: The minutes continue, "Item 2: Motion by the member for Fairfield on a new communications policy titled 'Permission to change his mobile number'. Motion denied by L. Foley." Then we come to, "Item 3: Management presentation by the member for Blacktown titled 'Fading Fast: the Luke Foley story'."

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! The question was about gas supply, was it not? I am wondering how this might be relevant to the question.

Mr Paul Lynch: It is not relevant but if the Minister would like to table the document we can have a look.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will return to the leave of the question.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: The minutes continue, "Item 4: Request by the member for Canterbury to attend the Cannes Film Festival. Approval given this time pending a check of the home building market."

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: My point of order is relevance under Standing Order 129.

The SPEAKER: Order! I have asked the Minister to return to the leave of the question.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: It is relevant because we know that the home building market is booming and therefore permission was granted. Behold the Leader of the Opposition: a do-nothing leader of a do-nothing party. The problem with doing nothing is that you never know when you are finished. In our case we know when he is finished. He has been given two weeks' notice. We will see the Labor Party back here in two weeks with a new leader.

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. This might be a joke to the Minister but a lot of people in New South Wales are interested in the answer.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister has completed his answer.

Question time concluded at 3.27 p.m.

PETITIONS

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

Powerhouse Museum Ultimo

Petition requesting the retention of the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo and the expansion of museum services to other parts of New South Wales, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Inner-city Social Housing

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

Pet Shops

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

Pig-dog Hunting Ban

Petition requesting the banning of pig-dog hunting in New South Wales, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Order of Business

Motion by Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS agreed to:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended at this sitting to permit the determination of the motion accorded priority after 4.00 p.m., and then provide for the following routine of business:

- (1) Government business;
- (2) private members' statements;
- (3) matter of public importance; and
- (4) the House to adjourn without motion moved at the conclusion of the matter of public importance.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Reordering of General Business

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Parliamentary Secretary) [3.28 p.m.]: I move:

That the General Business Notice of Motion (General Notice) given by me this day [domestic violence—support for victims] have precedence on Thursday 29 October 2015.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) [3.29 p.m.]: The Opposition will agree to the reordering of the motion.

Motion agreed to.

CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO BE ACCORDED PRIORITY

Leader of the Opposition and CBD and South East Light Rail

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Parliamentary Secretary) [3.30 p.m.]: My motion to be accorded priority is a very simple motion. The reason that it should be accorded priority is that the good people of New South Wales, many of whom were sitting in the gallery or listening online, heard today the Treasurer outline the Government's massive infrastructure spend on roads and public transport. This investment will ensure that New South Wales remains in a strong economic position. In this House our initiatives and policies are questioned by the Opposition, but surely we could expect the Leader of the Opposition, as the alternative leader of New South Wales, to put forward some policies in line with his protestations.

The Opposition can question our initiatives, which include a budget spend of \$68.5 billion throughout this term, with an investment of \$20 billion in infrastructure through Rebuilding NSW. Surely, on behalf of the people of New South Wales, it is not too much to ask the Opposition to show us a policy, just one policy. It is harder to find an Opposition policy than it is to find the Stocco boys. This afternoon the Stocco boys were found. I acknowledge the fine work of our NSW Police Force in tracking down those criminals, who have been on the run for eight years. In the end, even that was easier than extracting a policy from the Opposition. The Opposition cannot expect to lead this great State—a State that leads the nation in economic strength—without being prepared to put forward a policy.

The Opposition members who remain in the Chamber—many of them were thrown out this afternoon—must commit to clear ideals rather than their fascist, socialist stance that there is a Berlin Wall up the middle of George Street. That is not a policy and we do not accept it. The Opposition should take clearly defined policies to the people of New South Wales; the people of New South Wales deserve nothing less. The Leader of the Opposition stands condemned for his flip-flopping on public transport policy. Before the election he supported light rail up the middle of George Street but now he takes every opportunity to protest against it. He is the only person in New South Wales who wants that piece of infrastructure to fail. It does not stack up. The Leader of the Opposition needs to put forward some policies. If he cannot, he should make way for an Opposition leader who can.

Jobs Creation

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) [3.33 p.m.]: The House is considering two motions to be accorded priority. One is seeking to inflict a sort of limp-wristed and gratuitous violence on the Leader of the Opposition. The other motion, which is my motion, deals with the important matter of employment in New South Wales. It is employment that drives the economy of this State and the nation. My motion is about employment and the hopes of young people finishing school and TAFE and university studies and of getting a good job that defines who they are. The targets set by the Baird Government for the creation of 150,000 jobs in the next four years is the political equivalent of rolling the arm over. The mantra of this Government may as well be: If at first you do not succeed, simply change the parameters of the definition of "success".

If the trains do not run on time, just have them skip stations. That is what the now Treasurer did when she was the Minister for Transport. Do not worry about the people who are waiting. If a train is running late, it should just go straight through the station without stopping; never mind about service delivery. The Government still cannot meet its rail on-time running targets and so it scraps them. Unemployment is rising, so the Government simply redefines the definition of "success" for

unemployment. Ministers are failing on all of the key performance indicators in the State plan, so the Government simply throws it out. It gets rid of it together with all the bureaucracy that goes into testing Ministers and their departments in relation to service delivery and instead issues 14 motherhood statements as the State plan. Now we see that the Premier is doing something similar in relation to jobs.

Bob Carr was elected Premier in 1995 and in his first term he created 161,500 jobs. Admittedly, he was coming off a low base. Nick Greiner had left him with a jobs creation level in the previous four-year term of 88,000 jobs in the State. Bob Carr created double that in his first term. The number then increased to 242,000 jobs in Labor's second term and 167,700 in the third term. In Labor's final term, with the global financial crisis hitting, a further 231,600 jobs were created. I was sitting around the Cabinet table when the global financial crisis hit and saw the revenues of our Government fall by \$2 billion per year. What we did to create jobs, in conjunction with the Rudd-Swan strategy at the Federal level, was to pull the infrastructure lever. We spent \$18 billion in a single term of government on State capital expenditure projects. That figure has not yet been equalled by this Government. It worked a treat: it created 250,000 jobs.

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

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! The ayes have it.

Mr Michael Daley: The noes have it. I was drinking a glass of water.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! I point out to the Opposition, as I did two weeks ago, that once I call the ayes or noes the motion is resolved. The member for Maroubra may have been drinking a glass of water, but other members must know the intentions of the Opposition. The next time this happens, I will not relent on my earlier decision.

The House divided.

[In division]

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! The member for Hornsby will not lean on the public gallery bar, and nor will anyone in the public gallery converse with members or lean across the bar.

Ayes, 45

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

Noes, 30

Mr Atalla
Ms Car
Ms Catley
Mr Chanthivong
Mr Crakanthorp
Mr Daley
Mr Dib
Ms Doyle
Ms Finn
Mr Foley
Mr Greenwich

Mr Harris
Ms Hay
Ms Haylen
Mr Hoenig
Ms Hornery
Ms Leong
Mr Lynch
Ms McKay
Mr Mehan
Ms Mihailuk
Mr Parker

Mr Piper
Ms K. Smith
Ms T. F. Smith
Ms Washington
Ms Watson
Mr Zangari

Tellers,
Mr Lalich
Mr Warren

Pairs

Mr Constance
Mr Elliott
Mr Grant
Mr Roberts

Ms Burney
Ms Harrison
Mr Kamper
Mr Robertson

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! Before I call the member for Castle Hill, I remind members from the electorates of Londonderry, Maroubra, Wollongong, Maitland, Port Stephens, Shellharbour, Prospect, Kiama, Rockdale, Bankstown, Canterbury and Kogarah and the Leader of the Opposition that they are deemed to be on three calls to order. Standing Order 249 (1) will not apply whilst I am in the Chair and if I have reason to call any member to order that member will be removed from the Chamber for the remainder of the day.

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION AND CBD AND SOUTH EAST LIGHT RAIL

Motion Accorded Priority

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Parliamentary Secretary) [3.45 p.m.]: In view of the comments of the Assistant-Speaker, my contribution should be heard in complete silence. And that is how it should be, especially when priority motions are being debated. I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes the Leader of the Opposition has failed to lead his party, and his party room, on the issue of light rail in the central business district [CBD].
- (2) Condemns the Leader of the Opposition for his outrageous comments likening the CBD light rail to a "Berlin Wall down the central spine of Sydney".
- (3) Notes that the CBD light rail will transform the way people move around the city, taking hundreds of buses off our congested streets.

- (4) Thanks the commuters of Sydney for helping to make the closure of George Street run as smoothly as possible.
- (5) Calls on Labor to support its own infrastructure plan, which committed to revitalising George Street.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! The member for Castle Hill does not need the support of the member for Oatley or the member for Drummoyne.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: The Assistant-Speaker has probably saved the Opposition from extreme humiliation this afternoon. The Assistant-Speaker allowed a vote on whether this motion would be accorded priority. He has been generous to the Leader of the Opposition because those Opposition members who bothered to stay—I think I counted seven in total—and listen to this motion, which condemns the actions of the Leader of the Opposition, did not oppose the motion. In fact, they allowed it to pass on the voices. It was only through the generosity of the Assistant-Speaker—

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order: My point of order is relevance. This is an interesting motion but the comments of the member of Castle Hills are irrelevant to the motion that has been moved.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! There is no point of order. The member for Castle Hill has the call.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: I understand that the cockles of the member for Liverpool's heart are always stirred when things like the Berlin Wall are included in priority motions. It probably stirs his communist feelings—

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. If the member wants to attack me then he should do so by way of a substantive motion.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! There is no point of order. The member for Castle Hill is not attacking the member for Liverpool. If Opposition members intend to interrupt debate by continually taking points of order then I will place those members on calls to order. The member for Castle Hill has the call.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: The object of this motion is to clearly outline to the people of this State that we are yet to see any clear policy decision in relation to the CBD light rail put forward by the Leader of the Opposition. Prior to the election those opposite supported light rail, now they oppose it. I draw the attention of the House to a comment made by the Leader of the Opposition yesterday in this very place. He said he had been a champion of light rail in Western Sydney and then spoke about the benefits of light rail to his electorate. That is wonderful. Indeed, I hope those areas get light rail connectivity and this does help his electorate of Auburn. But it is a little bit cute that the Leader of the Opposition is happy to talk up the benefits of light rail in his electorate, and to pretend that he has been a champion for light rail, only to condemn the light rail for the people of this great city who rely on adequate public transport to move around it.

Look no further than the enormous benefit that will be provided to the New South Wales economy. Congestion is costing \$5.1 billion now. That is expected to grow to \$8.8 billion by 2021 unless we alleviate the congestion in the city. The Leader of the Opposition does not want to support that. He does not want to support economic growth. He does not want to support public transport. He does not want to support investment in hospitals and roads. We want to find out what the Leader of the Opposition does stand for, apart from his fascist, socialist leanings that we have seen already. He makes outrageous comments about a Berlin Wall dividing George Street.

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order: It is unparliamentary and in breach of standing orders to call anyone in this place a fascist. It is outrageous.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! I think the member said fascist attitudes. I do not believe he called the Leader of the Opposition a fascist. He said his attitude was fascist.

Mr Paul Lynch: To the point of order: If the member ascribed to the Leader of the Opposition attitudes that were fascist, that is equally in breach of the standing orders.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! The member's time has expired. I call the member for Heffron.

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) [3.50 p.m.]: It is not the concept of light rail that Labor is opposed to; it is the incompetence with which the CBD and South East Light Rail project is being implemented. The Leader of the Opposition should not be condemned for holding the Government to account. It is the Government that should be condemned. I remind the House that, when the project was announced in 2012, despite the advice of Infrastructure NSW it was announced at a cost of 1.2 billion. What is the cost today, when the Government has laid not one inch of track? It is \$2.1 billion. The project is more than 100 per cent overspent, with not one inch of track having been laid.

Governments often overspend their budgets. There is nothing unusual about that, particularly if it is an incompetent government like this one. The Government is strong on rhetoric but poor on implementation. I will give the House some examples from the implementation of the light rail project. The Government wanted to put a light rail stop in front of Randwick racecourse. It might sound reasonable to put a light rail stop in front of the racecourse to service those people going to Australian Turf Club races. I told the Minister in a meeting, as did Randwick City Council in a separate letter, that a light rail stop could not be put in front of Randwick racecourse because there happens to be a building in the way. It is the Australian Turf Club administrative building.

Those views were ignored until the Government let the contract to Alltrack. Guess what Alltrack told the Government? It said, "We cannot put a light rail stop in front of Randwick racecourse because there is a flaming building in the way." What did the Government do? It moved the light rail stop to the other side of Alison Road. It will take away part of Centennial Park. It will take away several 100-year-old trees, bike tracks and a footpath. The Government gave \$9 million to the Centennial Park authority for that purpose.

Mr Mark Coure: What is the point you are making?

Mr RON HOENIG: The point is that the Government is incompetent. It did not even know there was a flaming building in the way when it planned a light rail stop. The Government proposed to build a light rail stop in front of the stabling yards. It paid \$60 million to a developer to buy his land, just east of Doncaster Avenue properties, when Randwick City Council had already negotiated to obtain the Randwick racecourse stable yards behind Wansley Road. When it was told it could not put the light rail track there because the land floods, the Government said, "We will just raise it by a couple of metres." The incompetence shown in relation to this project is absurd. If members think that is crazy, the Government also constructed the Albert "Tibby" Cotter bridge over Anzac Parade, at a cost of \$38 million.

Mr John Sidoti: That is a great bridge.

Mr RON HOENIG: The member for the Drummoyne says it is a good bridge. The Auditor General of New South Wales loves that bridge. He has exposed the incompetence shown in the construction of the bridge. The bridge was going to take people from the light rail stop to the Sydney football stadium and the Sydney Cricket Ground. Thousands of people were going to walk over the bridge. Guess what? The light rail stop is not within cooee of the \$38 million bridge. That is the level of incompetence shown by the

Government. It is just as well that the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party scurried out of the portfolio and gave it to the member for Bega. It is like *Fawlty Towers*. He is the Spanish waiter trying to clean up the mess.

Look at the proposed light rail stop on Anzac Parade in Kingsford, in front of Souths Juniors club, on the other side of the Nine Ways. That is designed to service the Kingsford central business district. I invite the member for Drummoyne to come with me and show me how it is possible to walk from Souths Juniors to Kingsford central business district across the Nine Ways. It cannot be done. The light rail route down George Street was suggested by one of the Government's greatest supporters, the Lord Mayor of Sydney, Clover Moore. She urged the implementation of light rail down George Street. The Leader of the Opposition condemns the Government for the implementation of the track. The Government is being held to account, which in theory should be a good policy but in practice the Government is a disgrace.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne—Parliamentary Secretary) [3.55 p.m.]: As usual, the Opposition is being hypocritical on this issue. For 16 long and shameful years Labor neglected Sydney's growing congestion problem. Now Sydneysiders spend more hours stuck in traffic than people in New York City do. Infrastructure is a huge albatross wrapped around the necks of Labor members. This Government is doing something about Labor's neglect. Congestion in the city has reached crisis point. Currently congestion in the central business district costs the State around \$5.1 billion per year. If left unchecked, that figure will keep increasing. The existing infrastructure cannot keep pace with demand, and this situation has been aggravated by Labor's years of neglect. Labor would need to employ someone from *The Block* to have the credibility to deliver any infrastructure. Look at the Rozelle metro project. What a disgrace. Millions of dollars were wasted and not a centimetre of track was laid.

