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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday 12 November 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.

GREATER SYDNEY COMMISSION BILL 2015

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

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

FISHERIES MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2015

Bill received from the Legislative Council, introduced and read a first time.

Second reading set down as an order of the day for a later hour.

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I welcome to the gallery the Homicide Victims' Support Group Inc., guests of the member for Prospect.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Notices of Motions

General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) given.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS (CARE AND PROTECTION) AMENDMENT (PROTECTION FROM SERIOUS OFFENDERS) BILL 2015

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

Second Reading

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) [10.13 a.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I have introduced the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Amendment (Protection from Serious Offenders) Bill 2015 on behalf of the Opposition with mixed feelings: with a sense of pride for championing the rights of the most vulnerable and voiceless in our community, that is, abused children, and with a sense of sorrow for the children this bill is intended to protect. The purpose of the bill is to protect existing and future children of parents who have committed murder, manslaughter and other certain serious offences against their own children.

The bill will ensure that any person convicted of the murder or manslaughter of a child or of

certain other serious offences in relation to a child, where the offender was the parent or guardian of the victim, will automatically have his or her future children removed from his or her care at birth. The bill provides for the issue of restraining notices so that any person convicted of such an offence may be prevented from residing on the same property as a child or young person or from coming within a specified distance of the child or young person's residence or having any contact with the child or young person. Nelson Mandela said:

There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children.

I have brought this bill to the Parliament following three particularly devastating cases of child abuse which resulted in the most horrific end imaginable for an innocent child, that is, death. The first case I refer to occurred in 2012 when four-year-old Chloe Valentine was tragically killed after being repeatedly forced by her mother and her mother's partner to ride and crash a 50 kilogram motorbike. At the time of her death, Chloe Valentine had been the subject of 20 child protection notifications to Families SA, the South Australian equivalent of the New South Wales Department of Family and Community Services.

The coronial inquest into the death of Chloe Valentine examined the circumstances of Chloe's life and death. The tragic death of Chloe Valentine highlighted the manner in which child protection authorities in South Australia had mishandled her case and the need for reform in this area. The South Australian coroner made 21 recommendations in order to prevent other children suffering from the kind of neglect and harm that Chloe Valentine suffered at the hands of her carers. Recommendation 22.2 of the inquiry reads:

I recommend that the Children's Protection Act 1993 be amended to provide that a child born to a person who has a conviction in respect of a child previously born to them for manslaughter by criminal neglect, manslaughter or murder will, by force of the Act, be placed from birth under the custody of the Minister.

The South Australian Coroner also recommended specific reform to the internal processes of Families SA and to the training and practices of social workers, as well as a broader application of income management measures across the State. The South Australian Labor Government fully supported 19 of the recommendations and gave in-principle support for one recommendation. The remaining recommendation is subject to further investigation arising from the coronial inquest into the death of Chloe Valentine. This case, and the resulting coronial recommendations, has resulted in strong legislative action in South Australia and a bill to implement the coroner's recommendations is currently before the South Australian Legislative Council.

On 6 May 2015, the South Australian Labor Government became the first State or Territory government in Australia to propose a bill, known as the Children's Protection (Implementation of Coroner's Recommendations) Amendment Bill 2015, that provides for the automatic removal of a child from a parent or guardian with a previous serious violent conviction against their own child. The South Australian Government's bill follows the recommendations of the coronial inquest into the death of Chloe Valentine and broadens the range of disqualifying offences proposed by the coroner in his report to include the serious harm offences of: an offence against section 23 of the Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935, causing serious harm; and an offence against section 29 (1) or section 29 (2) of the Criminal Law 5 Consolidation Act 1935, acts endangering life or creating risk of serious harm.

The bill proposed by the South Australian Government also provides for the Chief Executive of the Department of Education and Child Development to issue an Instrument of Guardianship in respect of the child, and to apply for a restraining notice against a person who has been found guilty of a disqualifying offence, if it is found that a child is residing or about to reside with that person. A restraining notice may prohibit an offender, who in this case is a person other than the parent, from residing with a child, from residing in the same premises as a child, coming within a specified distance of the child's residence, having any contact with the child except under supervision, and having any contact at all with

the child. It should be noted that the South Australian Liberal Opposition does not seek to oppose that bill.

In light of the South Australian legislative response to the Chloe Valentine coronial inquest's recommendation, there is an opportunity in New South Wales to reflect on our existing child protection legislation. Before I move to the detail of the bill, I will share with the House two more heartbreakingly sad examples of what this bill is aiming to prevent. The first example is the death of Bailey Constable. In 2013, Nathan Forrest pleaded guilty to the manslaughter of four-year-old Bailey Constable. Forrest was sentenced to a maximum of eight years in jail and was to serve a non-parole period of six years. Forrest was the de facto partner of Bailey's mother, Jessica Constable. At trial the court heard that Bailey had told his maternal grandmother of Forrest's repeated physical abuse of him.

Under the existing New South Wales legislation, there is no specific provision that prevents a person such as Forrest with previous convictions for a serious violent offence, such as murder or manslaughter, against a child from residing with another child in the future. The second example is the very sad death of Ikicia Leach. In 2007 Benjamin Leach was convicted of manslaughter of his seven-week-old daughter, Ikicia. Leach was sentenced to four years and seven months imprisonment, but served less than four years. Following his release from prison, Leach changed his name and settled with a new partner, without disclosing his crime to her. A short time later, Leach and his partner had a child together.

Two years later, Leach's former partner, Jannice—Ikicia's mother—discovered Leach's new life by chance while chatting on Facebook. Jannice was horrified to think that the man convicted of the manslaughter of his first child could begin a new life and father another child so easily, without any legal restrictions. Under existing New South Wales legislation, there is no specific provision that states that a child born to or in the care of a person, such as Leach, with a previous conviction for a serious violent offence against their own child should be prohibited from caring or residing with their own or other children in the future. Galvanised by those tragic cases of Chloe Valentine, Ikicia Leach and Bailey Constable, NSW Labor launched a child protection discussion paper in June this year which proposed the reforms that are encapsulated by the bill before the House.

Labor's child protection discussion paper marks the beginning of a long and substantial period of consultation in relation to Labor's proposed child protection reforms. Labor also convened a child protection roundtable in July this year which engaged the deep thought and consideration of organisations such as the Aboriginal Child, Family and Community Care State Secretariat [AbSec], Anglicare, the Association of Children's Welfare Agencies [ACWA], the Australian Services Union, CatholicCare, the Homicide Victims' Support Group, Marist Youth Care, the Council of Social Service of New South Wales [NCOSS] and Uniting Care. I thank all those organisations for the extraordinary time and effort they contributed to making their submissions and for the carefully considered and constructive advice they provided.