This Government is investing now, to provide long-term solutions. The CBD and South East Light Rail will provide the capacity to meet the projected increase in passenger demand for decades to come. The bus plan implemented on 4 October has reduced the number of buses into the core of the city and has already eased congestion. I congratulate the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure on his leadership and vision and on keeping the community fully informed every step of the way. Sydney commuters have been more than cooperative in adapting to the changes and ensuring that the city keeps moving during the construction phase. The Government is also implementing the City Centre Capacity Improvement Plan and new city centre bus infrastructure.

This includes changes to road infrastructure to keep traffic moving into, through and from the central business district. The Government is delivering much-needed infrastructure across the State. There are 95 infrastructure projects in the city alone. There are more than 168 cranes in operation over this great city. That is something the Labor Party could never have dreamed of. This Government has demonstrated its commitment to the long-suffering commuters of Sydney. They are the people Labor ignored for 16 years. Ours is a challenging plan, but the problem of Sydney's congestion is a challenging one which will not disappear without action from this Government. I urge the Opposition to support the Government's plan for the central business district.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) [3.56 p.m.]: Paragraph 3 of the motion talks about the CBD and South East Light Rail transforming the way people move around Sydney. I sincerely hope that it does. It will service my electorate in a funny sort of way. Plans for light rail now stop at Souths Juniors at Kingsford, even though this House resolved, on a motion moved by me, that the Government ought to do a study to see whether there would be any benefits in taking it further south. Despite the resolution of the House, that study has never been done. It is the sort of "trust us" attitude that the Government presents to the people of New South Wales and to members of this place, who represent the residents of New South Wales, on all occasions. But on too many occasions the "trust us" exhortation is not backed up by the experts.

I have listened to the Leader of the Opposition speak on this issue a few times in this place and in other forums and he has said that in the last century eight major studies have been done on the light rail

and all the studies have recommended getting trams out of the central business district. The problem with the Government is that it only accepts advice it likes. At the commencement of the last term of government former Premier O'Farrell, with the support of now Premier Baird, instituted Infrastructure NSW, which was to be an expert panel of independent people—well-regarded people like Nick Greiner and Paul Broad—looking at transport and infrastructure projects in New South Wales, particularly in Sydney. Nick Greiner and Paul Broad said things like, "Don't do the North West Rail Link. It has got a benefit-cost ratio of 0.8", which means that every dollar of public money spent on that project returns 80¢ in economic improvement. That was ignored and we still do not have a business case on the North West Rail Link. On the South West Rail Link Nick Greiner said:

The narrowness of George Street may mean that a high capacity light rail service is fundamentally incompatible with a high quality pedestrian boulevard along this corridor.

Light rail is significantly more expensive than bus services, has no material speed benefits, is less flexible in traffic and if service reforms to the operation of CBD bus services are implemented, does not offer significantly greater capacity.

Even though Nick Greiner and Paul Broad were the experts appointed by the Government, the Government chose to ignore them. In the three minutes I have to speak there is only time to make cursory introductory remarks when we are talking about a project like this—I have not even got on to the delivery of it. Because of the attitude of the former transport Minister, the now Treasurer, the delivery of the project has been a farce. The new transport Minister has been trying to clean up her mess but he has got a hell of a job to do.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [3.59 p.m.]: I seek leave to make a contribution to the debate.

Leave not granted.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Parliamentary Secretary) [4.00 p.m.], in reply: Before I commence my closing remarks, I suggest that it was very unparliamentary for the Opposition Leader of the House to deny a colleague in this place the opportunity to speak. We always try to accommodate as many members of this House as possible in speaking on motions that affect them. I take the opportunity, on behalf of the House, to apologise to the member for Balmain and to condemn the partisan politics once again displayed by the member for Maroubra and Opposition Leader of the House.

The member for Heffron condemned the process around the delivery of the light rail and spoke about incompetence. I do not believe anyone in New South Wales will ever see in their lifetime a more incompetently handled project than the inner-city Rozelle metro that was proposed by the Labor Government and I do not believe we will ever see a greater waste of money—half a billion dollars. Not one cent was ever invested in infrastructure; it was a complete loss of half a billion dollars. Another Labor transport initiative was the proposed Tcard, in which the Labor Government invested more than \$100 million and we never got so much as a train ticket. I could go on, as I have done before, because I think the waste and mismanagement in just a few of Labor's transport projects adds up to a billion dollars.

I am prepared to stand here today and back our light rail project. We will not stand on rhetoric; we will not stand on what people see in a glossy brochure. We will stand on our record of public transport investment that has already seen the completion of the South West Rail Link—coming in months and months ahead of schedule and \$300 million under budget—and we will stand on our record of investment in the North West Rail Link, now known as Sydney Metro West, where four tunnelling machines will be almost finished by Christmas and will come out of the ground, having completed about 30 kilometres of tunnels.

The SkyTrain is being built and if people look across Sydney they can see more than 220 cranes reaching into the sky, building the infrastructure and the investment in this State. As well as enhancing

and stimulating our economy these projects are providing jobs. The member for Maroubra wanted his motion on jobs creation to be accorded priority but it was defeated. This Government has already created 250,000 jobs in the five years since it was elected. We were proposing 150,000 in this term of government but we have already created 70,000 jobs in the first six months; so we will exceed that 150,000 considerably. I commend the motion to the House.

Question—That the motion be agreed to—put.

The House divided.

[In division]

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! Four members were removed from the Chamber during question time for more than one hour. I am seeking clarification from the clerks. The members for Kogarah, Cessnock, Keira and Prospect will not participate in the division. They were each removed from the Chamber for at least two hours, but the member for Maitland was removed for only one hour. As far as I am concerned, Standing Order 249A does not apply while I am in the chair. Standing Order 249 applies and the member for Maitland will be removed for the rest of the day if she is called to order. I remind her that she is on three calls to order.

Before announcing the result of the division I advise the member for Maitland and the member for Canterbury that the division was called at 4.06 p.m. Both members were removed from the Chamber for one hour, which took the member for Maitland to 4.10 p.m. so in fact the member for Maitland should have been out of the House until 4.11 p.m. The vote of the member for Maitland will not be counted in this division. She may remain in the Chamber, but her vote will not be counted.

Ayes, 50

Mr Anderson	Mr Gulaptis	Mr Roberts
Mr Aplin	Mr Hazzard	Mr Rowell
Mr Ayres	Mr Henskens	Mr Sidoti
Mr Barilaro	Ms Hodgkinson	Mrs Skinner
Ms Berejikian	Mr Humphries	Ms T. F. Smith
Mr Brookes	Mr Johnsen	Mr Speakman
Mr Conolly	Mr Kean	Mr Stokes
Mr Constance	Ms Leong	Mr Taylor
Mr Coure	Mr Maguire	Mr Toole
Mr Crouch	Mr Marshall	Mr Tudehope
Mrs Davies	Mr Notley-Smith	Ms Upton
Mr Dominello	Mr O'Dea	Mr Ward
Mr Evans	Mr Parker	Mr Williams
Mr Gee	Mrs Pavey	Mrs Williams
Ms Gibbons	Mr Perrottet	<i>Tellers,</i>
Ms Goward	Mr Piper	Mr Bromhead
Mr Greenwich	Mr Provest	Mr Patterson

Noes, 26

Mr Atalla	Ms Finn	Ms Mihailuk
Ms Burney	Mr Harris	Mr Robertson
Ms Car	Ms Hay	Ms K. Smith

Ms Catley
Mr Chanthivong
Mr Crakanthorp
Mr Daley
Mr Dib
Ms Doyle

Ms Haylen
Mr Hoenig
Ms Hornery
Mr Lynch
Ms McKay
Mr Mehan

Ms Washington
Ms Watson
Mr Zangari
Tellers,
Mr Lalich
Mr Warren

Pairs

Mr Baird
Mr Grant
Mr Piccoli

Mr Foley
Ms Harrison
Mr Kamper

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

Pursuant to resolution Government business proceeded with.

GREATER SYDNEY COMMISSION BILL 2015

Second Reading

Debate resumed from earlier hour.

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) [4.16 p.m.]: I speak on the Greater Sydney Commission Bill 2015. The bill will constitute a Greater Sydney Commission as a New South Wales Government agency to coordinate planning and development strategies for Sydney. It will also empower the commission to make local environment plans for the Greater Sydney Region. I am pleased to support this bill to create a Greater Sydney Commission. This bill has bipartisan support, and in fact is a good Labor policy, one that we took to the last election and proudly stand by now. This bipartisanship presents real opportunities for the future commission and, with it, our city's future. As the Leader of the Opposition noted in this debate, Sydney could be described as an accidental city with some of our greatest moments occurring, not because of public policy but often in spite of it.

Sydney is truly a beautiful city and is unlike any in the world. It is a city of villages, with different perspectives and priorities. No two Sydney suburbs and no two local governments are alike, reflecting the unique character of our neighbourhoods. Local governments do a good job of representing local interests, with local decisions made by local people. But when it comes to meeting the challenges of Sydney's future, we have a common problem that demands a common approach. We need a shared vision for Sydney. Great global cities do not happen by chance. Siloed decision-making and pitting big State Government against small local government has led to a piecemeal, uncoordinated approach where transport plans are disconnected from metro plans, urban development disconnected from motorways and so on.

These disconnects have a real impact on people's lives. They result in the absurd situation where hundreds of us pour east every morning for work and then pour west again to get home at the end of the day. Sydneysiders spend countless hours in congestion, undermining productivity and representing valuable time spent away from children and families. It is undermining the liveability of our city. For people in my electorate and the inner west, the results are two-fold: increased traffic and pollution, and pressure for unbridled density. A Greater Sydney Commission represents an opportunity for a more holistic

approach to meeting those challenges so long as, in practice, it is a genuine attempt to work across the silos of government.

While I support the proposal for a Greater Sydney Commission, I share my colleagues' view that it should report to the Premier and not to the Minister for Planning. A commission with a whole-of-government approach and overarching body must report to the top. Most importantly, the Greater Sydney Commission must set out from the beginning to improve community consultation. Improving consultation is critical if we are to ensure that, when it comes to planning and development, the deck does not stay stacked against the vulnerable. Housing affordability is a critical issue for people in the Summer Hill electorate and throughout the inner west.

Whether a person is a resident in a local boarding house, a tenant in public housing, a renter, or a family trying to buy a home, access to quality and affordable housing is critical to their sense of wellbeing. For many, though, access to housing is increasingly out of reach. As I have said previously, in 2015 in Sydney the metaphor of the property ladder is a misleading one. It suggests that all one needs to do is to work hard, reach high and pull oneself up. But the rungs of the ladder are moving further apart, stranding people at the bottom. For renters, young people, essential workers like nurses and teachers, and workers on the minimum wage, the dream of home ownership is out of reach. The truth is that young people in my electorate and across New South Wales no longer expect to own a home.

Recently SBS published a map of housing affordability in Australia, which showed that the median unit value in Marrickville is \$625,500. The average gross income of a single person aged 25 to 34 is \$59,293 and the estimated gross income required to buy a unit at the median value is \$142,971. That means on average, young singles in Marrickville earn about \$84,000 less per year than they need to buy a unit. The map also shows that the median house value in Ashfield is \$1.35 million. The average couple aged 35 to 44 earn \$158,800 a year, some \$150,000 less than is required to buy a family home. For most nurses, teachers, transport workers and those on the minimum wage, buying a home in the Summer Hill electorate is no longer an option. This is wildly unfair and also poses a real threat to the health and vitality of our suburbs and our State.

A critical plank in solving the housing affordability crisis is to recognise the need for growth and density. But it needs to be density done well. It needs to be density that does not take a one-size-fits-all approach, throwing up hotchpotch high rises across the inner west. Density must be sympathetic to the human scale of our historic suburbs, preserving open and green spaces, and planning for public transport and active transport corridors that will serve a growing population. Development must also be ecologically sustainable, acknowledging that our built environment must have impact on the natural environment. Finally, services must also be at the heart of planning; with an acknowledgement that increased density increases demand on schools, hospitals and child care.

I am hopeful that the Greater Sydney Commission will be an opportunity to deliver affordable housing. The signals must be sent now that the commission is serious about housing affordability; that we can levy developers and create partnerships with community housing providers; and we can look around the world and adopt successful levers including inclusionary zoning, which ensures a percentage of new housing is available for those on moderate to low incomes. These measures are proving successful in cities like London, Amsterdam and New York—we can do it here too.

A Greater Sydney Commission presents an opportunity to break down the existing silos and foster an approach that works across government and across the community. It is important that health and education infrastructure be a pivotal part of any development plans, and input from experts in these fields is vital to the success of the commission. I agree with the views expressed by my colleagues that incorporating the advice of experts outside of government is critical to the commission's success. When I was Mayor of Marrickville I was proud to initiate the Architectural Excellence Panel, which brought together architects and design experts to comment on developments that met the panel's terms of reference—buildings of significance or over a particular size.

It has proven a successful way of incorporating external advice and has helped restore people's faith in the development and planning process. I think rhetoric that focuses on the criticisms of the commission's board as unelected is misdirected. We need that expert advice and we need an holistic approach to planning. By bringing together experts, government and the community, the commission offers an opportunity to restore the community's faith in the planning process. Requiring the commission to report to Parliament annually would facilitate a greater degree of accountability and transparency, giving the community further confidence that its work is conducted in the open. It would also go some of the way to ensuring that people and local communities are at the heart of planning.

Too often, the community has been short-changed when it comes to development and planning, particularly when it comes to consultation. The community is rightly angry about the woeful lack of consultation around the Parramatta Road revitalisation, WestConnex and now the Sydenham to Bankstown Urban Renewal corridor. I support the bill and welcome the opportunity the Greater Sydney Commission represents. It is an opportunity for a coordinated approach to meeting Sydney's challenges, not least of which is affordable housing. But to fulfil its potential, the commission must put people and local communities at its heart. A people-centred approach is the only way we can remain a global city, but also a city of many villages, united and well planned.

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) [4.26 p.m.]: The Greater Sydney Commission Bill 2015 is designed to set up the Greater Sydney Commission. I note that the commission will be responsible for finalising district plans for each of Sydney's six districts, conducting regular reviews of councils' local environmental plans, conducting all decision-making and plan-making on rezoning proposals currently undertaken by the Minister or a delegate, taking on the current assessment and planning-making functions of the Joint Regional Panels including pre-Gateway reviews, monitoring and reporting to government on implementation of actions for the plan for growing Sydney and requiring councils to give effect to regional growth plans and district plans when amending their local plans. Labor thinks that this is a good model, one that can be transformed to other parts of the State and regional areas.

I refer particularly to Wyong on the Central Coast where, for too long, the approach to planning has been uncoordinated—the State releases plans, local councils enact some of them but they also allow a lot of spot rezonings. The Wyong electorate has experienced massive growth in new housing and we must make sure that proper infrastructure is in place. When I was the Parliamentary Secretary for the Central Coast I pushed very hard for the Central Coast Development Corporation to be set up. Then Premier Kristina Keneally agreed to set it up in the hope that it would result in a coordinated approach to development on the Central Coast. Unfortunately the Central Coast Development Corporation was never given the power to do the job it was set up to do. The panel members of its committee were very talented and were chosen from the business community. They tried their hardest, but unfortunately competing interests meant that they were never really given the responsibility to plan things in a coordinated way.

This bill creates a commission that could be replicated in other areas around the State, particularly growth areas, to properly coordinate development. The Central Coast Regional Strategy was a comprehensive and high-level plan that became a blueprint for how things should work. In September 2014 this Government released a discussion paper to review the Central Coast Regional Strategy with a view to issuing a new Central Coast Growth Plan. We are fast approaching the end of the year when it was promised to be published. I hope that we will see it sooner rather than later.

The document I was particularly interested in was entitled the "North Wyong Shire Structure Plan", which sets out to the year 2031 how the growth area of the northern Central Coast will develop. The background to the plan is that the population of Wyong shire is predicted to grow from almost 150,000 to more than 210,000 people by 2031. The Central Coast Regional Strategy, which I identified earlier, found that 39,500 additional houses would be required in the Wyong local government area to support that growth. That is a tall order, but it is good to see that a large amount of housing development is going ahead at the moment and some projects that were approved in the planning process are slowly

coming to fruition.

I refer particularly to the Warnervale town centre, which was first mooted in 1975. We now have a lovely intersection and road to the top of the hill and we are waiting for Woolworths to commit the funds to build the town centre. Part of the plan included a railway station and bus interchange that would be built to facilitate public transport to the new growth area. I note that in the amendments we will move in the other place we will ask for the secretaries of Health and Education to be on the Infrastructure Delivery Committee. A problem we found on the Central Coast was that the different government departments were almost in competition with each other. We would sit through meetings—

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! I have been listening to the member for Wyong quite intently. I point out to the member that the bill is titled the Greater Sydney Commission Bill 2015. At page 11 of the bill there is a map of the greater Sydney region, which unfortunately does not include Wyong. In his contribution to debate the member has concentrated almost entirely on his electorate of Wyong, which really is outside the leave of the bill. I draw the member back to the leave of the bill.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I would argue that I am talking about the principles of the bill and how they could be applied across the State. I think that makes my contribution relevant. I am talking about how the same model would work in different places.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! I also point out to the member, whilst he is canvassing the suggestion I gave him, that only on one occasion during the past six minutes has he referred to amendments that may be proposed to the bill.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I went through the principles of the bill at the start.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! I ask the member to return to the leave of the bill. I remind the member for Wyong that this is not an opportunity to do a parish pump, belting up councils in his electorate. This is an opportunity for him to speak to the Greater Sydney Commission Bill and its effects on the greater Sydney area.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: The Labor Opposition will propose amendments in the other place to require the Greater Sydney Commission to report to the Premier, not the Minister for Planning. We think the commission is an important organisation and as such it should report directly to the Premier to make sure that it is delivering on the outcomes being promised. The Greater Sydney Commission should also include two private sector industry representatives to make sure that those important areas have a say in the development of the plans. As I said earlier, because of conflict that often occurs between government departments, important areas such as health and education should be represented on the Infrastructure Delivery Committee.

That representation is specifically so that where large areas are rezoned for housing, for example, new schools and health facilities will also be planned. It is as important to plan for those services as it is to plan for new roads and housing estates. Clearly, people need to use those services. That is why I referred to my electorate to point out the problems that occur when such things are not planned for and that is how that part of my contribution related to the bill. I was talking about examples where it does not work unless all areas are included in the planning.

The Opposition also feels it is important that the commission is directly accountable to Parliament. We will call for the commission to report annually to a joint parliamentary committee, similar to the arrangements for the Public Accounts Committee. The Greater Sydney Commission will be given extraordinary powers. It is important that the public is able to understand why it is doing particular things and to ensure it has a high level of accountability for its actions across the six districts. Finally, there should be clear guidelines in regard to community consultation. We think that is incredibly important.

Governments of all persuasions have not undertaken community consultation particularly well over time. Things are often foisted on communities without them being able to put their views forward. I support the bill. [*Time expired.*]

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) [4.36 p.m.]: I make a brief contribution to debate on the Greater Sydney Commission Bill 2015. I note that the early clauses of the bill certainly strike all the right chords when it comes to things such as membership of the commission and the requisite expertise of its members. The bill contains all the catchphrases. It mentions things such as environmental sustainability, environmental science, sustainable design, strategic design, urban design, traffic and transport engineering. Social justice is in there, for which I commend the Minister. The bill also contains references to other terms such as property development, community engagement, economics, tourism and heritage.

I feel that the Government ought to pay great regard to the phrase "community engagement". Members of the Greater Sydney Commission should feel that they are utterly bound by that requirement when they take up their positions. As an economic shadow Minister, having been an economic and infrastructure Minister and spending 13 years as a councillor on Randwick City Council, I know that people sometimes say that planning blockages and red tape slow down the economic development of the State. On the other hand, some people say that provisions such as Part 3A went too far and tipped the scale excessively in favour of developers. In all of these things balance is the key, but alarm bells rang for me in the second year of this Government when the then planning Minister announced the establishment of urban activation precincts.

When I learnt that the south Anzac Parade corridor in my area had been identified as an urban activation precinct I asked the member for Wakehurst, who was the Minister of the day, for a briefing from the Department of Planning. He was good enough to afford me that briefing almost immediately. Something worried me during the briefing with senior members of the department. I will not name them because I have respect for government workers. I did when I was a Minister and I do now. I know that they do not get the opportunity to defend themselves. However, I will say this: When those gentlemen were briefing me about urban activation precincts I was astounded by their lack of knowledge of my electorate including the crucial aspects of built form, urban development, transport provision and green space—all of the important things that go into making a community.

A process was then established whereby 40 people from the local community were able to go to a briefing session with the department. Those who wanted to go but were not on the invitation list were excluded from the meeting. Diagrams with shaded options were put before the members of the community. The options had been drawn up in-house by the Government and the department without speaking to any of the experts in our community. As I have always said in my 20 years of public life, the experts are the people who live in the community and particularly the local members of Parliament. As I have said both in this place and in public forums, there are areas of Sydney, such as my electorate, that can cope with more development. Sydney is growing and we need to accommodate more people. But how it is done is the key.

It is no use declaring the southern part of the Randwick City Council area to be an urban activation precinct when the good burghers of areas like Ku-ring-gai, through the obfuscation of their local council and the extortion of section 94 fees and other mechanisms, refuse to accept a single block of units. We will not accept that. If we are going to talk about proper development, then equality and consistency is the key. I was alarmed to see that these urban activation precincts plans were drawn up and offered to the community on the basis of weak, meaningless and duplicitous consultation from the Government. If the Government wants to develop an area, it should go and talk to the local member of Parliament. I know I speak for every one of the 93 local members in this place when I say that we pride ourselves on knowing our local area and its people. I have made the offer, both to the Minister for Planning of the day and to his successors, that I will sit down with the department and with the Minister and in good faith show them the areas in my electorate that can cope with some sensible development.

In my electorate there are Department of Housing buildings that are 70 years old. They are no longer fit for human habitation and are way beyond economic repair. I would start with cooperation between the Department of Planning and the Department of Housing and rebuild some of those buildings, giving guarantees in writing to the Department of Housing tenants that they can come back into the redeveloped block if they so wish. The Government could work with private developers to uplift the number of affordable housing and Department of Housing dwellings in that area. Those are the sorts of mechanisms that should be used. I am happy to work with the Government on promulgating these sorts of suggestions, if it would only listen.

I say to the Minister and to the future members of the Greater Sydney Commission, do not be guided simply by development principles and the economic exigencies of the day. They must realise that the built form can change communities for the better or for the worse. They must listen to the local members of Parliament and consult with them genuinely. They must listen to local councils and to local residents. Of course there will be people who oppose development at every turn, just as on the other side of the equation there will be people who promote overdevelopment at every turn. Balance is the key. I know that the member for Heffron will be making some interesting observations in this debate.

Upon giving this bill a cursory glance, I am worried that the bill contains provisions that allow the Greater Sydney Commission and the Government to ride roughshod over council local environmental plans [LEPs]. The test of this bill, once enacted—which brings significant change to the planning regime in New South Wales and establishes the scheme—is whether the members of the Greater Sydney Commission will take this weapon that will be afforded to them and use it inappropriately. That will be the test of this legislation. I think the Minister for Planning is a good man and he is genuine. I would hope that the members of the Greater Sydney Commission do the right thing by the people of New South Wales and Greater Sydney, and that starts and ends with genuine consultation.

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) [4.44 p.m.]: I make a contribution to debate on the Greater Sydney Commission Bill 2015. The Opposition does not oppose the bill but we will propose a number of substantial amendments, which have not yet been finalised. The concept of the Greater Sydney Commission and its objectives as stated in this bill was a suggestion of the now Leader of the Opposition when he was the shadow Minister for Planning. It was part of Labor's policy and is now being implemented in this bill. Effectively the commission has been made an adviser to the Government as to the operation of regional plans and what are called district plans.

I thank the Minister for Planning for his courtesy in providing me with a copy of the bill before it was read a second time. I had a discussion with him as to what is proposed in this bill. I have the highest regard for the Minister for Planning, and certainly for his qualifications—he has a PhD in planning law. I accept from the Minister his assertions that this is a genuine attempt to reform planning in this State, that it has to stand the test of time, that it is not politically based, and that he has not been subject to any political direction in what is proposed.

So my criticisms of various parts of this bill are meant to be constructive criticisms, bearing in mind the fact that the Minister and I have similar views as to how planning should be reformed in this State. Whilst some might think this is going back to the future, I think both of us regard the 1979 Environmental Planning and Assessment Act as groundbreaking legislation and a model for planning in this State which has effectively been destroyed by the Parliament since the early 1990s. I know that is the Minister's view because I have listened to podcasts of lectures he has given at Macquarie University. What I say in respect of this bill though is that the Minister had a golden opportunity to actually fix planning in accordance with his views and my views and he effectively squibbed it.

The Greater Sydney Commission is simply the re-creation of a body that will recommend to the Minister regional plans and what were called previously subregional plans—in the bill they are called district plans—and provide advice to the Minister. I am extremely pleased that the Minister has ensured that the provision of regional and district plans are subject to recommendations to him and he is making

the decision. Others say that the Premier should make the decision. It does not matter so long as whoever is making the decision on regional and district plans is accountable to Parliament for the decisions that they make. These plans will affect this State for the next 100 or 200 years and it is fundamental that the decision-makers are accountable in a democracy as elected representatives, so as to ensure scrutiny.

The other philosophy that I maintain, and this is where I think the opportunity has escaped the Minister, is that significant decisions that affect the quality of life of citizens, and do so for generations to come, should be made by elected representatives and not by bureaucrats. It is unreasonable to assume that bureaucrats can make these decisions. Secondly, the delegating of effectively political decisions to bureaucrats does not really escape the liability politicians ultimately have for allowing that to occur. So my view is that it is right and proper for the State to make decisions that are of State or regional significance, and decisions that are not of State or regional significance should be made by elected councillors, who should be forced to apply the law—unlike the way in which many of them have conducted themselves in the past. There is a way in which to do that. Because I am not leading for the Opposition in this debate I have very limited time. I want to go to some statutory provisions which indicate the considerable failures of this bill. I hope the Minister gives these failings some consideration and picks up on them.

Proposed section 75AC relates to the provision of regional and district plans. Proposed section 75AC (3) requires the commission to have regard to State environmental planning policies that apply to the region. The commission also has to have regard to State environmental planning policies that apply to district plans. State environmental planning policies have had an adverse impact on the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act because they cut across its entire objectives. I am sure if I were to ask the Minister his view about the impact of State environmental planning policies on the intended framework of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act that he would agree with me.

The Minister makes the decisions in respect of regional and district plans. So there is no need for the State to neuter the commission by having it take into consideration State environmental planning policies. Indeed, I would have thought, bearing in mind that the commission is providing advice to the Minister in respect of these plans, that it should be telling the Minister that the current State environmental planning policies are inconsistent with their recommended direction. So that if there is one in existence the Minister would then say that that policy should or should not apply to the Sydney region. The Minister is nodding his head. I think he gets the point I am trying to make—unless he is looking at something on his telephone. I am sure the Minister will follow my argument when he considers it. I am particularly concerned about the provision that is buried in proposed section 75AE (3). Often when provisions are buried by Ministers it is usually because it is a stuff-up, but that would not be the case with this Minister. Proposed section 75A (3) states:

- (3) The document entitled *A Plan for Growing Sydney*, published on the website of the Department and in force as at the commencement of this Part, is taken to be the regional plan made under this Part for the Greater Sydney Region (the ***initial GSR plan***).

If the Act is to be enabled in this way then suddenly there will be a regional plan. The regional plan, which is what is contained in "A Plan for Growing Sydney", is to be read in conjunction with the NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan and the Rebuilding NSW State Infrastructure Strategy. On the enacting of this bill, as drafted into law, we are immediately overriding every single local environmental plan in New South Wales. That would mean, for example, if Meriton wanted to make a development application in the Domain it would be refused because it would not be for a use consistent with the zoning. But if the Government owned the Domain and it felt that the land was not being utilised to its best extent, then the development application could be made and considered. This is effectively overriding every local environmental plan.

This high-powered commission, irrespective of its constitution, will be providing advice to the Minister as to what should be in a regional plan. So why adopt these documents that are floating around

the website? The Minister made no reference to this in his second reading speech. It has been tucked away in the bill and it will cause a substantial problem. I contend that my view about the application of that provision as a matter of law is correct. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

The other provision of considerable concern is proposed section 53A. This has also been buried in the bill. Proposed section 53A (1) states:

- (1) The Greater Sydney Commission may make environmental planning instruments for the purposes of environmental planning in each local government area in the Greater Sydney Region. Any such instrument may be called a local environment plan ...

In other words, the Greater Sydney Commission, apart from having an enormous task—I do not think it will be successful but the Minister is at least trying—has also been authorised to make local environmental plans. This will mean the commission could do spot rezoning. For example, the Greater Sydney Commission could spot rezone the block of land next door to where the member for Cabramatta lives to allow a 20-storey block of flats to be built. That is not the way in which even a reformed planning scheme should work. The Minister cannot prepare a local environmental plan in that circumstance but he can direct a council to prepare one. If the Minister cannot prepare a local environmental plan himself, why would the commission be given the ability to do so when ultimately its function is to prepare regional and district plans?

It is my view that these statutory bodies should not be involved in these decision-making processes and that the processes contained in the original 1979 Act were right. The commissions of inquiry were not bodies appointed by the Minister because the governments of the day were frightened of making decisions: the local media would attack them or someone had made a political donation and so the development approvals were passed to independent bodies for decision. But they were not really delegating their political responsibility because the bureaucrats, in making a decision to grant approval, were more frightened of vocal minority groups. I do have a philosophical view in that regard. Measures were taken in the 1979 Act to fix it. They were called designated developments for matters of State and regional significance and they were seen to be out of the political process and transparent. I thought this bill might have been a golden opportunity to do that.

The 1979 Act provided for regional and subregional plans but the Government did not prepare any. The department was not capable of preparing one, and we are now at a substantial loss because only Sam Haddad knows the history of the matter. The only effort it made to prepare a draft subregional plan was the Botany Bay subregional plan. That was probably the leading plan, but it was never successful because governments will not fund the necessary infrastructure in conjunction with planning. For example, the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight is not going to have the Minister for Planning telling him what roads he has to fund. The Minister for Transport and Infrastructure is not going to put a rail line where the Minister for Planning says there should be one. This bill does not require that.

The Minister is trying something that has not been tried before. He is locking these senior bureaucrats, including the Secretary of the Treasury, into the commission to have an input into the strategic planning process in order to break down those government silos. The trouble is that the Treasury never wants to spend any money, so I am not sure it will be successful. But it is certainly a very clever and worthwhile way of doing it. I do not care who is on the Greater Sydney Commission so long as there is expert input. This should overcome the problem the Government had under the 1979 Act. The commission should provide advice to the Minister. It is all these other statutory approval processes that can override existing local environmental plans that cause me concern.