In particular, I pay tribute to Martha Jabour from the Homicide Victims' Support Group for her unflinching support and vocal public advocacy for the reforms proposed in the bill before the House. Martha is present in the gallery. Labor very much values its continued engagement with its stakeholders, particularly when contemplating the sensitive issues addressed in the bill I have introduced today. I also pay tribute to Karen Chapman, the grandmother of Bailey Constable, and Jannice Florendo, the mother of Ikicia Leach—two children who were taken from us far too soon. I acknowledge that Karen Chapman, Jannice Florendo and Bailey's other grandparents, Sandra and Chris Campbell, also are present in the gallery. I thank them for being present this morning.

Both the Leader of the Opposition and I have had the extraordinary privilege of meeting and talking with Karen and the wonderful opportunity of getting to know Jannice. We have been truly inspired by their bravery and courage in confronting what one can only imagine to be the most difficult of personal events to deal with. In particular as a very young mother, Jannice's courage and fortitude in advocating for the reforms proposed in this bill have been nothing less than inspirational and are a tribute to her

strength and determination to ensure that Ikicia's, Bailey's and Chloe's deaths were not in vain.

I now turn to the amending bill. The Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Amendment (Protection from Serious Offenders) Bill 2015 will amend the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998. With the indulgence of the House, I will deal with the bill in detail. Schedule 1 item [1] provides for the protection of children and young persons from persons who have been found guilty of certain offences when the victim was a child and the offender was a parent or guardian of the child. The item includes a new part 3A, which relates to protection from persons convicted of certain serious offences in chapter 4. The proposed part contains the following provisions. Proposed section 38B provides a definition of disqualifying offence. A disqualifying offence means any of the following offences, whether committed before or after the commencement of part 3A, when the victim was a child or young person and the offender was a parent or guardian of the child or young person: first, murder; and, secondly, manslaughter.

Thirdly, it means an offence under any of the following provisions of the Crimes Act 1900: section 22A, which relates to infanticide; section 25A, which relates to assault causing death; section 27, which relates to acts done to the person with intent to murder; section 29, which relates to certain other attempts to murder; section 30, which relates to attempts to murder by other means; section 33 (1), which relates to wounding or grievous bodily harm with intent; section 35 (1) or (2), which relate to reckless grievous bodily harm; section 42, which relates to injuries to a child at the time of birth; section 45, which relates to prohibition of female genital mutilation; and section 45A, which relates to removing a person from a State for female genital mutilation.

It also means an offence under section 227 of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998, which relates to abuse of a child and young person; an offence constituted by an attempt to commit an offence referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (d) of proposed section 38H, and an offence under the law of another jurisdiction that corresponds to an offence referred to in paragraphs (a) to (e) of proposed section 38H. The offences identified under section 38H of the proposed bill are clearly the most serious offences that could be committed against any other person, let alone a defenceless child. It must be acknowledged that any person capable of such unspeakable crimes against a child ought not to have the right to automatically have children born to them and attempt to raise other children in the future. The offences identified under proposed section 38H of the bill also closely align with the South Australian Coroner's recommendation 22.2 from the inquest into the death of Chloe Valentine, which states:

I recommend that the Children's Protection Act 1993 be amended to provide that a child born to a person who has a conviction in respect of a child previously born to them for manslaughter by criminal neglect, manslaughter or murder will, by force of the Act, be placed from birth under the custody of the Minister.

It is important to note that a parent is defined in this bill as the biological parent of a child or young person, whether or not that biological parent has parental responsibility for the child or young person, but does not include a stepmother or stepfather of the child or young person unless she or he has parental responsibility for the child. Proposed section 38I explains the extended meaning of being found guilty in the proposed part.

For the purposes of part 3A, a reference to a person being found guilty of an offence will be taken to include a reference to a person having been charged with a disqualifying offence and there being, first, a special verdict that the accused person was not guilty by reason of mental illness under section 38 of the Mental Health (Forensic Provisions) Act 1990; or, secondly, a verdict of the kind referred to in section 22 (1) (c) or (d) of that Act, being a verdict that the accused person committed the offence charged or an offence available as an alternative to the offence charged; or, thirdly, an acquittal on the ground of mental illness, where the mental illness was not set up as a defence by the person acquitted; or, fourthly, any finding of a court of another jurisdiction that corresponds to a finding referred to in subparagraphs (a) to

(c).

Proposed section 38J provides that, for the purposes of proposed part 3A, a newborn baby will be taken to reside on the same property as a person if the baby is likely to reside on the same property as the person when the baby comes out of hospital. Proposed section 38K requires the Secretary of the Department of Family and Community Services to assume guardianship of a child if the Secretary becomes aware that the child has been born to a parent who has been found guilty of a disqualifying offence. This is achieved by the Secretary issuing an instrument of guardianship. The child specified in the instrument for all purposes will be under the guardianship of the Minister for a period of 60 days, unless a parent of the child makes a successful application to have the instrument of guardianship revoked.

Proposed section 38L clarifies that the effect of an instrument of guardianship, which is to allocate all aspects of care responsibility for the child to the Minister, is to authorise the removal of the child from the care of those of his or her parents who have been found guilty of a disqualifying offence, require the child to be kept at a place approved by the Minister and specify the arrangements for the custody, care, protection, health, welfare or education of the child. This is, of course, the main operating provision of this bill and closely aligns with the South Australian Coroner's major recommendation of his report at number 22.2 as stated previously, that a child born to a person who has a conviction in respect of a child previously born to them for manslaughter by criminal neglect, manslaughter or murder, will, by force of the Act, be placed from birth under the custody of the Minister.

Proposed section 38M provides that the Act applies to an instrument of guardianship as if it were a care order. Proposed section 38N provides that an instrument of guardianship remains in force for 60 days, unless it is earlier revoked, but can be extended. This provision ensures that should the Minister require further time to provide alternative care arrangements for the child in question, the secretary may apply to the Children's Court to extend the duration of the instrument of guardianship if they are satisfied it is appropriate to do so.

Proposed section 38Q requires the secretary, if he or she becomes aware that a child or young person is residing, or is about to reside, on the same property as a person who has been found guilty of a disqualifying offence, to issue a restraining notice to the person. The secretary is not required to issue a notice if of the opinion that the relevant disqualifying offence occurred where there were significant mitigating circumstances, or arose as a result of any illness or condition from which the offender no longer suffers or from any circumstances that no longer exist. This provision is in place to ensure that any person guilty of a disqualifying offence is unable to reside or care for a child who is not their own, who they may seek to reside with or care for, perhaps due to a pre-existing relationship with the child's parent.

Proposed section 38R provides that a restraining notice may prohibit the offender from residing on the same property as the child or young person, or coming within a specified distance of the child or young person's residence, or having any contact with the child or young person except under supervision, or having any contact at all with the child or young person. Proposed section 38S provides that a restraining notice will apply for a period of 60 days, unless it is earlier revoked, but can be extended.

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

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Marshall): I welcome to the public gallery school leaders from Wyong Technology High School, Gorokan High School and Wadalba Community School, guests of the member for Wyong.

Pursuant to sessional order General Business Orders of the Day (for Bills) proceeded with.

LIMITATION AMENDMENT (CHILD ABUSE CIVIL ACTIONS) BILL 2015

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 15 October 2015.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse—Attorney General) [10.33 a.m.]: The Limitation Amendment (Child Abuse Civil Actions) Bill 2015 seeks to amend the Limitation Act 1969 to retrospectively remove the limitation periods applying to damages claims for death or personal injury resulting from child abuse. On 14 September 2015, the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse released its final report on redress and civil litigation. The New South Wales Government welcomes the final report, and continues to strongly support the important, and difficult, work of the royal commission. Over the past two years, the royal commission has shone a light on the abuse of many children and young people across the nation during a long period of our history. We all acknowledge the strength and courage shown by the survivors of institutional child sexual abuse and their families to tell their very difficult stories.

As of today, the royal commission has handled more than 26,000 telephone calls, received more than 14,000 emails and letters, held more than 4,000 private sessions and held numerous public hearings across the nation. Indeed, the difficult work of the royal commission has revealed dark and hurtful chapters of our nation's past. When speaking at the opening address of the 7th Biennial International Research, Theory and Practice Conference the Hon. Justice Peter McClellan, chair of the royal commission, shared the most recent analysis of the private sessions held to date. While these statistics might not be wholly representative, they do give an insight into the nature and extent of the abhorrent abuse.

Approximately 62 per cent of survivors are male, and approximately 37 per cent are female; approximately 30 per cent of survivors are aged between 50 and 59. Almost 25 per cent are aged between 60 and 69 years and approximately 20 per cent are aged between 40 and 49 years. The average age at which abuse occurred was just over 10 for males and just under 10 for females. The most common decade in which abuse reported to the royal commission first occurred was the 1960s at approximately 28 per cent; followed by the 1970s at 23 per cent. The most common type of institution in which abuse occurred—at approximately 45 per cent—was out-of-home care, which includes what were called orphanages, children's homes and foster care. Approximately 60 per cent of the institutions in which sexual abuse occurred were faith-based organisations, followed by 23 per cent that were managed by government. Most offenders were male—approximately 89 per cent—and on average, children were abused over a period of 2.8 years. To be blunt, these statistics are confronting.

Having personally heard evidence at the public hearing on the Bethcar Children's Home, spoken with a courageous woman, Bonney Djuric from Parramatta Girls Home, and Leonie Sheedy, a champion from Care Leavers Australia Network, I know that child abuse cruelly deprives people of the life they deserved to have lived—a life free from abuse, a life free from harm. Abuse, especially in one's early formative years as a child or young person, can trigger a ripple effect on someone's life. As the Hon. Justice Peter McClellan, chair of the royal commission, so eloquently and sympathetically said in a speech in September 2013:

It is also clear that the damage to an individual, be it a boy or girl, who is abused at a time when, because of their age, they are unable to resist an abuser or report the abuse to others, may be life changing.

It is common that a person who has been abused in a school setting, but this may occur elsewhere, will experience significant difficulties in being able to concentrate on school work compromising the development of the skills necessary to obtain employment and establish appropriate familial and broader social relationships.

They lose faith in their teachers and in the school and may come to feel alienated from their friends and family. What many may consider to be low levels of abuse of boys and girls can have catastrophic consequences for them leading to a life which is seriously compromised from what it might otherwise have been. Both boys and girls are left with a distrust of adults and difficulties with intimacy. Inappropriate touching of boys may leave them with confusion as to their sexual identity. This can manifest in lifelong difficulty in relationships which can cause difficulties in other aspects of their lives.

But importantly, for victims and our nation, the work of the royal commission has undoubtedly been cathartic. It has been raw, honest and revelatory. The royal commission, and the unquestionable public support it enjoys, has given many victims the opportunity and comfort to come forward, often for the first time, and share their stories. The royal commission, including the heartbreaking testimony it heard, is a call to all of us across this Chamber, across our communities, inside governments and inside and outside institutions, to strengthen our efforts to better protect our children and young people. It is also a call to all of us that change is needed now to better provide justice to survivors. In particular, the royal commission highlighted how statutory limitation periods pose a barrier to civil litigation for survivors. Statutory limitation periods determine the length of time following the event in which legal proceedings must be commenced before the courts.

It is now widely accepted that, due to the injuries inflicted on them by their abusers, survivors of child sexual and other abuse often take decades to understand and act on the harm arising from the abuse. The average time to disclose childhood sexual abuse is 22 years. However, the applicable limitation period is between three and 12 years. It simply does not work. As such many survivors find the statutory time period in which to commence a claim for damages has passed by the time they are able to commence proceedings. For many other survivors, the process of proving an exception to the limitation period can be expensive, lengthy and traumatic. In essence, statutory limitation periods often mean people lose access to, or do not pursue, justice owed to them. Indeed, in the final report, the royal commission stated:

Limitation periods are a significant, sometimes insurmountable, barrier to survivors pursuing civil litigation.

The Government supports the removal of limitation periods for certain categories of child abuse. This is reflected in its work in this area to date. As is well known, the Government is strongly committed to reform in this area, and has already introduced a number of specific interim measures to give the survivors of institutional child sexual abuse the compassion and care they need and deserve. To date the Government has offered: unlimited counselling for survivors through the Victims Support Scheme; provided extra resources to the Department of Family and Community Services to improve and fast track a victim's access to their care records; assisted with establishing a place of recognition at the Parramatta Girls Home; and adopted guiding principles to guide New South Wales government agencies on how to better respond to a civil claim for child sexual abuse.

Those guiding principles provide, amongst other things, that New South Wales government agencies will generally not raise the passage of time as a defence or reason to disallow a claim. At the same time, the Department of Family and Community Services determined not to generally rely on limitation period defences in civil claims for the sexual and physical abuse of a child. In addition, the Department of Justice recently released a discussion paper for public consultation on potential legislative changes in this area. It received 48 submissions from a wide range of stakeholders, including the NSW Bar Association, the Law Society of NSW, Care Leavers Australia Network, Barnados, the Alliance for Forgotten Australians, plaintiff law firms, community legal centres, academics, the judiciary, the ombudsman, indigenous groups, religious organisations, and the Insurance Council of Australia.