I do not mind if the Minister adopts a commission's district plan which causes a local environmental plan to be overridden, but I do not want the commission without a plan to start overriding local environmental plans. That will cause the government of the day more trouble than part 3A did. The reality is that the Minister will not be able to hide behind the commission. Once the planning process

loses its integrity, once the public loses confidence in the planning system, there will be a knee-jerk reaction from this Government—or a future government when there is a change—and the very thing the Minister is trying to achieve with this bill will be unravelled. The Minister has missed an opportunity to implement his whole plan. I commend the bill to the House. [*Time expired.*]

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) [4.59 p.m.]: I am pleased to be a member of this Coalition Government which has introduced yet another revolutionary bill to improve the efficiency and productivity of New South Wales. I note the presence in the Chamber of the Minister for Planning, who is doing a fantastic job. I may talk more about him later. Over the past 4½ years the Government has undertaken ambitious infrastructure projects across the State to improve our roads and transport system, after 16 years of Labor neglect. The Government will build the Sydney Metro, with a train running every four minutes, on what was formerly known as the North West Rail Link. Trains will run every two minutes on the south-western arm.

Across Sydney the Government is building and widening roads. It is committed to the construction of WestConnex and NorthConnex. The Government is committed to fighting for light rail and buses throughout the city to relieve congestion on our roads and to introduce viable transport alternatives to all residents. Further afield, the Coalition Government has fought to upgrade the Great Western Highway, which is essential for the survival of many rural communities. The list goes on. The Greater Sydney Commission Bill 2015 implements measures in a similar vein to those groundbreaking infrastructure projects. The bill seeks to establish the Greater Sydney Commission to guide, research and lead planning for the greater Sydney region. Its primary aim is to assist in overseeing the execution of the Government's regional plan for metropolitan Sydney and to prepare the infrastructure for our growing city.

The commission will work in conjunction with local government and State departments to guarantee that population growth is matched by adequate infrastructure growth and areas receive the infrastructure planning they require. The bill makes provision for a commission that draws its members from numerous departments and specialties. I am pleased to endorse a bill that at its heart affords local planning districts the ability to work in conjunction with the State Government and its respective departments. The commission will consist of 13 members. Four members will be greater Sydney commissioners, who will be appointed by the Minister. There will be six district commissioners, to represent each planning district, as was outlined in A Plan for Growing Sydney. The three additional members are the secretaries of the Department of Planning and Environment, Transport for NSW and the Treasury.

This bill provides for a range of expertise in overseeing planning projects and gives great scope for synergies to be gained on the day-to-day work of the commission. The commission will act as a New South Wales government agency and will be invested with functions relating to planning and development across the metropolitan and greater Sydney region. The bill seeks to allow the commission to replace joint regional planning panels under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. It is believed that this will allow more efficient, unified panels to oversee the numerous and large infrastructure projects that the Government is undertaking. The bill includes an amendment to the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act and inserts a new part 3B, which contains a strategic planning clause.

This clause will be the first to introduce the preparation, public exhibition and design of draft strategic plans into the planning legislation. It will apply to regional plans, which are included in A Plan for Growing Sydney, as well as to district plans. This will provide for improved strategic planning across the State, especially in our rural and regional communities, which rely on new and improved infrastructure and roads to provide their invaluable services. The first declared region will be the greater Sydney region. The commission will work closely with members of Cabinet. Regional plans, including A Plan for Growing Sydney, will continue to be made and presided over by the Minister and Cabinet. The commission will play a large role in assisting the Minister to oversee A Plan for Growing Sydney. The commission will have the important duty of reviewing that plan every five years.

The bill will result in plans for individual districts within the greater Sydney region being researched, prepared and distributed by the commission. Notwithstanding that, the bill ensures that district plans still allow for regional plans that have been endorsed by Cabinet to be reflected in district level planning. Fundamentally, the bill and related regulations outline the procedure for undertaking plans and the required content, including necessary steps such as mandatory exhibition. The bill contains a provision for the commission to ensure that draft and proposed district plans are placed on public exhibition and display within 12 months. This extends the work that the department has already undertaken in producing regional and subregional plans and will allow the commission to take control of the draft non-exhibited documents.

The bill also will allow the commission to produce local environment plans and authorise rezoning for local government areas within the greater Sydney region. Local environment plans will be necessary to approve and support both district and regional plans. The bill currently proposes that each local government area in each respective district review and oversee its local environment plans and make planning proposals to modify local environment plans to support and approve district plans. It will be up to councils to review how their local environment plans are consistent with their district plan, and it will be their prerogative to approve them. As is currently the case, the Minister will retain powers relating to the approval of State environment planning policies. State environment planning policies can currently override local environment plans. The Minister will retain the right to direct relevant planning authorities as to the exercise of their functions in making local environment plans in conjunction with section 11 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act.

The Coalition Government has embarked upon an ambitious infrastructure program. Every week a new project commences or is delivered. The Government has been given a once-in-a-generation opportunity to re-energise and rebuild our roads, our transport system and our Government. The Government is building infrastructure to keep up with growth. I thank the Minister for Planning for his recent announcement of the new town of Wilton Junction in the electorate of Wollondilly. Wilton Junction will be a vibrant new community in the growing south-west of Sydney. It is in the heart of the electorate of Wollondilly. It will deliver high-quality new housing, jobs close to home, supporting infrastructure and services, and a range of complementary land uses.

Wilton Junction will bring together the best of city and rural life. It will feature easy access to growing employment opportunities, as well as recreation and community facilities, all set against the natural backdrop of bushland, gorges and the Nepean River. Up to 16,600 homes will house 30,000 to 35,000 people. The new town centre will be a great place to live, featuring community facilities, recreation opportunities, commercial and retail space, health and education services and civic and cultural facilities. Local employment is a matter that has been raised with me by the Wollondilly community. Currently, more than 70 per cent of residents travel outside the shire every day to access employment. It is important that employment is at the heart of the new town of Wilton Junction.

I am pleased to announce that more than 11,000 jobs will be available in the heart of Wollondilly. The Minister is keen to see those opportunities provided and to see regional and rural areas catered for. Another issue that the people of Wollondilly raise constantly with me is the need for a second high school and more primary schools in the shire. The proposal for Wilton Junction includes high schools and primary schools. The Wilton Junction plan is open for comment. I encourage anyone and everyone to go to the website and make their views known. I thank the Minister for Planning for his hard work and I commend the bill to the House.

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning) [5.08 p.m.], in reply: I thank all members who contributed to debate on the Greater Sydney Commission Bill 2015. I acknowledge the speeches of the Minister for Local Government, the Leader of the Opposition and member for Auburn, and members representing the electorates of Holsworthy, Castle Hill, Drummoyne, Bankstown, Strathfield, Campbelltown, Balmain, Fairfield, Londonderry, Sydney, Lakemba, Summer Hill, Wyong, Maroubra, Heffron and Wollondilly. I note that members from across the metropolitan region and beyond have

spoken on the bill, which is appropriate given the expansive way in which it will change the communities that we are so privileged to serve.

In particular, I acknowledge the contribution of the member for Holsworthy on sustainability and better environmental outcomes; the contribution of the member for Castle Hill on productivity and economic outcomes; the contribution of the member for Drummoyne on social issues and liveability; and the contribution of the Minister for Local Government on the need for consultation and the critical partnership embedded in the commission between State and local government. I also thank the member for Wollondilly for his contribution in relation to some of the planning challenges being faced in his peri-urban part of Sydney and in relation to the announcement of the first new town in New South Wales for a generation. A number of other members made a range of contributions that I will deal with throughout my reply.

This bill delivers the Government's commitment to establish a Greater Sydney Commission to lead metropolitan planning for the Greater Sydney Region and to implement Sydney's regional plan, A Plan for Growing Sydney. Many have previously called for a Greater Sydney Commission. Some speakers from the Opposition have highlighted previous advocates from the Labor side for metropolitan governance. I could quite happily reel off an equally long list of Liberal and Coalition members of this place who have made equally strong arguments in favour of a Greater Sydney Commission but, perhaps more appropriately, in the ecumenical spirit of this debate, I highlight the leadership of John Daniel Fitzgerald, who in 1906 published the case for a Greater Sydney metropolitan governance architecture. From recollection, he was also a founding member of the Town Planning Association, as it was then known, and in 1913 he served on the Royal Commission for a Greater Sydney.

J. D. Fitzgerald began his political career in the Labor Party and ended it in the Nationalist Government of John Holman. Perhaps no-one speaks better to the ecumenical nature of this debate than a member who served across the political spectrum in the Chamber but who was passionate in his advocacy for metropolitan governance to ensure that they could plan this city for a more productive, more liveable and more sustainable future. More recently, Dr Michele Acuto, from University College London, suggested in a 2011 article, "The Power-Geometry of Sydney's Greening Governance", that "it is perhaps time to look at the possibility of establishing a Greater Sydney Authority". Dr Acuto explained:

This is not a call for a despotic internal pecking order but rather for a system capable of organising the practice of governance evolved thus far ...

[The] lack of a responsible coordinator at the urban level impacts Sydney's capacity to intersect more effectively with those spheres of authority it already looks to beyond state and federal layers ..."

The bill delivers a Greater Sydney Commission that is independent, will lead the public dialogue on Sydney's future and will lead integrated planning for a more productive, sustainable and liveable Sydney. This is a proposal that will better ensure joined-up thinking across Sydney as it grows, for the benefit of the entire community. I note that in his contribution to the debate on this bill the Leader of the Opposition focused on the need for joined-up thinking, which is precisely what the Greater Sydney Commission is designed to help achieve. The bill provides for a 13-member commission with four Greater Sydney commissioners, six district commissioners representing each of the planning districts in A Plan for Growing Sydney and, importantly, the secretaries of the Department of Planning and Environment, the Department of Transport and Treasury. I note that in his contribution the member for Heffron focused on why it is important to have those secretaries represented in the governance of a Greater Sydney Commission.

The bill amends the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act by inserting a new part which introduces the preparation, the public exhibition and the making of draft strategic plans into the planning legislation. This bill provides for strategic planning in relation to regions across the State, with the first

declared region being the Greater Sydney Region. The bill also requires the commission to prepare updated draft regional plans, such as A Plan for Growing Sydney. Provision has been made for A Plan for Growing Sydney to be reviewed and updated in 2017 to align with the review of the NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan.

The bill requires that district plans and local environmental plans give effect to and are consistent with the objectives, strategies and actions in the regional plans, ensuring that decisions are reflected in each level of planning. This is perhaps a good juncture to answer some of the concerns raised in the second reading debate by the member for Heffron and the member for Maroubra in relation to the capacity of the Greater Sydney Commission to "override" the planning decision-making of other levels of government. The member for Heffron, in particular, raised some concerns in relation to State environmental planning policies.

I do not have the legislation in front of me but I think sections 5, 24 and 26 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act are quite clear on the ambit of State environmental planning policies: they must be prepared for the purposes that are specified in the Act; they cannot go outside the objects of the Act or the reasons for which environmental planning instruments [EPIs] can be created. I also make the point that it has always been the case, as far as I am aware, that environmental planning instruments have generally included a provision stating that the EPI will prevail over any other EPI to the extent of any inconsistency. So there is nothing at all revolutionary about the idea that a new plan should supersede the provisions of an old plan. If it did not, we would end up with a morass of conflicting policies and plans, which would not be in the public interest.

The bill sets out the required content and process for preparing district plans, including mandatory exhibition periods. In addition, the Greater Sydney Commission will lead a new level of community engagement in the planning system. The drafting of new district and metropolitan plans will include examination in public and extensive community engagement processes to elevate public input in the planning system to touch on and shape the future of Greater Sydney, which is something I hope all members in this place can agree with. It is vitally important that we have public participation in shaping our city and in deciding upon the future desired shape of our city and the spatial choices we have to make. But it is also important that we shape this participation to ensure that it is conducted in such a way that it will lead to meaningful and positive change rather than it always being seen to be a reactive and responsive process.

What we want to encourage, as well as existing public participation processes, is more up-front engagement in strategic planning and to enthuse the public to be involved in the actual city-shaping process at a regional level—not just focusing defensively on one small part of the city but rather looking at the city as a whole. As John Donne once said, "No man is an island entire of itself"; everyone is part of the main. The city is similar. We have a whole range of distinct neighbourhoods, communities, suburbs and hamlets right through the Sydney region. This bill recognises the need not only to plan for these places specifically and uniquely but also to recognise that they are connected to one another and that what is good for one part of Sydney is good for other parts of Sydney and what is bad for one part of Sydney can also produce negative results in other parts of Sydney. The bill recognises that we need to plan not only for discrete, small-scale places but for the city as a whole.

I acknowledge the bipartisanship shown by the Leader of the Opposition in his speech. The Opposition leader set out a number of important tasks for the commission to undertake early in its establishment. In particular, the Leader of the Opposition suggested there may be merit in the commission being tasked with developing town centre strategies for Campbelltown, Penrith and Liverpool. The Leader of the Opposition also suggested a role for the Greater Sydney Commission in leading planning for the Olympic Park corridor and in attracting jobs to Western Sydney. It was pleasing to hear that the Opposition clearly agrees upon the polycentric nature of Sydney—the fact that it is a city with not one centre but comprises many different centres which are all important in providing jobs and services locally and regionally.

Once this bill passes into law and the commission is established, I will direct the commission to pursue these important tasks alongside the other priorities the Government has set. The Leader of the Opposition also noted that the Greater Sydney Commission may be a credible vessel for Federal funding. Our Government would welcome all support for future investment in Sydney, including through the commission. I note the Leader of the Opposition's comment on taking a collaborative approach with the private sector on funding. The commission will have an integral role in aligning infrastructure needs with growth priorities and then working to ensure this infrastructure is delivered. This should, appropriately, include consideration of innovative mechanisms such as value capture and collaborative funding.

The member for Strathfield asked that I elucidate further how the commission will relate to local government. A critical part of the commission's role will be working with local councils. As the Minister for Local Government set out, the creation of a city-wide authority is deeply compatible with local councils and sensible regional planning arrangements. The case for a city-wide authority for Sydney, analogous to the Greater London Authority, is not new and there are potentially strong benefits for local government in assigning decision-making authority to a regional body to consider the metropolitan ramifications for policy decisions.

The district commissioners will have a significant role in bringing a district perspective into the deliberation of the commission and will play a pivotal role in representing their district. The commission will also have a critical role in providing support and guidance so that councils can engage in strategic decision-making. Local environmental plans will continue to be developed by councils. Decisions on their adoption, however, will shift from the Minister to the Greater Sydney Commission [GSC].

The member for Strathfield and the member for Sydney also raised concerns regarding the role of the commission in circumstances where a council refuses, or fails, to respond to an application to amend local planning rules. The bill makes the commission responsible for rezoning reviews in the greater Sydney region. I recently announced our decision to replace the pre-gateway review process with a simpler, clearer rezoning assessment. Reforms for the new rezoning review process include strengthening the test for the review of existing zoning to ensure zonings only proceed where they exhibit clear strategic merit. This will be at the core of the commission's decisions on rezoning reviews. It will establish a presumption against a rezoning, unless that rezoning clearly demonstrates strategic merit.

That goes to the concerns raised by the member for Heffron regarding the power of the Greater Sydney Commission in relation to spot rezonings and rezoning reviews. I concur broadly with the member for Heffron that the issue of spot rezonings has always been at the forefront of community concern with the planning system. I agree with the sentiment behind the member for Heffron's words that people should not be surprised by applications that could not reasonably be anticipated in that region. That is why it is so important that this new process focuses on the need to exhibit strategic merit. It goes to the heart of the importance of having a Greater Sydney Commission, that there be a clear planning narrative for the city of a future.