The Government acknowledges that these are only the first steps in what must be a comprehensive reform process. The Government has since undertaken substantial work to develop a

legislative proposal to remove limitation periods in claims for child abuse, taking into account the submissions to the Department of Justice discussion paper and the broad findings of the royal commission. The royal commission's limitation periods proposal is an important reform that will ensure victims are at least able to commence a claim in our courts for civil compensation. It will assist in making civil litigation a more viable option for survivors, particularly those who have stronger evidence. It will not, however, solve all the barriers to justice faced by victims of institutional child abuse.

While the aim of the bill before the House is commendable and laudable, in attempting to deliver on one recommendation of the royal commission, any amendments to limitation periods must be considered in the broader context of the other extensive recommendations—99 in total—of the royal commission. In particular, the Government supports the royal commission's keystone recommendation for the establishment of a single national redress scheme. I believe, and the Government believes, this is the best way to ensure consistent, accessible justice for survivors, regardless of where or when their abuse occurred. A redress scheme will provide a less traumatic alternative to civil litigation for survivors.

At the Law Crime and Community Safety Council meeting I attended in Canberra last week a national redress scheme was discussed. The New South Wales and Victorian governments—governments of different political persuasions—came together and moved an urgency motion calling on the Commonwealth to give effect to the royal commission's recommendation for a single national redress scheme. I am pleased to report that in response the Commonwealth agreed to take a lead role to facilitate the creation of a nationally consistent scheme. I commend it for its leadership. In the coming months I look forward to constructive discussions with my Commonwealth, State and Territory colleagues on this issue.

That is not to say a redress scheme would displace the need to enhance survivors' rights to commence civil litigation—it does not and it will not. Considering the removal of limitation periods as a comprehensive package with any redress scheme, and other possible civil litigation reforms, will allow the Government to progress a holistic approach and response to the royal commission, and consider the cumulative impact of the mix of reforms to help victims of child abuse. I am convinced, and the Government is convinced, that this is the best way the Government can deliver justice for survivors of child sexual abuse. Unfortunately, and importantly, removing limitation periods is only one of the many steps that will need to be taken to ensure that victims of institutional child sexual abuse have an opportunity to seek compensation for the injuries and life-long trauma they have suffered.

That is why the Government does not want to consider the Opposition's bill in isolation. I want, and the Government wants, to empower survivors of abuse by creating multiple ways through which they can access justice in the broadest sense. The Government has acted, is acting and will act. Next year the New South Wales Government will introduce legislation in response to the royal commission's recommendation on limitation periods. The Government is currently finalising this legislation as it considers its broader, comprehensive and important response to the royal commission's final report on redress and civil litigation. For these reasons, the Government does not support the bill before the House.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) [10.48 a.m.]: I support the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Amendment (Protection from Serious Offenders) Bill 2015. The emotional turmoil of pain, suffering and sadness that child abuse causes lasts for a lifetime. Victims bear scars that never completely heal. Even decades after their torment they struggle with mental illness, family dysfunction, abuse, circles of poverty, self-medication and unemployment. Child abuse is one of humanity's greatest crimes, one for which victims are rarely able to find justice. Unlike many other torts, the actions of perpetrators of child abuse, the identification of victims and resulting effects of child abuse are often not discovered for decades. The current limitation period of only three years is grossly insufficient.

The victims of child abuse deserve the same justice that is available to everybody else when they are seeking financial redress for the crimes committed against them. They deserve more time to be able to seek the justice they deserve. I have heard horrific stories from survivors of child abuse—both physical

and sexual. According to one account, the victim was forced to walk into a dark room in a urine-soaked sheet and to perform sexual acts on a number of older and stronger people under threat of further physical violence. The victim was in a boarding school and was not allowed to use the phone or to leave the premises to contact the police—he was helpless. Today, many years later, he suffers from mental illness and relives the horrific abuse in regular nightmares. He is unable to concentrate or to work, and is also unable to seek justice because the limitation period has passed. There are hundreds, if not thousands, of stories like this being brought to light as a result of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

Victims of child abuse have spent the majority of their lives suffering. They know who the perpetrators are. In institutional cases, they know the institution that employed paedophiles, and that the institutions were well aware of the violence being committed behind closed doors. The victims deserve justice, not only from a criminal law perspective but also from their civil right to compensation for medical treatment, lost financial potential, and for the many other areas in which their lives have been devastated. This House has a responsibility to protect the victims of child abuse. The march toward justice has come a long way.

I commend the New South Wales Government for its continued partnership with organisations such as Bravehearts and the Care Leavers Action Network in providing support for victims of child abuse. I also commend the Government for taking a more serious stance on child sexual abuse with the introduction of life sentences for the most heinous cases. That is a good start. However, there is still a long road ahead. No amount of legislative reform will undo the suffering of child abuse victims. This House cannot undo the past, but it can improve lives. Improving the lives of child abuse survivors is something we must do.

The Limitation Amendment (Child Abuse Civil Actions) Bill 2015 addresses three recommendations made by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Recommendation 85 states that State and Territory governments must remove the limitation period in regard to civil actions founded on personal injury caused by the sexual abuse of the victim as a child. Recommendation 86 states that the removal of limitations should have retrospective effect, regardless of whether a claim was subject to a limitation period in the past. Recommendation 87 states that courts' existing jurisdictions and powers should be preserved so that their power to stay proceedings is not affected by the removal of the limitation period. Furthermore, the Opposition has heeded recommendation 88 as solid advice that these reforms be enacted as soon as possible.

Retrospectivity is always a difficult issue in law. Lawmakers must be careful to ensure that justice is paramount. In New South Wales, sexually abusing children has been a crime and a civil wrong for well over a century. The perpetrators of child abuse know that, and they have always known that their actions have consequences under the law. There is no criminal limitation period for child sexual abuse, and the perpetrators also know that. Given the gravity of the effects of child abuse upon the victim, the civil limitation period should match the criminal limitation period. The societal standard we hold that time does not run against justice for the most heinous crimes should be standardised. In many civil cases, limitation periods focus on efficiency. In many cases, that is fair. However, the current limitation period gives child abusers an unfair advantage. Extending the limitation period for child abuse civil actions will improve justice.

It is reported that on average it takes a victim 23 years to seek compensation. The existing limitation period is only three years from the time the victim turns 18. It is shameful that this House has allowed that 20-year gap to exist. Under current law, we are expecting already vulnerable and suffering young adults to file and prosecute a civil case against their abuser or the institution that permitted the abuse to occur. It is a simple principle of tort law that an individual is able to seek compensation for injury caused by either an intentional action or negligence on the part of another party. New South Wales has a long history of recognising the importance of this concept.

For example, it is enshrined in workers compensation legislation with the idea that employers must compensate employees for injuries they have suffered caused by the employer's negligence. We have long accepted that breaching a duty of care should not happen without consequence. It sickens me that in a large percentage of child abuse cases where the abuse has occurred under the care of institutions that duty of care has been breached in a most horrific way. It is unjust that we expect victims of child abuse who have barely begun to accept themselves as adults and who have limited knowledge of the legal system to take their abusers to court, and to do all of this before their twenty-first birthday. That is why the limitation period for child abuse actions must be removed.

The reforms introduced by my learned friend and colleague the member for Liverpool are long overdue. If accepted by this House, they will create avenues of justice for the victims of child abuse. However, they are only one part of the many reforms this House must implement to provide justice for victims of child abuse, and particularly victims who still suffer the after-effects of their abuse under State and institutional care. Civil litigation is a significant action for any person. The decision to take a matter to court is rarely made lightly.

This House knows that even after removing the limitation period many victims of child abuse will not litigate, and the emotional and mental pain of litigating such a matter is often too great a burden to bear. That is why the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse has recommended the creation of a national redress scheme. The New South Wales Government must support the establishment of such a scheme. Recently, I gave notice of a motion urging the New South Wales Government to approach the Federal Government to start work on implementing a national redress scheme. I am pleased that in her contribution to this debate the Attorney General mentioned such a scheme and spoke about addressing this issue. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

The five key recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse are: first, the establishment of a national redress scheme to process compensation claims for child abuse survivors in New South Wales; secondly, care leavers with a reasonable likelihood of having been abused should receive at least \$10,000 and up to \$200,000 in the most severe cases; thirdly, the New South Wales Government should pay New South Wales institutions' shortfalls; fourthly, religious organisations and residential facilities for children should be liable for child abuse in civil lawsuits; fifthly, there should be a program to provide unlimited counselling and psychological care throughout survivors' lives. This approach would allow victims of child abuse already piecing together what is left of their shattered lives to seek compensation without having to go to court. The money they receive will not undo the past. However, it will address issues such as diminished income resulting from not being able to work, and will cover the cost of counselling and psychiatric treatment.

It is important to note that financial distress is not a problem for all survivors. Many survivors are lucky to have a supportive network of friends and family. Having such a network has been proven to help enormously. Many other victims, however, were already vulnerable at the time of their abuse. They suffered in orphanages and homes under State and church care. These victims still have a limited support network. It is these victims that this House must work to support and protect. Recommendation 88 of the royal commission urges this House to act now to at least remove the limitation period. Unlike a national redress scheme, removing the limitation period is something we can do today. It is perhaps the fastest route to some degree of justice for child abuse victims.

There are a number of members of Parliament whom I must commend: the shadow Attorney General, the Attorney General and Mr David Shoebridge in the upper House, amongst others. But most importantly I commend the thousands of child abuse victims for their courage. There are hundreds of thousands of child abuse victims, many who remain silent. Even today, children will be abused in the most heinous way—and we would never know. They will face mental illness and develop a distrust towards others, and sadly many will take their own lives. I commend the courage of the thousands of child abuse survivors who say, "I will not allow what happened to me to happen to my children or to other children in our community."

I commend the courage of the most vulnerable members of society who were abused under institutional care, who never had the support of family, and who still face the world every day. I commend the courage of those who have spoken out about their past and have put this issue on the agenda today. This House is united in saying the State of New South Wales does not stand by when hundreds of thousands of child abuse victims are deprived of justice. New South Wales does not allow its most vulnerable people to suffer. New South Wales stands up for what is right and will give the victims of child abuse the voice they deserve. This bill is to be commended. I strongly support its passage through this House.

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) [11.01 a.m.], in reply: I thank the Attorney General and the member for Prospect for their contributions. I also acknowledge that a bill with a slightly different title but in identical terms has been moved by Mr David Shoebridge in the other place. Whilst he and I will disagree on some things, on this bill he and I are completely of one mind, as is the member for Newtown with whom I have had some discussions about this bill. I am disappointed, I must say, by the Attorney's view. The difficulty with her argument, which is that you cannot proceed with this until there is a national redress scheme, is that it is resolutely and coherently opposed by the recommendation of the royal commission. Recommendation 88 of the royal commission said:

State and territory governments should implement these recommendations to remove limitation periods as soon as possible, even if that requires that they be implemented before our recommendations in relation to the duty of institutions and identifying a proper defendant are implemented.

The Attorney General was very complimentary about the work of the royal commission, as indeed she ought to be, but the difficulty for her argument is that while she is complimentary about the commission she is ignoring its recommendation. The recommendation says that we should be doing what is proposed in this bill as soon as possible. And it is not just that that is the recommendation of the royal commission. The recommendation is based upon a very clear and logical position, which is that the common law means of redress are entirely separate to the national scheme of redress—they are entirely separate and whatever changes you make to common law do not in fact impact upon the national redress scheme.

So not only does the royal commission recommend the course of action proposed in this bill and contradict the arguments of the Attorney, the logical position is exactly the same. For those reasons I have to say I am profoundly disappointed by the ungenerous view of the Attorney on this. I think she misunderstands the royal commission and certainly seems to misunderstand the law. I conclude my comments by echoing the comments of the member for Prospect and paying tribute to the courage of victims and survivors. Whilst we are arguing about the law, it is sometimes easy to forget the true cost that underlies all of these things, and it is entirely appropriate that their courage be acknowledged. Having said that, and with regret at the Government's attitude and its opposition to what is an entirely sensible and rational proposition, I commend the bill to the House.

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

The House divided.

Ayes, 36

Ms Aitchison
Mr Barr
Ms Burney
Ms Car
Ms Catley

Ms Hay
Ms Haylen
Mr Hoenig
Ms Hornery
Mr Kamper

Mr Parker
Mr Piper
Mr Robertson
Ms K. Smith
Ms T. F. Smith

Mr Chanthivong
Mr Crakanthorp
Mr Dib
Ms Doyle
Ms Finn
Mr Greenwich
Mr Harris
Ms Harrison

Ms Leong
Mr Lynch
Dr McDermott
Ms McKay
Mr Mehan
Ms Mihailuk
Mr Minns
Mr Park

Ms Washington
Ms Watson
Mr Zangari

Tellers,
Mr Lulich
Mr Warren

Noes, 39

Mr Aplin
Mr Brookes
Mr Conolly
Mr Constance
Mr Coure
Mr Crouch
Mrs Davies
Mr Dominello
Mr Elliott
Mr Evans
Mr Fraser
Mr Gee
Mr George
Ms Gibbons

Mr Gulaptis
Mr Hazzard
Mr Henskens
Mr Humphries
Mr Johnsen
Mr Kean
Mr O'Dea
Mrs Pavey
Mr Perrottet
Ms Petinos
Mr Provest
Mr Roberts
Mr Rowell
Mr Sidoti

Mrs Skinner
Mr Speakman
Mr Stokes
Mr Taylor
Mr Tudehope
Ms Upton
Mr Ward
Mr Williams
Mrs Williams

Tellers,
Mr Bromhead
Mr Patterson

Pairs

Mr Atalla
Mr Daley
Mr Foley

Mr Baird
Ms Berejiklian
Mr Grant

Question resolved in the negative.