There must be a desired vision for the city so that all decisions can be consistent with an overall vision. We must be able to lay out a vision that decision-makers can have regard to in making decisions on the matters that come up from time to time in a reactive way, such as decisions about planning proposals for site-specific rezonings. In that context, the member for Heffron raised concerns generally with the Greater Sydney Commission having these sorts of powers in relation to the making of local environmental plans [LEPs] and in relation to considering applications for rezoning reviews. I concede that the Minister is ceding power to this new body. If the Minister were not, then the GSC would either be toothless or duplicative.

This body needs to have a clear mandate and clear powers to be able to carry it out. If not, there would be no point in this reform, which is so important if we are to get metropolitan governance right in this city. Furthermore, the Greater Sydney Commission Bill introduces strategic planning requirements

into the legislation and requires local environmental plans to give effect to district plans. This means that rezoning proposals will need to be consistent with these plans. The member for Bankstown raised some specific concerns about the Sydenham to Bankstown land use and infrastructure corridor, the consideration of social and environmental issues and the delivery of infrastructure. This is exactly the reason we have released the strategy, to ask these questions and to plan for new infrastructure such as schools, parks, community centres and bike paths. As the strategy clearly sets out, the aim of the corridor strategy process is:

To promote community discussion about the vision for each station precinct, guide future development and inform more detailed precinct planning and infrastructure investigations for the corridor.

The point that the member was making is actually the very point that the urban renewal corridor strategy itself sets out, that the point of making these investigations is to identify what infrastructure will be required and to articulate a process for providing that infrastructure in lock step with the rezonings that such infrastructure might be able to support. The member for Bankstown requested further information on the qualifications required for district commissioners. Clause 6 (1) (b) of the bill outlines the qualifications for the district commissioners which are identical to those required of joint regional planning panel members currently. The Government has also advised councils in each district that property developers, councillors and members of Parliament will not be eligible for appointment.

The member for Campbelltown asked about the advertisement of commissioner roles. Advertisements for expressions of interest for district commissioner roles ran earlier this month. An independent consultancy is now compiling a list of applicants for the councils to consider. Councils will be able to consider other people they identify as being qualified under the legislation to be district commissioners. I note the concerns of the member for Balmain regarding the selection of commissioners. The design of the commission reflects that it is a representative body made up of representatives of State and local government. All appointments in this Government are made by Cabinet so it is accurate that district commissioners are technically appointed by Cabinet. Local councils in each district will, however, nominate their preferred candidate and it will only be in extraordinary circumstances, for example where a significant probity issue or conflict of interest emerged, that Cabinet may decline to make the nominated appointment. In this case, the relevant local councils would be asked to nominate an alternative candidate.

I do not envisage anything other than a smooth appointment process for the local district commissioners. I note that the Leader of the Opposition suggests the commission be responsible for infrastructure decisions. Under the representative model for the commission outlined in the bill, it is appropriate for the commission to provide advice and recommendations to the government of the day. The final decision in infrastructure investment and the concordant expenditure of State funds will sit with the democratically elected State Government of the day. As Infrastructure NSW conducts assessments and makes its case publicly, so too will the Greater Sydney Commission make public submissions to government on infrastructure proposals.

Ultimately the government of the day will need to explain to the Sydney community why it is either accepting or rejecting those recommendations. The commission is designed to support both vertical and horizontal integration of land use and infrastructure investment decisions: Vertical integration, by ensuring that councils are actively supported in the strategic planning process and enabling consistency between the plans produced by the State Government and councils; horizontal integration, by ensuring that government departments work together on strategic decisions and can adopt a whole-of-government and Sydney-wide approach.

The commission will concurrently deliver both top-down and bottom-up decision-making. This will facilitate improved outcomes for the community, environment and economy. I also note the member for Balmain's concern that the Sydney planning panels will have less local representation than the current

Joint Regional Planning Panel. This is not correct. Councils will continue to have two representatives. The number of State Government representatives will however reduce from three to two. In the place of one of the State Government representatives will be the relevant district commissioner who will have been nominated by local councils in the district.

I note the concerns of the member for Sydney regarding the need to ensure the commission conducts its affairs in public where possible. The commission will work in an open and transparent way to ensure the needs of all stakeholders are appropriately protected and the commission is provided with the information it needs to do its job. The panel will provide all information relating to development proposals considered by the Sydney planning panels online before the matter is being considered and once a decision has been made. The protocol on the panels will be available online.

The bill allows for the commission to hold its meetings in public. To ensure the commission is effective, I expect there will be times when it will be required to consider information that is commercial in confidence or contains legal advice. This may require that certain matters are not considered in public. There may be a range of cases where such a hearing is not appropriate. The Government will develop a detailed stakeholder engagement plan that will identify how it will engage with different stakeholders to support its functions. Community engagement will be at the heart of the work of the commission and, where appropriate, its functions will be conducted in public.

I note the further concerns of the member for Sydney regarding the commission's capacity to delegate functions to councils. Whether delegations are made to the council, the general manager or staff depends on the nature of the functions being delegated. Where they relate to minor administrative or operational matters, it is more appropriate that such functions be undertaken by council staff rather than elected councillors. In practice, the Greater Sydney Commission and the Sydney planning panels will work in very close cooperation and there will be consultation in respect of any delegations proposed to be made. We need streamlined administrative arrangements to ensure the Greater Sydney Commission can deliver in a timely manner.

I note the concerns of the member for Sydney regarding compensation for staff who are seconded from councils. The commission will work closely with councils in undertaking its functions and will welcome the input of councils and support of councils in undertaking commission work. The commission may, at times, and only with the support of councils, welcome the opportunity to second staff and partner with councils to work on specific projects. Secondments to the commission will be made in accordance with part 5 of the Government Sector Employment Act 2013 and subject to agreement on costs.

I note the concerns of a number of members across the Chamber who have spoken on this bill affirming the importance of strong and effective community engagement and consultation. The example from the Greater London Authority of examination in public of proposed district plans should be instructive to the commission. The regulations made in accordance with this bill will set out in detail how public consultation, community engagement and public participation in the work of the commission will occur. The Opposition has signalled that it will propose certain amendments to the bill in the Legislative Council. In the spirit of bipartisanship I am happy to commit to working with the shadow Minister for Planning to consider the proposed amendments in good faith.

I note the comments of the member for Wyalong proposing strategic planning, of the nature that will occur under the Greater Sydney Commission, elsewhere in the State. The Government is currently developing regional growth and infrastructure plans across New South Wales. The Government recently placed a draft Illawarra Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan on public exhibition and a draft Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan for the Hunter and also for the Central Coast will be placed on exhibition shortly. For the information of the member for Wyalong, the Government has also established a committee under section 22 of the Environment Planning and Assessment Act to examine more broadly planning and growth arrangements in the Central Coast. It is critical that we plan strategically across the State.

While Sydney's growth and planning is often the lens through which all of New South Wales is viewed, in practice planning does not and cannot end with Sydney. The Government is committed to good planning across New South Wales and recognising the statewide need for strategic planning. I note the Legislative Council is considering the need also to focus specifically on regional planning. The natural advantages offered by Sydney are widely recognised by both past and present generations. But there is a need for us to plan better and think more broadly to ensure that Sydney will grow better. This bill recognises the need for and establishes a governance model that will allow Sydney to develop as a global city, the leader in our region, and be more than just the sum of its parts. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Motion by Mr Rob Stokes agreed to:

That this bill be now read a third time.

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

CENTENARY OF ANZAC

Debate resumed from 6 August 2015.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [5.33 p.m.]: Many of our communities have stories of heroes and I refer to Percy Muir Dun who was born at Bungwahl via Bulahdelah in New South Wales. He enlisted on the same day as his younger cousin Albert at Newcastle on 7 February 1916. Percy Muir Dun was born in 1894 in Stroud and was a soldier, sawmill manager and grazier. He was the ninth surviving child of Thomas Dun, grazier, and his wife, Elizabeth. He was educated at home and later worked as a storekeeper. Dun enlisted as a private in the Australian Imperial Force on 7 February 1916, and was allotted to the first reinforcements for the 35th Battalion. In May he embarked for training in England and in September he was promoted to lance corporal. In November he was posted to France and was made a corporal that month. The 35th Battalion went into the Armentières sector and, in the winter of 1916-17, he was badly wounded. He did not resume duty until 30 September. For gallantry at Messines he was awarded the Military Medal and promoted to sergeant in October. He was again wounded on 12 October in the second battle of Passchendaele.

After resuming duty on 8 November, Dun was commissioned second lieutenant and transferred to the 38th Battalion. He was serving with this unit when he won the Military Cross for gallantry in a raid on enemy trenches. The citation stated that he had "led his men with great dash and determination, killing the crew of a machine gun and capturing the gun". On 2 April 1918 he was promoted lieutenant and was transferred back to the 35th Battalion. He served at Villers-Bretonneux in April, at Morlancourt in May and in the Battle of Amiens in August. Though wounded on 8 August he remained on duty. Three weeks later, during the battalion's attack on Curlu, he "led his men splendidly through dense fog and on two occasions headed a charge against machine guns, capturing the guns and some forty prisoners". Of this action a battalion sergeant stated, "Lieutenant Dun really deserved the V.C.: his men would follow him anywhere."

He was awarded a Bar to his Military Cross but he had been wounded for the fourth time at Curlu

and saw no further active service. In addition to his three decorations he was mentioned in dispatches. Dun returned to Australia in June 1919 and his AIF appointment ended on 28 July. After demobilisation he worked in a sawmill at Glenreagh in New South Wales and by the time of his marriage to Violet Andrews on 22 April 1933 he was the mill's accountant. He ultimately became manager and retired in 1960.

I now refer to two sons of a Bulahdelah mother whose lives were lost in World War I. The Sutton boys, Thomas, Jim and Jack all enlisted for World War I, but only Thomas returned to Australia alive, albeit after having been twice wounded in action. Thomas David Sutton and Frederick James Sutton, who enlisted under the alias Smith, and Albert [Jack] Sutton were three of the 10 children of Frederick George and Elizabeth Ann Sutton of Bulahdelah. They enlisted in the Great War and Frederick and Albert were killed in action in a period of three weeks in late 1917. Thomas David Sutton was a labourer aged 29 years who enlisted in the 34th Battalion at Newcastle in 1916. He was wounded in action on 11 June 1917 and was wounded on a second occasion, gassed, on 27 May 1918. On 1 July 1919 Thomas arrived back in Bulahdelah at 5.30 a.m. and was surprised that everyone was there to meet him.

Frederick [Jim] James Sutton, alias Smith, was a labourer aged 29 years who enlisted in the 60th Battalion at Goulburn in 1916. Frederick was gassed on 15 May 1917 and was killed in action on 26 September 1917 in France during the Battle of Polygon Wood. He is buried in the Tyne Cot British Cemetery near the Ypres railway station. Frederick was married with a daughter. Albert [Jack] Sutton was a blacksmith assistant, aged 20 years who enlisted in the 3rd Reinforcement, Medium Trench Mortar Battery at Broadmeadow, Newcastle on 27 May 1916. Jack was transferred to the 11th Battery, 4th Field Artillery Brigade. He was wounded in action and admitted to the 12th Field Ambulance, Belgium where he died on 19 October 1917. Jack is buried in the Menin Road South Military Cemetery, Ypres, Belgium. Jack was married to Grace Eliza and they had a daughter, Florinda, whom he never saw.

Not only men fought in the war; nurses also participated. Infantryman Jack Short and nurse Winifred Frost met during the Gallipoli campaign and married in Egypt on 16 January 1916. Winifred Frost was born on 24 August 1885. She trained at the Adelaide Hospital and other places. The declaration of war on Germany by Britain on 4 August 1914 was greeted with great enthusiasm and volunteers rushed to enlist. On 10 August 1914, with a letter from the superintendent of nursing at Adelaide Hospital recommending Winifred as being "quite suitable", she joined the Army Nursing Service of South Australia. At the same time her future husband, Albert Charles Edward Short, had joined the Australian Infantry Forces, B Section, 3rd Field Ambulance.

He embarked on the SS *Medic* on 20 October 1914 and proceeded to join the men at Gallipoli. The nurses did not land at Gallipoli but served in Egypt and on hospital ships. Winifred was on the HM Hospital Ship *Assaye* and at the No. 17 Alexandra Hospital. In a letter to her parents on August 1915 Winifred stated that her ship had arrived in Egypt from the Dardanelles. Jack, who was wounded in the knee, married Winifred on 16 January 1916 at the garrison chapel in Egypt. Winifred and Jack returned to Australia in March that year and made Bulahdelah in the electorate of Myall Lakes their home.

Hannah Pankhurst is another nurse associated with the Myall Lakes electorate. She trained as a nurse at the Manning River District Hospital in Taree and graduated in 1909. She then worked at Goulburn Hospital before returning to the Manning River District Hospital in 1913 as head nurse. Born in 1882 to Thomas and Fanny Pankhurst of Tinonee, Hannah was the second of seven children. Her father died in 1902. Sister Pankhurst enlisted with the 3rd Australian General Hospital in July 1915 when she was 22. She left Australia 10 days later on the SS *Orontes* and on 4 September she commenced duty on the island of Lemnos, where the Gallipoli wounded were taken. She was hospitalised with dysentery in October.

In January 1916, following the evacuation of Gallipoli, Hannah moved to the Abbassia Hospital in Cairo for around eight months. In October she was transferred to Brighton Hospital in England and was sent to St Albans for two weeks of rest in November. In April 1917 Hannah crossed the channel to France

on transport duty, which involved accompanying the wounded moving between hospitals. Her brother William was killed in action in July 1917. At the end of January 1918 Hannah left England for Australia. She worked at the Liverpool Field Hospital until her discharge on 11 September 1918 after three years of service. Hannah returned to nursing at the Manning River District Hospital, her life's career. She died in 1966 aged 83.

The First World War was not the first time that Australia had sent troops to overseas theatres of war, but it was the first time that Australian troops served under the flag of the Commonwealth of Australia. Prior to that Australians served for their States. The first conflict in which Australians saw action was the Maori Wars. After that were the Sudan Wars, and the first and second Boer Wars. Another Taree nurse who served in the Boer War was Eliza Emily Hoadley, who was born near Carcoar. She trained at Sydney Hospital, completing her three years training certificate in 1894. In 1899, when the New South Wales Army Nursing Service Reserve was established, she joined as one of the inaugural 24 nurses. She went to Africa to serve in the Boer War, arriving there in January 1900.

With the other nurses Eliza was deployed to Sterkstroom with the New South Wales Army Medical Services. She then served at East London, Cape Colony and Orange Free State. In 1912 after her discharge she was appointed matron of the Manning River District Hospital in Taree. She enlisted in the First World War in 1915 and travelled to the Middle East, where she was posted at Lemnos to support the Anzacs at Gallipoli and later at Abbassia in Egypt. Eliza served not only in the Boer War but also the First World War. It is only appropriate that we talk about the service of nurses because without them the death rate of Australian servicemen would have been much higher.

I will now discuss two brothers who paid the ultimate price. Frederick and Russell White, two of the nine children born to Robert and Alice White of Marlee near Wingham, enlisted together at Liverpool on 2 May 1915. Fred was 21 and Russell was 19. They had two younger brothers. Although enlisting together, they subsequently went in different directions: Fred with the 7th Battalion and Russell with the 30th Battalion. Russell may have hoped for the Light Horse. An enlistment report states his occupation as station hand and says that he was a good shot but only a fair rider.