Motion negatived.

Bill not read a second time.

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

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Parliamentary Secretary) [11.13 a.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) Commends the Government for investing \$60 million in funding to support victims of domestic violence.

It does not give me any great pleasure to move this motion. However, it is a necessary motion. It gives me great pleasure to acknowledge the investment that our Government is making to address the problem of domestic

violence. The plague of domestic violence has invaded our society for far too long and causes trauma to victims. A reported 70 women perish in this country each year at the hands of their partners. It is a disgraceful statistic. Another statistic is that one in four men throughout their life will commit domestic violence against their partners.

I am not suggesting that anyone here commits domestic violence, but to put it into perspective, almost 100 parliamentarians work in this place and potentially 25 of those could commit the crime of domestic violence. It sends home the message that every day, as we go about our business in our community, we mix with men who cause immense harm to their partners in their homes. No-one should ever have to live with the fear of violence in their home. We must target those offenders to change their attitudes and behaviours in order to make a lasting change. It is every individual's responsibility from here on to speak up. We encourage the victims of domestic violence and their family members to speak up so that this crime can be addressed.

The New South Wales Government has committed \$60 million to domestic and family violence [DFV]. This is in addition to the \$148.5 million it has invested over four years for specialist DFV services in the 2015-16 budget. The Government's package puts the perpetrator clearly in the centre of the picture while continuing to provide specialist crisis support to women, men and children who have experienced domestic and family violence. Domestic and family violence is in every community. It can occur in any household in any street of any suburb in our electorates. People are suffering at the hands of perpetrators and many continue to suffer at the hands of recidivist offenders. Domestic violence is a crime, and more than one in five domestic violence offenders will end up in court convicted of a second offence within two years.

This package shows the Government is serious about targeting perpetrators to change their behaviour. In all six police regions, \$15 million has been allocated to create domestic violence high-risk offender teams, which will be rolled out over the next three years. The teams will target serious recidivist offenders and investigate serious domestic violence matters in the same way that police investigate other major crimes. The package also includes domestic and family violence suspect target management plans that will put offenders on notice, which is in line with approaches to the management of other serious crimes. The Central Metropolitan Region has kicked off using the plans this month with a view to rolling them out across the State in 2016.

An investment of \$4.1 million will be made to advance the rollout of all 24 domestic violence liaison officers [DVLO] who were promised prior to the 2015 election. The DVLOs will play a critical role for police by investigating and supporting victims by connecting with community issues and concerns related to domestic violence, and by utilising information and intelligence. Almost \$20 million will be invested in mandated perpetrator behaviour change programs to provide treatment for perpetrators, as we do for drug and alcohol offenders. This will force perpetrators to face up to their actions, attitudes and behaviours. The package also better supports victims with a \$20 million increase for specialist homelessness services, providing additional emergency accommodation and supports, and increasing case management capacity to enable services to respond more quickly. Four new Staying Home, Leaving Violence sites will be established in Coffs Harbour, Inverell, Orange and Clarence Valley.

Australia's first Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme will be piloted in four police local area commands from early 2016 in Oxley, Shoalhaven, Sutherland and St George. An important component of this scheme is that in addition to a police officer, whether or not a violent history has been disclosed, specialist domestic violence support services will be provided. The Government will invest a further \$2.3 million over two years in police and non-government organisation partnerships for expert non-government organisations to provide specialist domestic and family violence wraparound supports that undertake

safety planning to address those concerns. These specialist support services will be offered to all primary persons.

Some \$1.3 million will be invested over four years to increase the number of qualified sexual nurse examiners in high-risk rural and regional communities. These specialist nurse examiners will collect forensic evidence from adult victims of sexual assault, and provide support and essential expert advice for criminal proceedings, as required. For decades, effective action in domestic violence has been focused on supporting victims—and long may that continue. This significant package builds on that by further targeting perpetrators in a way never seen in New South Wales. This State is leading the nation by tackling domestic violence. We will not tolerate domestic and family violence any longer in our society. On this side of the House we are championing this new social policy, which we hope will stamp out domestic violence in the future.

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) [11.20 p.m.]: I speak on the motion moved by the member for Castle Hill. I note he said that domestic or family violence is a plague that is invading society, causing trauma. The announcements made as part of the Government's domestic and family violence behavioural change programs that were made last month, including the announcement of specialist policing teams, are certainly very welcome. My concern, and the concern of other members on this side of the House, is that bringing on this motion as an urgent motion is a smokescreen for the fact that the Government has not responded to the 2011-12, the 2012-13, or the 2013-14 recommendations of the Domestic Violence Death Review Team.

The latest report released by the New South Wales Domestic Violence Death Review Team, which was released last week, shows that the Baird Government has failed to formally respond to any recommendations made by the team over the past four years. The team was established in 2010 by the Labor Government to review domestic violence-related deaths in New South Wales. The team analyses specific cases and collates data to provide recommendations to the Government to prevent or to reduce the likelihood of domestic violence deaths in the community. The 2013-15 report contains 15 recommendations. However, a response to those recommendations will not be provided until this time next year when the 2015-16 annual report is due for publication.

Those 15 recommendations are based on in-depth analysis of the 30 domestic violence homicides that occurred in New South Wales between 1 July 2010 and 30 June 2012, and include quantitative data concerning all homicides that occurred in New South Wales between 1 July 2000 and 30 June 2012. Disturbingly, there are 14 recommendations from the 2011-12 Domestic Violence Death Review Team annual report and 23 recommendations from the 2012-13 report, which the Government will not respond to until late 2016. Over the past four years that makes 37 recommendations by the Government's own specialist panel that have been sitting on a shelf gathering dust. As a matter of urgency, this Government should provide a comprehensive and detailed response to all of the outstanding recommendations made by the team. There is no greater social challenge than eradicating the scourge of domestic violence. On that matter the Parliament is united in a bipartisan way. I will now go through some of the important recommendations of the Domestic Violence Death Review Team that the Government is yet to address. Recommendation 14 from the 2011-12 annual report states:

That the Department of Family and Community Services—Housing NSW remind operational staff to inform tenants of domestic violence services, where appropriate, when they become aware of domestic or family violence occurring within a public housing property.

The whole-of-government action to that recommendation is that a progress update will be provided in the team's 2015-16 report.

Ms Pru Goward: What is wrong with that? Isn't that the right way to do it?

Ms JODIE HARRISON: These are recommendations from the 2011-12 annual report. I will move

to the next recommendation, recommendation 10 from the 2011-12 annual report, which states:

That the NSW Government commission the development and implementation of a public education strategy aimed at improving the reporting of domestic violence, including physical violence and controlling and coercive behaviour. This should be targeted at reporting by:

- victims;
- family, friends and neighbours of victims; and
- specific groups ...