Fred undertook further training in Egypt, but in 1916 he was hospitalised with mumps and "Nile fever". On 4 April he transferred to the Anzac Provost Force, the military police, and was responsible for the enforcement of military discipline and investigating those disobeying military regulations. Russell took part in the 30th Battalion's first major battle, which began at Fromelles. The next day Russell was killed in action. He is buried at the Rue-Petillon Cemetery near Armentieres. Fred was wounded in June 1917 but returned to active service a month later. Fred was again injured with a broken leg and died the next day due to blood loss from his wound.

Many people from Myall Lakes made the ultimate sacrifice. Sir Neville Reginald Howse from the Manning Valley is Australia's first Victoria Cross [VC] winner. Sir Howse served in the Boer War, where he received the VC. He then served in the First World War as a doctor, and received numerous awards and citations. After returning from the Boer War he worked as a doctor in the Orange area. The member for Orange and his constituents like to claim Sir Neville Reginald Howse as their man, but people from the Manning Valley know that he is really ours. It was a great pleasure for me to meet his grandson some months ago at the unveiling of a memorial for Sir Howse outside of Wingham near Ellenborough Falls.

Two other local Anzacs were Stanley and Archibald Maybury. Stanley and his cousin Archibald enlisted in the AIF in 1916. Stanley proceeded overseas to France and was "taken on strength" with the 33rd Battalion. He was awarded the Military Medal on 25 October 1918. Stanley set out to return to Australia, but disembarked in South Africa in 1919 where he died in hospital from septic pneumonia. He is buried in South Africa. His cousin Archibald proceeded overseas to France with the 34th Battalion. Archibald was wounded in action on 2 October 1917 and rejoined his unit on 9 December 1917. On 2 October 1918 he was invalided to the United Kingdom and returned to Australia. He was discharged in

1919. Archibald married Lydia Fraser and had two children. I wish had more time to talk about some other great local people who served in the First and Second World Wars. Anzac Day means so much to all Australians.

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

REGULATORY REFORM AND OTHER LEGISLATIVE REPEALS BILL 2015

OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING NATIONAL LAW REPEAL BILL 2015

Messages received from the Legislative Council returning the bills without amendment.

Pursuant to resolution private members' statements proceeded with.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

BLUE MOUNTAINS BUSINESS AWARDS

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) [5.49 p.m.]: On Friday 23 October 2015 I attended the ninth annual Blue Mountains Business Awards presentation night at the Fairmont Resort in Leura. I was a guest of the Blue Mountains Regional Business Chamber at these awards, and I thank President Vent Thomas and Business Awards Manager Heather Shepherd for their efforts and energy in supporting business achievements and organising such a fabulous night. Almost 250 people attended the event, and they were in awe of the spectacular creativity and the glittering black-tie event that it was.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank each of the major sponsors: Blue Eco Homes, Premium sponsors; BlueMountainsAustralia.com; Nova Employment; Western Sydney Business Centre; Blue Mountains Gazette; Scenic World; Accounting and Taxation Advantage; Blue Mountains City Council; Blue Mountains Economic Enterprise; Bartons Real Estate; Office Choice; and 2LT Move FM. Our master of ceremonies for the awards was entertainer extraordinaire Daryl Lovegrove, who sings *Nessun Dorma* as though there is no tomorrow. The night began with a Welcome to Country from the talented and mesmerising Wagana Dancers, led by Jo Clancy. Musical interludes were provided by the energetic Blue Mountains Ukulele Group, known as the Blue MUGS. We were joined by the Mayor of our great City of Blue Mountains, Mark Greenhill. The council, councillors and council staff should be acknowledged for recently, and not at all surprisingly, being declared fit for the future as an astute local government entity. Our council is a major supporter of the business awards.

Award presentations featured the following categories and presenters, and I note each winner: Excellence in Innovation was presented by Steve Ticehurst to Graham Reibelt of Ask Roz; Customer Service was presented by Councillor Chris van der Kley to Stainless Steel Worx; Excellence in Business Ethics was presented by Jeffrey Donley to Merin Foran of Katoomba Veterinary Clinic; Business Services was presented by Mark Barton and Sharon Morgan to Michelle McKenzie and John Richards of Richards Financial Services; Hospitality was presented by Anthea and David Hammon to Clint Westerweele of Blue Mountains YHA; and Creative Industries was presented by Donald Luscombe to Amanda O'Bryan of Creative Queen Bees 3.

The New Business award was presented by Vent Thomas to Lawrence Baker and Jess Kingsford of Selwood House Veterinary Hospital; Retail Business was presented by Paul Sturgiss to Bruce Cash and Deb Campbell of Beaut-t-ful Bags in Winmalee; Excellence in Small Business was presented by Lawrence Atkinson to Rob Lees of Mortgage Choice; and Excellence in Sustainability was presented by Mayor Greenhill to Amanda Solomons and Simone Bateman of Rubyfruit. I was pleased to present the Employee of the Year award to Kylie McInerney of Blue Mountains YHA.

The Employee Inclusion Award was presented by Lynette White to Supa IGA Lloyd's of Springwood; Young Entrepreneur was presented by Susan Templeman to Amy Gent; Employer of Choice was presented by Frances Waddell to Bronwen Johnston of Blue Mountains YHA; Business Leader was presented by Geoff Starr of the NSW Business Chamber to Teresa Henson of Stainless Steel Worx; BlueMountainsAustralia.com Peoples' Choice Award was presented by Sylvia Ong to Robert Anderson and Glenn Puster from Katoomba's Avalon Restaurant. The coveted Harry Hammon Business of the Year Award was presented by Anthea and David Hammon to Stainless Steel Worx.

Special mention must be made of Lorraine Allanson of Mountain Whispers Luxury Accommodation for her well-deserved highly commended trifecta in the awards. Small business is the economic backbone of our communities. Small businesses and community organisations are the glue that holds our community together. It is community members who bolster one another, especially during tough times. As was noted at the awards evening, it was not the Government who stepped up in the aftermath of the fires to assist with recovery; it was those in the room—businesses and Blue Mountains folk—who supported one another. During the recovery period the Baird Government failed to support many struggling businesses by refusing to deliver the promised small business loans.

Our resilient Blue Mountains residents and businesses have come a long way since the 2013 bushfire emergency. They are stronger, but not without some scars. Many struggle to this day. That said, our community members rose to the challenge of encouraging one another; and they will continue to do so. This happens in a number of ways. For example, chambers of commerce across the Blue Mountains have initiated "shop local for Christmas" projects. These are vibrant, sustainable and supportive. I pay tribute today to our Blue Mountains Regional Business Chamber, all the sponsors involved in the Blue Mountains Business Awards, all the nominees and of course all those businesses that won awards. I thank them for their contribution to our local economy and to the fabric of our society. I congratulate them all.

COROWA CIVIC BOWLS CLUB

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) [5.54 p.m.]: In August two years ago I spoke in this place about the resurrection of that mighty sporting and cultural institution of the Riverina, the Corowa Civic Bowls Club. This once nation-leading home of bowls had closed when Victoria embraced the poker machine. The cash stopped flowing and the bowls stopped rolling. That a regional lawn bowls club could rise to national prominence and importance in the first place is a story all of its own. However, the emergence of the club from its darkest days is a fresh story altogether, and one that highlights the potential for growth within regional New South Wales.

It was two years ago that the Corowa Civic Bowls Club reopened, and began hosting local and regional championships again. The question was: Could this regional club turn its first few events into a lasting resurgence? The new club, on the site of the historic clubhouse and grounds, would be different in one major respect: There would be no poker machines this time. Public meetings were convened to talk through the issues. Corowa Shire Council signalled its backing for the move by waiving lease fees on the site, which it owned. Finally, the club reopened with 200 members, of which 120 were active bowlers. Many others joined to lend their support; and numbers continue to grow.

The story of the resurgence of the Corowa Civic Bowls Club is more than simply a tale of community resilience; it is not a romantic country idyll that might develop into a Sunday night television mini-series showing heroic figures from the bush. What the Corowa Civic Bowls Club delivers is a message to Parliament that regional communities are evolving and growing, often unseen from the coastal capital cities. It might not be true of every rural town, but we must understand that regional people are happy where they live and are prepared to fight for their towns and their futures. Given half a chance and a bit of financial and other support, they emerge when the climate is conducive.

As someone who lived through the 16 years of the previous Government, I am pleased to say that the climate now is positive and the signs of renewal are spreading. Here are some examples of what can happen in our State's regions: The Minister for Roads is tackling the problems of the winding, bumpy and narrow Riverina Highway out from Albury to the Hume Weir—the section of that road that was too tough for any other Government to deal with. It is tricky technically, geographically and geologically. But we are fixing that road. The Minister for Health, as I have noted previously, is rebuilding and renewing three of our multipurpose services, in Holbrook, Culcairn and Tumbarumba. This tells people they will be looked after where they live.

The Minister for Regional Development travelled to Albury at the end of September to look at ways the Government can help the people of Henty further develop the business opportunities of their wonderful site where the Henty Field and Machinery Days are held. We also visited the emerging cold climate wineries of Tumbarumba—a timber town now producing sparkling wines winning international recognition, but where there is minimal infrastructure for winery tourism. Here the Government is considering piloting a rail trail project. I can see the elements of successful support starting to come together—to boost this timber town community towards a prosperous future. The bowls tournaments are returning to Corowa. In recent months there have been mixed pairs and ladies fours events. The mixed pairs tournament reached capacity, with 56 teams coming from far and wide to compete on the four greens.

A tournament success like this has a major impact on the local economy. Motels, residential parks, cafes, restaurants, clubs and retail shops all benefit from the influx of players and their families. The club has also won a contract with Bowls Victoria to hold men's group championships for teams and clubs from across the State for the next three years. Applications are expected to be so strong that tournament dates have been adjusted so there will be sufficient accommodation in Corowa, avoiding peak summer holiday periods. And an armed bowlers tournament commenced on 8 October. The Bowls Club has rehabilitated its four main greens, leaving one aside. A year ago this fifth green was spotted by other sports-minded people, who opened a new croquet club on this facility. Croquet is a great match for a bowls club because, among other reasons, it caters particularly to people who have difficulty bending down to bowl. Croquet can be played from a more upright position. So, once one good thing gets going you soon find others join in.

Two years ago I offered my best wishes to all the members and supporters of the Corowa Civic Bowls Club for a fantastic year of tournaments and for a return to its fitting role as host club for important national and regional competitions. Now I feel confident those early hopes have been secured and the club's members can look forward to a strong future for their sport and their community. I extend my congratulations to the club's president, Ian Bilney; vice president, Judy Willett; secretary, Eileen Ide; and the entire board of directors and membership of the club. I wish them every success.

MYALL LAKES COMMUNITY AWARDS 2015

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [5.59 p.m.]: Tonight I inform the House about the 2015 Myall Lakes Community Awards, which was held last Saturday, with more than 350 people in attendance. The Federal member for Lyne, Dr David Gillespie, assisted in the presentation of the awards. There were six categories. The finalists in the Young Person of the Year were: Joshua Gilbert, Ellie Gooch, Adam Koch and Mitchell Basden. The finalists in the Senior Person of the Year were: Bill Green, Robert and Margaret West, Margaret Watt, Irene Worth and Margaret Fends. The finalists in the Junior Sports Person of the Year were: Jacob Straub, Dane Jeffery, Taye Cochrane, Claire Horn and Amber Hunt. The finalists in the Sports Person of the Year were: Kylie Hilder, Ashleigh Alcorn, Catherin Nelson, Kimberley Beaton, Laura Thurtell and Mikaela Worth.

The finalists in the Community Group of the Year were: Wingham Show Society, Manning Valley Camp Quality, Bulahdelah Historical Society, Taree Craft Centre, Manning Great Lakes Riding for the Disabled, Taree Volunteer Rescue Association and Friends of Great Lakes Library. The finalists in the

Citizen of the Year were: Kevin Carter, Julie Brady, Jim Crookston, George Hoad, Annette O'Rourke and Carol Isaacs. The judges had a hard time because there were some outstanding finalists, but ultimately there has to be a winner of each category. Ellie Gooch from Bulahdelah was the 2015 Myall Lakes Young Person of the Year. Ellie is 18 years old. She is currently sitting for the Higher School Certificate. She attends Bulahdelah Central School. Ellie was elected school captain for 2015 and is a member of the school's student representative council. Her achievements this year are impressive and include: winner of the 2015 Paterson Young Citizen of the Year award; winner of the Lions Youth of the Year Public Speaking competition; leader in establishing the Bulahdelah Central School's Leo Club, or Junior Lions; and volunteer on the Bulahdelah Health Advisory Committee, which represents the needs of youth.

Ellie also has an outstanding record in her chosen sports. She is school-aged champion in swimming, athletics and cross-country, competing at zone level in those sports in 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014. She is a regional and New South Wales representative in cross-country and a New South Wales representative at the All Schools Athletics in 3,000 metres. She won first place in regional athletics in the 800, 1,500 and 3,000 metres and first place in the five-kilometre cross-country race in Las Vegas, following selection from the top third of runners in New South Wales. She was the third-placed female at the Foster Fun Run five-kilometre event; and she is the recipient of the Pierre de Coubertin Award 2014 for representing at the State and national level, and exhibiting the values of sportsmanship and upholding Olympic values.

Irene Worth is the 2015 Myall Lakes Senior Person of the Year. Irene lives in Bulahdelah and has been a member of the Bulahdelah Hospital Auxiliary for more than 40 years. In that capacity she has worked tirelessly to raise funds for hospital equipment through monthly stalls and events. She is also a member of the Bulahdelah Historical Society and helps in preparing catering for bus groups and running stalls. She also spends many hours keeping the surrounding gardens of the Bulahdelah Courthouse Museum in immaculate condition. Irene initiated the concept of including the Alum Rock as part of the National Rock Garden in Canberra. Irene has been a member and a steward at the Bulahdelah Show 15 years.

Claire Horn is the 2015 Myall Lakes Junior Sports Person of the Year. Claire lives in Forster and is a student at Great Lakes College, Forster Campus. Claire is an outstanding member of her school community and is a member of the student representative council. She has been described as a role model for her fellow students. In 2015 Claire's sporting achievements include: school, zone, regional and State representative in the girls four by 100 metre relay; under-15s State netball competition, in which she finished fourth; State age netball division two, in which she finished fourth; member of the gold-winning Combined High Schools touch football team; a reserve for the NSW All Schools touch football team; and campus representative in the "Battle of the Colleges". Claire is a member of the Forster Tuncurry Touch Association State Cup team and a member of the Northern Eagles—the northern NSW Regional Area Touch Football Team as both a junior and ladies team player.

Laura Thurtell is the 2015 Myall Lakes Sports Person of the Year. Laura lives in Forster and is a longstanding member of the Forster Surf Life Saving Club. She is an Australian record holder. In 2014 Laura won medals at the New South Wales State titles against competitors from Sydney and Newcastle clubs. She won gold medals in the 45 to 49 years iron woman and surf swim, and silver in the tube rescue. She has also won numerous gold medals and Australian records for pool rescue championships.

Taree Craft Centre is the 2015 Myall Lakes Community Group of the Year. Taree Craft Centre was established in 1975 and is run by volunteers. It is completely self-sufficient. Volunteers worked hard to raise the funds needed to buy a property in Taree as a permanent home for craft activities. Thousands of hours of volunteer labour has turned the Heritage Cottage at Taree into a functional arts and craft centre. Examples of what the members of the Taree Craft Centre do include: making and donating turbans for women in the oncology unit at Manning Base Hospital who suffer from hair loss; conducting craft classes for young adults with a disability; supporting elderly residents in nursing homes with handmade scarves, beanies and knee rugs; selling handmade poppy brooches et cetera.

George Hoad is the 2015 Myall Lakes Citizen of the Year. George lives in Killabakh in the Manning Valley. His most keen pursuits are gardens and gardening. Most of his major achievements are in this area, including being senior vice president of the Gardens Club of Australia; he will soon become the president of that association. He is the events and functions manager and the regional zone coordinator of the Mid-North Coast and Hunter north zones; he has been a member of the Killabakh Garden Club since 2001; he is the organiser and coordinator of fundraising events, including open gardens at his own garden; and he has done a number of other things.

NATIONAL GONSKI WEEK

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—The Speaker) [6.04 p.m.]: Unfortunately, even though there has not been a great deal of discussion about it in this place, this is National Gonski Week. I take this opportunity to share some of the Gonski success stories for the people who live on the coast and the schools in my area. This week a number of events have been held to mark National Gonski Week, but we have missed most of them because we have been at Parliament House. There have been street stalls, coffee mornings and information sessions. There was also a great Gonski float in the Shoalhaven River Festival parade, which was held last Saturday, to help remind people of the importance of Gonski funding now and into the future.

It was in 2013, under the leadership of the Hon. Barry O'Farrell, that New South Wales led the nation in the signing of the Gonski agreement. I was both pleased and proud that New South Wales was the first State to sign up. This historic announcement meant that 1.1 million New South Wales schoolchildren would benefit from the additional funding. As a result of New South Wales adopting the Gonski reforms, public schools in my electorate will receive nearly \$9.4 million in additional needs-based funding. It is sometimes very easy to talk about dollars and cents and the increases this year from last year, but sometimes we fail to identify some of the really great programs in our schools that are proceeding as a result of Gonski funding.

The principal at Milton Public School, Mr Mark Thomson, wrote to me last week to share how important the Gonski funding has been for his school. The school has been able to employ a support teacher for additional time to help students who are experiencing difficulty with classroom learning as well as employing two Aboriginal education workers to support their Aboriginal students. The school has also been able to implement specialist classes this semester to help stage one students struggling with literacy and numeracy. In fact, another parent wrote to me to share her story and to thank the Government for the difference this class has made to her child. After struggling with and becoming disheartened about learning to read, this young man was selected for the new intensive literacy program and as a result he progressed five reading levels in one term. The student was really pleased with his progress and his mother said that it has boosted his confidence with his learning in all of the schoolwork. This is one example of how this funding is making a real difference to the lives of our young people at our schools.

Similar stories are being told across schools on the South Coast. The benefits of this funding model are especially being felt by local Aboriginal students, who are receiving a range of additional assistance. Ulladulla High School, where I taught for 27 years, also communicated with me this week to tell me how the Gonski funding has enabled the school to employ Aboriginal elders, an Aboriginal Education Officer, and Aboriginal mentors and tutors. It has also led to the creation and implementation of Aboriginal learning hubs. These measures have assisted all Aboriginal students studying for their Higher School Certificate to graduate in 2015. Many of the students have said that they could not have achieved this without the new mentoring and tutoring made possible by the Gonski funding.

Ulladulla High School has also implemented after-school mentoring and tutoring targeted at year 7 to year 12 students. This provides vital one-on-one support and targeted study skills. These sessions have proved very popular with students, especially those studying for their Higher School Certificate. In addition to these 14 programs, Ulladulla High School has also been able to cultivate a partnership with

High Tech High, San Diego, to allow teachers to share resources and build exceptional learning experiences. It is very clear that Gonski funding is making a real and positive difference to the lives of schoolchildren across every electorate in this State who need additional help.

I take this opportunity to congratulate Fotis Loupos, the Gilmore coordinator of the Australian Education Union, whom I have met many times, for his continued efforts to see the full implementation of the Gonski funding model across this State. Given the benefits we are seeing from adopting this model, it is vitally important that we continue to provide teachers with the resources required to give our students the best possible education and the best possible experiences at school into the future. I therefore use this opportunity to call on the Federal Government to implement years 5 and 6 of the Gonski funding model in New South Wales.

I know there was no funding from the former Government for years 5 and 6, but I would like the Federal Government to hear and read some of the stories that I have read about schools in my electorate, and stories from around this country, so that it sees the benefits of additional funding and commits to additional funding in years 5 and 6, which will enable the continuation of the programs that have started in all of our schools. Gonski is a real reform process. The New South Wales Government was the first to sign up and we need the Federal Government to now commit to years 5 and 6 and to continue this funding into the future.

ARTS HEALTH INSTITUTE

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) [6.09 p.m.]: I bring to the attention of the House an inspiring organisation based in Newcastle, the Arts Health Institute. The Arts Health Institute brings the arts and health care together to change worlds. As a non-profit organisation it works to improve lives through the integration of the arts into all aspects of health, especially in aged care environments. The Arts Health Institute works with a number of research institutes to build a solid evidence base for its work. That is one of the aspects that makes the Arts Health Institute unique and one of its strongest characteristics. It marries good research and good academic scholarship with good measurement of outcomes and performance. It measures the changes attributable to its intervention, such as a reduced need for medication and a reduction in the incidence of falls. That is why the organisation has been so successful in such a short time.

The Arts Health Institute adds a flavour and a dimension that good clinical care on its own cannot provide. It does so through a celebration of life and through art, expression and performance in a different dimension. It has created a number of innovative projects and is a thought leader in the field, offering consultancy services and education. It also offers a yearly Play Up convention, where ideas about health and arts are challenged and explored by internationally renowned presenters and artists. One of its projects is the Play Up humour therapy program. Play Up was founded in the wake of research showing that music, song and humour do the aged a power of good. A lot of the work of Play Up entertainers is done one to one in a person's room or in small lounges.

The institute trains established performers, who are used to working in pubs, clubs and theatres, to work in a program that is designed for an aged care facility, where there may be people suffering from dementia. Part of what the performers do is to connect with the client they are visiting. They find out the history of the person they are talking to: What did they do for a living? Do they have any children? How big a family did they come from? This information is then turned into material to talk and sing about. Often they are dealing with people who may be non-verbal or depressed. The constant focus of the humour therapists, the Play Up performers, is to get the clients to respond over a period of time. It is not strictly entertainment; it is play therapy for selected individuals. It also gets people out of their rooms and connecting with others.

Another of the Art Health Institute's programs brings together primary school students and residents of aged care homes. Ageing can be a terrifying and stifling process, but the Arts Health Institute

has shown that a passion for life can be renewed with the help of young children. The institute used the powerful tool of music to bring together year 6 students from Holy Family Catholic Primary School and residents of Novacare's residential aged care in the nine-week program Sing Out Loud Together. The intergenerational program, which was led by Stephanie Priest, a qualified maestro, aimed to enable seniors to share their rich history and life stories and also to teach children the importance of giving. After meeting every Tuesday at the aged care facility, yesterday the combined choir performed classic and modern songs, poetry and tricks in the school's old church. Brenda Bryant, aged 82, is a prolific poetry writer. She suffered a stroke in January and it was not until she met her student buddies that she began to write again. She said:

I had always loved writing poetry, but after my stroke it was hard to find the motivation. Meeting Isabella and Erin made me want to start writing again.

Studies show that increased physical, cognitive and social activity through intergenerational programs improves the health of older people and promotes learning for children. Whilst the institute is only in its second year, it has received more than 660 expressions of interest from artists wishing to be considered for work. Its total revenue increased by 297 per cent to \$2.4 million compared to \$807,372 in the previous 12 months. The number of new programs grew from two to six, one under an international licensing arrangement allowing exclusive use in Australia and New Zealand. The Play Up program continues to grow, with more than 44,408 elders visited this year.

The chief executive officer of the Newcastle-based Arts Health Institute, Dr Maggie Haertsch, has been announced as a winner in the *Australian Financial Review* and Westpac 100 Women of Influence Awards for 2015. Dr Haertsch has been recognised in the social enterprise and not-for-profit category for her contribution to delivering innovative, evidence-based approaches to health and aged care through the arts. She is one of the 100 women chosen from more than 500 entrants this year. The most influential in each category as well as the most influential overall will be announced at the *Australian Financial Review* and Westpac 100 Women of Influence Awards gala dinner in October at the Sydney Town Hall. I congratulate the Arts Health Institute.

NORTHERN INLAND ACADEMY OF SPORT

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) [6.14 p.m.]: The Northern Inland Academy of Sport [NIAS] held its twenty-third annual awards presentation evening at the Armidale City Bowling Club last Sunday night. It was a pleasure to attend again this year and take part in that fantastic celebration of the achievements of the 207 NIAS athletes over the past 12 months. I acknowledge Armidale City Bowling Club chief executive officer Patrick Crick, deputy chief executive officer Phil Wheaton and president of the club Richie Clutterbuck for hosting the gala evening. The food was lovely, the entertainment was wonderful and it was a good night. It was typical of the support that Armidale City Bowling Club shows to NIAS and sport in general, as do all the local clubs.

The 2015 year has been an exciting one for NIAS. The NIAS introduced Australian Football League for the first time and welcomed back soccer and rugby union. Athletes in all sports achieved outstanding results. In July NIAS established the inaugural National Primary Games, which was held in Tamworth. Hundreds of primary school aged athletes from New South Wales and interstate competed at the games over several days. The games were proudly and generously sponsored by Macquarie Sports and their success was a direct reflection of the excellent staff at NIAS. I acknowledge former chief executive officer Jason Lincoln, current chief executive officer James Cooper and Pip Benham, as well as the many volunteers who supported the event.

At the awards night it was fantastic to see two Northern Tablelands athletes taking out the Athlete of the Year awards. National mountain bike champion Katherine Hosking won the women's award, while Armidale's Will Menz, a soccer player who tried out for the Australian under-17 World Cup football squad, won the men's category. Following her four-year journey as a NIAS athlete, Katrina Reknow, also from

Armidale, was awarded the Sarah Heagney Memorial Scholarship in recognition of her commitment as a coach in 2015. Armidale cyclist Sam Jenner, who represented Australia in the under-19 cycling team at the World Championships in the United States of America, received the Scott Campbell Lonestar Athlete of the Year award and the Chairman's Award.

Will Menz was an active participant in the NIAS football program this year. That sport returned to NIAS this year for the first time in a decade. Without doubt, the highlight of his year was being identified to participate in a trial for the under-17 Joeys, a team that is competing at the FIFA World Cup in Chile. That is a great achievement for a NIAS athlete, considering he was trying out with players signed by Premier League clubs like Liverpool FC. Katherine Hosking has lifted her mountain biking performances to another level this year. She competed at the national level, which saw her travel from Pemberton in Western Australia to Toowoomba in Queensland. She was undefeated in the national series. Her next goal was the Oceanic title. Unfortunately, she had a few crashes and finished fourth, which was disappointing given her form. She will be back again. I congratulate Katherine and Will on winning those awards. They have had a terrific year.

Sam Jenner is also a cyclist and was a member of the NIAS Lonestar program this year. Sam was one of five riders selected to represent Australia in the under-19 categories at the 2015 UCI Road World Championships in Richmond, United States of America, in September. He continues to go from strength to strength. He is a champion on the bike and a great ambassador for the sport, for Armidale and for the Northern Inland Academy of Sport. I congratulate all of the coaches in the NIAS. They have done a magnificent job not only for the elite athletes but for all the athletes who participate in the program. The NIAS has a very strong track record in developing athletes' ability and their full potential on and off the field. Achievement on the sporting field and growth as young people participating in society are vitally important. Well done NIAS and all the winners. I look forward to another huge year in 2016.

CRESTANI FAMILY FOUNDATION

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) [6.19 p.m.]: Dr Chris Crestani was the Chief Radiation Therapist at St Vincent's Hospital for more than 40 years. Throughout his career he treated thousands of cancer patients before succumbing to neck cancer in 2006 at the age of 70. Determined to ensure her husband's legacy was never forgotten, his dedicated wife, Yvonne Crestani, set up the Crestani Family Foundation. The foundation's webpage is adorned with the family crest to honour her husband's family name. Yvonne wanted to raise awareness of cancer and to raise funds for cancer research through her garden parties. Her social fundraising events became a key part of the Central Coast social calendar and many wanted to be a part of Yvonne's challenges.

Yvonne's objectives quickly advanced and she identified that it would be of great benefit to raise funds for education scholarships for health workers conducting research to improve treatment for cancer patients. Yvonne established the Scholarships in Radiotherapy Committee, which comprised a small group of dedicated volunteers led by Yvonne. As opportunities in medical techniques developed, her scholarships grew to fund overseas education. The popularity of Yvonne's fundraising events grew and it was inevitable that her home garden soirees were relocated to a larger venue. In 2013 the annual garden party coincided with the opening of the new radiotherapy department at Gosford Hospital. A close alliance was formed with the new Chief Radiation Therapist, Dr Adam Chandler, and the new Central Coast Cancer Centre.

At this time Yvonne decided that all money raised would stay on the Central Coast to directly benefit the local community. Last week I had the honour of attending Yvonne Crestani's annual fundraising event at the Gosford Art Gallery. More than 70 guests enthusiastically attended her soiree and funds were raised during the evening. The announcement that the Crestani Family Foundation was awarding two scholarships, one to Monica LeMott, radiotherapist, and one to Chris Lee, chief medical physicist, was roundly applauded. Both recipients plan to travel overseas in the not-too-distant future to improve their techniques in the field of radiotherapy. Both of these two worthy recipients will come back

with the latest developments in cancer treatment, which is so vital to ensure positive patient outcomes.

The foundation is very grateful for the continued support of local businesses and the local community. It continues to grow, and volunteers are always welcomed to become part of the scholarship program. Over the years Yvonne Crestani has raised in excess of \$130,000 to help improve cancer research and to support those who seek improvements in treatment and new technology. It would not have been possible on such a scale without Yvonne's contribution. The need for treatment by people with cancer continues to grow on the Central Coast, as was evident with the opening of the new Central Coast Cancer Centre at Gosford Hospital in 2013 by the Minister for Health. This centre removes the necessity for local cancer patients, including my wife, to travel to Sydney or Newcastle for public radiotherapy treatment or to pay the high cost of treatment at private facilities.

The \$39 million facility was jointly funded by the Federal and State governments, with Canberra investing \$28 million in the centre. The new centre has the capacity to treat approximately 800 patients per year, using state-of-the-art machinery. This has increased the need for the team of outstanding clinicians to receive the latest cutting-edge training. The wonderful contribution by Yvonne and her foundation will allow this team to remain at the forefront of treatment, which in turn will ensure the best possible care and treatment for patients at Gosford Hospital. This year the planning and early works for the \$368 million Gosford Hospital redevelopment have begun. This major project, being the largest expansion of Gosford Hospital in more than 70 years, will deliver state-of-the-art health services and, in conjunction with the existing Central Coast Cancer Centre, is designed to meet the increasing demands of the growing population in our region.

I know that Yvonne is always grateful for the donations and the support she receives from local businesses and the community. I thank Yvonne for her tireless commitment to the foundation, which has resulted in a direct benefit for thousands of Central Coast locals with cancer. Yvonne Crestani, a diminutive, quietly spoken and unwaveringly determined lady, has the gratitude of all the patients, their family and friends, and the clinicians. We all hope her wonderful work continues and we look forward to many more soirees in the future.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.24 p.m.]: I commend the member for Terrigal for an inspiring private member's statement. I wish his wife well; I hope she is on the recovery trail. The member for Terrigal talked about the wonderful work performed by our medical practitioners and nurses. In every hospital across the State they do a remarkable job under difficult circumstances. I mention Concord Hospital in my electorate, in particular the Concord Cancer Centre. Like the member for Terrigal, I was inspired by the staff at Concord Hospital who organised an event to raise \$80,000 to employ an extra clinical nurse, which would enable an extra 15 trials for life-threatening blood cancer. In fact, they raised in excess of \$130,000 in one evening. God bless our hospital staff across the State; they do a remarkable job.