The whole-of-government response to or action on that recommendation was that a progress update will be provided in the team's 2015-16 report. Recommendation 6 from the 2011-12 annual report states:

That the NSW Police Force incorporate into its existing domestic and family violence Standard Operating Procedures the requirements that ... the police must inform the victim of the increased risk of lethality posed to them ...

The whole-of-government response to or action on is that a progress update will be provided in the team's 2015-16 report. With respect to the 2012-13 recommended actions, recommendation 15 states:

That the NSW Judicial Commission develop and implement training and guidelines for all NSW judicial officers in relation to domestic and family violence, which:

- a) promotes awareness and understanding ... and
- b) emphasises and supports the use of a common language ...

The whole-of-government response to the team's 2012-13 report is currently being prepared. This response will be reported in the team's 2015-16 report. So a whole-of-government response to the 2012-13 report of the Domestic Violence Death Review Team has not yet been finalised; it is currently being prepared. The Domestic Violence Death Review Team was established by Labor to examine deaths in the community as a result of domestic violence. Almost 40 recommendations were made between 2011 and 2015 to which the Government has failed to respond. The Government is failing victims of domestic violence by ignoring the recommendations of the review team. These are the experts in the field, and the Government should be listening to them.

There is no doubt that reducing domestic violence is one of the great policy challenges facing all levels of government. It is truly baffling that the Baird Government is ignoring the advice and not reporting on the recommendations of its own expert team. While there is no doubt that funds announced as part of the domestic and family violence package last month are welcome, the moving of this motion as an urgent motion is designed to provide a smokescreen for the Government's inaction on the implementation of the Domestic Violence Death Review Team recommendations over the past four years. It is time for this Government to take the work of the team seriously, and to respond to and implement its recommendations. [*Time expired.*]

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) [11.27 p.m.]: I acknowledge my friend and colleague the member for Castle Hill for moving this outstanding motion. I formally acknowledge the outstanding work done by Minister Goward and her team in moving forward with the Staying Home, Leaving Violence program. This Government takes this very seriously; this Minister takes this seriously. I make it very clear that this is a whole-of-government issue, with actions taking place across many portfolios. The fact that 20 women in New South Wales died at the hands of their partners is unacceptable to everybody. One of the reasons women return to violent partners is the difficulty they have in setting up a new life. Starting over in a new home, new area, new school, and new employment can be overwhelming for women who wish to escape a violent relationship, especially when they have little or no support.

The Staying Home, Leaving Violence program aims to prevent homelessness by working with the NSW Police Force to remove the perpetrator from the family home so that women and children can

remain safely in their own homes and their surrounds. The program places accountability firmly on the shoulders of the violent offender—and rightly so. This ensures women and children are not driven to homelessness or uprooted from their families, friends and schools. The program also provides a range of support for victims such as safety planning, improving home security, assistance in managing finances, support for children, and helping women throughout the complicated legal process. The service operates in 23 Staying Home, Leaving Violence locations across New South Wales, including in Gosford and Wyong on the Central Coast.

The New South Wales Government is investing \$20 million over two years to boost the capacity of women's refuges and other specialist services to include expert and responsive 24/7 on-call services, to increase beds by refuges renting nearby properties, and to provide more crisis and emergency accommodation and temporary accommodation. The New South Wales Government will spend a record \$182 million in 2015-16 on specialist homelessness services, including women's refuges. But the Government knows that demand is growing, and it is responding.

The Department of Family and Community Services will consult locally with specialist homelessness services to deliver women's refuges and domestic and family violence support. As reported today by the Central Coast district director, Jane Vickers, in this week's *Express Advocate*, there is "increased demand on services to help women and children" who are victims in their own homes. Ms Vickers further stated that discussions are about to commence with providers across the State on how funds will be invested over the next two years to boost the capacity of women's refuges and other specialist homelessness services. That is positive news for those in need on the Central Coast.

It is important to understand that the Government funds the Staying Home Leaving Violence program to reduce the risks confronting women and children who are escaping violence. The Government is providing support for them to stay safely in their home of choice and to prevent their homelessness by working with the police to remove perpetrators from the family home. This means that those affected by domestic violence undergo comprehensive risk assessments, which include safety planning and management strategies. Policewoman Sergeant Jess Bradbury is the leader of the domestic violence unit for the Brisbane Water Area Command in Gosford and has reinforced to our community that domestic violence is a crime. It is about violence directed towards those who are vulnerable, and it is not acceptable.

On Saturday 21 November the White Ribbon Bike Ride will include members from the NSW Police Force who will ride from Newcastle to Blacktown to raise awareness of domestic violence. The New South Wales Government is committed to reducing and eliminating domestic and family violence in this State. I participated in Walk the Talk with the Brisbane Water Local Area Commander, Danny Sullivan, who is working in conjunction with the Minister's department.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON (Blacktown) [11.31 a.m.]: This motion is insightful in many ways, not least because it provides an insight into this Government and its attitude towards this issue. The Government is busily congratulating itself for cutting funding and closing domestic violence services to women, in particular women-only refuges. We have a government that is busily congratulating itself, but it is not doing what is needed in the current circumstances. Ministers sit in their ivory tower offices and do not confront the reality of what is going on when it comes to domestic violence.

Ms Pru Goward: And of course you do. Well, do you? Go on, tell us about it.

Mr Ray Williams: Have you?

Ms Pru Goward: How many groups have you consulted with?

Mr Ray Williams: Why don't you fess up and tell us what you've done? What did you do when you were a Minister?

Ms Pru Goward: Yes. Tell us what you did for 16 years or what your government did.

Mr Ray Williams: Why don't you put that on the record?

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: I find rather offensive the interjections being made by Government members when those members actually do not have an insight into the personal circumstances of families and what they have lived with. While the 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 might like to big-note herself, the reality is that there are many members of this House who have experienced domestic violence firsthand. I suggest that the Minister sit and listen nicely for a change. This issue requires urgent action to be taken. It does not need this Parliament spending its time on self-congratulatory resolutions and motions when much more needs to be done in this space. The issue of domestic violence is characterised by families in crisis.

Just this week my office dealt with a woman who was told that she should stay at home, take out an apprehended violence order [AVO] and be in touch with the police. But she was in my office because she was in fear for her life and because she could not access crisis accommodation. When she went home, the phone rang. The violent partner was on the phone and said, "I'm coming around to kill you." That is an example of the real-life circumstances that exist. I can tell the House about the vigils I have held and the women who talk about the fact that they have taken out AVOs and had their partner arrested. After the partner was arrested, he was released. He came home, started playing with bullets in the lounge room and said, "Which one do you think has your name written on it?"