PARRAMATTA ROAD RENEWAL PLAN

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) [6.25 p.m.]: Tonight I speak about the Parramatta Road Renewal Plan, which is currently on display for community feedback. I thank the Minister for Planning for agreeing to a further consultation period. As I have said a number of times in this place, the first round of consultation at the end of 2014 was a sham and was completely mismanaged by the previous Minister. This current Minister has been collaborative, and I am thankful for his approach. I am concerned that this is not a plan to improve Parramatta Road but a plan to increase density. While the total number of proposed dwellings has fallen to 40,000, more than half of those are in the electorate of Strathfield and, in particular, in Homebush, North Strathfield, Concord West and Burwood. The population of Homebush, North Strathfield and Concord West in the defined precinct will increase from 4,693 to 25,929 and dwelling numbers will increase from 1,721 to 14,228 by 2031.

My community, which is already facing the harsh reality of WestConnex, is now under pressure

from increased high-rise development that is included in this plan. It is important to note that in the eight precincts identified, most of the change proposed is not on Parramatta Road but in nearby streets. In Burwood, for example, the development reaches back to Burwood Park. I have already mentioned North Strathfield and Concord West, where much of the area will be rezoned to up to 12 storeys high. Those communities will be literally smashed by high-rise development.

In the previous draft strategy, no information on health and education infrastructure was required to meet this population growth. In this strategy, the Department of Education and Communities has indicated the number of classrooms it believes will be required but there is nothing at all from NSW Health. The document indicates that asset planning will be carried out, but that is it. We know that asset planning has already taken place within Government, so surely the Government knows what will be required. We know that an expansion and upgrade of Concord Hospital are required, but it is not included in this document. It should be.

I will briefly mention my other concerns with this project. Parramatta Road will remain three lanes each way, although, according to the document, two lanes will be reserved for rapid transport. But there is no mention of what that rapid transport will be. Local councils will be forced to fund most of the improvements to social and amenity infrastructure and services through the usual mechanisms of voluntary planning agreements [VPAs] and section 94 contributions. Once the plan is signed off, UrbanGrowth—the Government's development arm, which is effectively managing this project—will walk away and will have nothing to do with the implementation. The implementation plan in this document is for five years only. There is some talk of an "outcomes manager" within the Department of Planning; however, there is no clear governance structure to make this happen across the 10 local government areas. We have one go only at revitalising Parramatta Road and the bar must be set high for developers in both the design and construction of buildings.

As it stands, without proper planning and development controls we could end up with more ugly, high-rise buildings which detract from the amenity of our area and do not contribute to building communities. It concerns me when design excellence is not factored into development plans. I am not opposed to density but it has to be done well. The Parramatta Road Renewal Plan does nothing to ensure that that will be the case. There is mention in the plan of light rail from Parramatta to Olympic Park and Strathfield, as one of four routes. The Government has dithered and delayed on confirming this route. It makes sense to have that route from Parramatta through to Strathfield. I note that the member for Drummoyne is in the Chamber and I thank him for his support of that route.

The Strathfield town centre has not been included in the plan. It does not make sense that the defined precinct stops right at the town centre. A plan for improved community and density should include the town centre. The main area earmarked for growth—North Strathfield, Homebush and Concord West—struggles under the weight of traffic moving up George Street, Underwood Road and Pomeroy Street. There has been no mention in the plan of improvements to the dreaded Australia Avenue roundabout. If a high-rise area is to be built around North Strathfield, then the problems with that roundabout need to be addressed. It is the worst roundabout in Sydney. There is no mention in the plan of an upgrade to North Strathfield station, but that is imperative. I thank the member for Drummoyne for his support on this issue. North Strathfield is a station that is shared by both our electorates. I urge the Minister to note my community's unhappiness with the plan. I believe this plan on the renewal of Parramatta Road will not provide the outcome that is needed and wanted.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.30 p.m.]: As the member for Strathfield said, our electorates adjoin at Parramatta Road. I note that there are concerns, as have a number of my constituents. As I have said in correspondence to constituents, I have found it surprising that the level of high-rise penetration away from Parramatta Road, particularly in the Concord precinct, extends for three or four blocks inland. The consultation period is open for submissions until Christmas and residents should take this opportunity to express their concerns. Transport, schools and hospitals must be considered in the plan. If the renewal plan is done effectively and properly the community will

come along for the ride. If not, it will pose major problems for our community.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Anna Watson): I congratulate the member for Strathfield on bringing this important private member's statement before the House. The Parramatta Road renewal affects many people and it is an ongoing issue.

Private members' statements concluded.

Pursuant to resolution matter of public importance proceeded with.

MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

Matter of Public Importance

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) [6.33 p.m.]: In public life one learns so much from one's local community. One hears about the many happy and sometimes challenging stories of hardworking, honest and decent people. For me, the stories of personal struggles relating to mental illness present powerful images of emotional and psychological pain, triumph and perseverance just to get through the daily grind of a normal day. I am delighted to speak about Mental Health Month as a matter of public importance. Frankly, it is a matter of national importance.

Mental illness is indiscriminate and affects every aspect of our society. It shows disregard for social status or personal achievement. Mental health is a matter of great importance in New South Wales and our nation as one in five Australians will suffer from a mental illness. One in six of our working population are currently experiencing mental illness. More than \$11 billion is lost in annual workplace productivity but the cost to families and our communities in the fight against mental illness is so much more. Investing in programs and preventive measures makes economic sense. More importantly, it makes social sense because it is about caring for and helping other Australians and their families in their time of need. An organisation that spends a single dollar on an effective mental health action program achieves a return of \$2.30. That is a pretty good investment.

Awareness programs such as Mental Health Month are important in reaching out to our community and providing the much-needed platform for thousands of organisations to become involved. Such programs enable the exchange of information and publicise the availability of support, particularly for high-risk groups. Different platforms are used, such as films, festivals, exhibitions and education seminars to encourage the collaboration and coordination of corporate and community organisations, all working together on implementing preventive and responsive measures on an issue of great public importance. Earlier today I had the pleasure of attending the Black Dog Institute's launch of the post-traumatic stress disorder [PTSD] guidelines for our emergency service workers. Our frontline emergency service workers are always there for others during times of trauma and tragedy but today's launch was to demonstrate that we are there for them in their time of need. I commend Professor Helen Christensen, the chief executive; Peter Joseph, the chairman; and all the staff at the Black Dog Institute for their ongoing work to make our community a better place.

Mental Health Month is about more than activities, events, programs and the dissemination of educational information. Its impact is more profound. It is about drawing attention to the way in which our civic society is afraid to talk about an issue that is personally sensitive and private. For many, it is an issue that contains much shame and is often experienced in isolation and solitude. By having these conversations, public forums and debates during Mental Health Month, it shows that we are unafraid of hearing opinions and views on the subject. It shows that no matter how difficult it is to implement policy, no matter how long we have to wait for scientific research to find a genetic source that induces mental illness and no matter how many risks we take to deal with mental health in New South Wales, we are unafraid.

Ours is a mature society that can openly debate ideas and initiatives. By publicising mental illness we normalise it in the same way that other illnesses—such as a broken leg, diabetes or cardiac illness—are considered normal. Our community can openly discuss issues without stigma and shame. Stigma and shame are significant hurdles to a long-term solution because they prevent those who feel isolated from reaching out for help. Stigma can cause them to pretend to their families and friends that everything is okay when it is not. In some diverse communities where patriarchal social norms are more prevalent, the pressure and expectation of managing a mental illness with a pretend macho exterior is even greater. Societal and cultural expectations, together with an increased sense of shame, make it difficult to admit to a mental illness. A strong masculine exterior can hide internal anguish and exacerbate a sense of isolation.

Every community in New South Wales must make it normal for there to be private and public discussions about mental illness. Surely that is what a mature and caring society does when faced with a complex issue. The positive impact of Mental Health Month in normalising open discussion was represented for me by the stories of Glenn, Susan and Sandra and her volunteers at Beautiful Minds. I have spoken about these wonderful people previously in a private member's statement. This month the ABC presented the documentary *Changing Minds*, which was filmed at Campbelltown's Mental Health Unit. It was my privilege when I was mayor to work with Sandra and Beautiful Minds to raise money to improve our local mental health facilities.

It has been my pleasure to speak about Mental Health Month as a matter of public importance. I finish with a Greek proverb: Our society grows great when people plant trees whose shade they will never sit in. Let us plant the trees so that people such as Glenn and Susan and many others can sit in the shade when they need to. Let us plant the trees to provide shade for people whose faces we will never see, whose names we will never say and whose stories we will never hear. Let us plant the trees to provide shade for the grandmother I met who had tears in her eyes and running down her cheek because all she wanted was for her boy to get better.

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.38 p.m.]: I congratulate the member for Macquarie Fields on bringing this matter of public importance to the House. I will personalise the issue by referring to the Clarence Valley. Just over a month ago I attended a specially convened meeting, hosted by Skye Sear from the New School of Arts in South Grafton, to discuss a response to a recent forum on youth mental health issues and community support in the Clarence for mental health solutions. We had just had a spate of youth suicides and a couple of attempts at suicide and the purpose of the meeting was to achieve commitment to ongoing communication within the community and to walk beside the relevant agencies in this process.

The meeting was attended by: Dan Griffin from Clarence Valley Council; Mark Magrath from Cranes; Gary Maher from headspace; Erin Gallagher, a community member; Tracey Poynter from the Department of Human Services; Donna Jackson, a community member; Tania Williams from TAFE; Jodie Clifford from Cranes; Mick Roberts from the Northern Rivers Social Development Council Connecting Home; Gary Martin, a Lifeline counsellor; Rebecca Ashanden, a Lifeline counsellor; Shelly Rowe from headspace; Mardi Dunbar; Richie Williamson, the Mayor of Clarence Valley Council; Kevin Hogan, the Federal member; Jason Thomson from Kevin Hogan's office; and Steve Carrigg from NSW Mental Health. This was a whole-of-government and whole-of-community approach.

A very positive suggestion from headspace was to extend the Smile Program of school mentoring to high schools in the Clarence Valley. This particular program is used by the principal of Woolgoolga High School. This program was introduced to a select group of year 11 students. They are identified as mentors for other students in the school. Each year, year 11 students are inducted into the program. We were advised that there were some positive results at Woolgoolga High School as a consequence of the program. The fact is that kids do not want to talk to adults about mental health issues; they want to talk to other kids. It was generally acknowledged that getting the Smile Program on to the education forum agenda would be an outstanding outcome. It has been noted, since the meeting, that most schools

already have peer support programs in place.

The representatives from headspace pointed out that there are different stages when dealing with youth mental health and teen suicide prevention, including community level education, early intervention and emergency intervention. If the Smile Program were able to be rolled out, it would be a massive success. But there is no denying that some young people will still need intensive services, which are not currently available in the Clarence Valley. Any community-wide mental health program must be evaluated. There is no single solution to treating mental health patients and that is why the Northern NSW Local Health District put in an expression of interest for a LikeMind Centre for Grafton. Whilst it was unsuccessful in its bid for the centre the local health district believes this model is one that is suitable to a regional centre such as Grafton, and we will continue to advocate for this model.

LikeMind is a new way of providing mental health care by co-locating triage, assessment, care coordination and discharge planning services. It brings together local partners that specialise in mental health, drug and alcohol, physical health and social needs, making sure people get access to the integrated help they need. The centre even helps with links to employment and housing services. A major strength of LikeMind is that anyone can walk into the centre without an appointment or a referral from a health practitioner or organisation. When the Minister for Mental Health opened a LikeMind Centre at Seven Hills she said:

The NSW Government strongly values the partnerships it has with the non-government sector, and the support and collaboration that the sector provides. LikeMind is a prime example of how well these partnerships can work.

She continued:

The NSW Government is investing \$7.2 million over three years for two LikeMind Centres. The first Centre opened in Penrith in January 2015 and is already supporting over 200 clients to live well in the community.

The other is in Seven Hills in Western Sydney, and this will enable people living with a mental illness in Western Sydney to have access to a range of treatment and support services under one roof at the new LikeMind Centre. The LikeMind centres align with the Government's response to the recommendations in the Mental Health Commission's "Living Well" report. These recommendations focus on strengthening prevention and early intervention, increasing the focus on community-based care and working together to deliver person-centred care. I thank the member for Macquarie Fields for bringing this matter of public importance to the attention of the House.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) [6.43 p.m.]: I acknowledge Mental Health Month and contribute to this very significant matter of public importance. I thank the member for Macquarie Fields for raising this important matter that has bipartisan support. We know that many Australians suffer from a whole range of different mental health illnesses. Sadly, 45 per cent of Australians at some point in their life will suffer from mental health-related issues and that figure is likely to rise in the future. Approximately one million Australians suffer from depression and two million suffer from some form of anxiety. They are startling figures. We know that more and more working Australians also suffer from a whole range of mental health-related illness.

It is so important that we have deemed mental health awareness should occupy an entire month rather than a week or a day. It is also important in doing so to acknowledge the different associations and organisations that play a very vital role in supporting our communities in relation to mental health. Organisations such as Beyond Blue or headspace, which provides support for young people in particular, play a tremendous role in supporting people. Way Ahead Mental health associations of NSW provide a whole range of educational facilities and services for the 4,200 mental health awareness associations that operate in our State. This State is very blessed to have many associations that play a vital role in

supporting our communities in coping with the far-reaching consequences of mental illness.

It is important to work together in a bipartisan way. I acknowledge that His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley, AC, DSC (Ret'd), Governor of New South Wales, at the start of the month, held a wonderful morning tea to acknowledge the many different associations and invited a range of their representatives to Government House to pay tribute to their work in the community. As members of this House we must do all we can to provide resources and funding to help our communities to cope with what is going to be an increasing concern for every one of us. Weekly we become aware that many of our constituents and their family members suffer from mental illness and need support. I thank the member for Macquarie Fields for raising this matter of public importance.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) [6.46 p.m.], in reply: I thank the member for Clarence and the member for Bankstown for their fine contributions to debate on this very important issue in our community, which has bipartisan support. We are always willing to invest in our community to make sure that families and individuals in need get the care and help they need. Apart from being a medical condition, mental illness is also about personal stories and struggles. It is about families who make sacrifices for the people they love and it is about the collective obligation to never be afraid of challenging societal norms of talking about a medical condition which is sensitive, which carries stigma and which can make the sufferers feel a sense of personal failure and shame.

I was delighted to hear the member for Clarence mention some of the services in Western Sydney, including headspace. We must remember that mental illness can affect our most vulnerable. The young children in our school playgrounds can experience difficulties as they go through life dealing with the pressures of living in the twenty-first century, including the advent of technology and the overwhelming amounts of information available to them. The societal norms that they need to conform to place added pressures on young people to live up to the expectations of their friends and families. It can be hard, but it is why it is important for us as a Parliament and a nation to ensure that we continue to invest in this matter of national significance. I will finish by repeating the quote I read earlier, "Our society grows great when people plant trees whose shade they will never sit in." I am delighted to know that every member in this House and every worker in our mental health sector will continue to plant trees for people in our community so that they can use their shade when they need it most.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Ms Anna Watson): I congratulate the member for Macquarie Fields on bringing Mental Health Month to the House as a matter of public importance.

Discussion concluded.

HOME BUILDING AND DUTIES AMENDMENT (LOOSE-FILL ASBESTOS INSULATION AFFECTED PREMISES) BILL 2015

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

**The House adjourned, pursuant to resolution, at 6.50 p.m. until
Thursday 29 October 2015 at 10.00 a.m.**