It is all well and good for the Government to congratulate itself for what it is doing, but I still do not see it dealing with matters such as specialist courts to deal with domestic violence. I do not see police officers out in the community other than from 9.00 a.m. until 5.00 p.m. on business days. While I acknowledge that some positive measures are being rolled out, my view is that it is far too early for anyone to be congratulating themselves. We know that women are being killed on a regular basis. Despite all the talk, more needs to be done. To suggest for one minute that this House ought to spend its time congratulating the Government when there is so much more to do is offensive. Much more action should be taken in this space than is currently occurring.

We must ensure that more police officers are available not only between 9.00 a.m. and 5.00 p.m. and that greater support is provided for women who are confronting the circumstances I have described. Laws should be introduced to stop perpetrators from being charged and released, thereby being able to knock on the door or put the key in the door, go back into the lounge room, and start playing with bullets. Such perpetrators say to women who are living in fear, "Which one of these has your name on it?" I have spoken to women who have said that they cannot access support services and cannot get accommodation with their boys, so they choose to stay home and "take the flogging in the backyard" rather than deal with the crisis. While steps are being taken, it is way too early for a motion such as this to be before the House.

Ms Pru Goward: Oh!

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: You are a disgrace.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! If the member for Blacktown makes such comments and then leaves the Chamber, he may remain outside the Chamber all day, if he wishes.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [11.35 p.m.]: The scourge of domestic violence must be eradicated across the State, including in my electorate of Myall Lakes. No-one should have to live in fear in their own home. Domestic violence is a crime just as bank robbery and any other offences committed by criminals are crimes. Domestic violent offenders should be dealt with as criminals. The

Government should change attitudes so that people who perpetrate domestic violence crimes know that they are committing criminal offences and will be dealt with as criminals in the very same way that other criminals and ratbags are dealt with in our society. The Government has listened to the experts, taken advice and made a number of changes, some of which are being announced today. Contrary to the suggestion by the member for Blacktown, whose conduct was straight out of the Labor Party's handbook—"Say whatever it takes but rarely come up with initiatives"—this is not a self-congratulatory motion. The purpose of the motion is to advise the people of the State of action the Government has taken and the positive measures that have been introduced.

The State has more police officers than in the past and more domestic violence offenders are in our jails. The Government has provided more counsellors and services. The Government has a suite of policies to address the problem. As it does with any policy area, it is constantly reviewing implementation and examining the actions that are being taken. For the first time in Australia, there is a Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, and that Minister was appointed by the New South Wales Government. In no other jurisdiction of Australia has that occurred. The Government has provided \$60 million for specialist police squads to target domestic violence offenders and perpetrators to force them to undergo behaviour change programs.

The Federal Government announced \$100 million in funding to tackle domestic violence, set up trials for global positioning system trackers for perpetrators, and provided extra security for women at home. The New South Wales Government also introduced a pilot program, the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, which will enable people to find out whether their partner has a history of domestic violence offences. Furthermore, the Government has introduced new legislation which will give the police new powers to investigate crimes against women and which includes powers to use video evidence that has been obtained by the police. The New South Wales Government has committed \$20 million to women's refuges and homelessness services to cater for the provision of extra emergency accommodation and 24/7 on-call services. The Premier's strategy is affirmation of the Government's domestic violence policy of offenders being held fully accountable for their actions and dealt with accordingly.

Importantly, a new bipartisan group, the Parliamentary Friends of the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, has been formed. I am pleased to inform the House that I have been appointed as one of the deputy chairpersons of the group. Domestic violence offenders have been placed on notice that this Government is targeting their unacceptable behaviour and crimes. In my electorate of Myall Lakes, the Samaritans are looking after the women's domestic violence shelter in Taree. During this year's election campaign, Labor members were saying that the shelter would close, women would not be looked after, and men also would be accommodated in the shelter. They were like Chicken Little, running around saying, "The sky is falling!" But nothing could have been further from the truth.

Ms Pru Goward: Lies.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD: They told deliberate lies and deliberately misled people. They were doing what the member for Blacktown did earlier in this Chamber: whatever it takes. The Government gets that. Earlier this year concerns were expressed about the shelter having sufficient capacity. In response to that, I met with the former Minister, the Hon. Brad Hazzard, and subsequently with Annabelle Daniel, the chief executive officer of the women's shelters.

After that the community got together with all the stakeholders and when there was a funding shortfall for a community shelter in the Great Lakes area, this Government provided extra funding so it could be up and running before Christmas. I am very proud to say that that organisation has made me the patron of the facility in the Great Lakes. This Government is getting results by introducing initiatives to help the women in this State. I am proud of what we are doing. Those opposite were in government for 16 shameful years when they did absolutely nothing for the women of this State. They might have had talkfests but they came up with no practical solutions; we are delivering practical solutions where they are

needed.

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

Pursuant to resolution private members' statements proceeded with.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

HEATHCOTE ELECTORATE SERVICE ORGANISATIONS

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) [11.41 a.m.]: I congratulate numerous local organisations whose outstanding efforts in support of our community have made 2015 a great year. Activus has operated Sutherland shire community transport for more than 30 years. It is a longstanding service organisation in my local community. Activus provides transport options for the frail and aged and people living with disability. These services are available to clients who live independently in their own home or unit and who are unable to access mainstream transport due to physical, social or geographical factors. From humble beginnings with a Holden station wagon, the organisation has grown to a fleet of 22 vehicles servicing more than 3,000 Sutherland shire residents with almost 80 volunteers. Activus offers a wonderful transport service that assists residents to maintain their independence by attending medical appointments, utilising sport and leisure centres, visiting relatives and friends in nursing homes and attending religious events and support groups.

Northern Illawarra Neighbourhood Aid, or NINA as it is locally known, is a community-based organisation operating out of Helensburgh and assisting local residents from Helensburgh to the coastal town of Coledale. It is a true success story of the not-for-profit community service sector. NINA began nearly 30 years ago with funding for just one 15-hours-a-week coordinator position. It has gone from strength to strength looking after the vulnerable people in our local community. Today, NINA offers a range of services including community transport, social support, food delivery and facilities for community groups. I am often told wonderful stories by local residents about how NINA has provided service and assistance to them.

I first met the manager of Essential Community Services, Carl Piraino, five years ago when I was elected as the member for Heathcote. I have long admired the work of his organisation in support of our local community and in particular some of our most vulnerable residents. Essential Community Services [ECS] has grown and developed over the years in response to the changing needs of the community and, in my opinion, the service and program this organisation has provided are essential to supporting the ongoing health, mental health and wellbeing of local residents. My support of ECS reached lofty heights two weeks ago when the organisation asked me if I would "volunteer" to participate in its major fundraising event, the Sweet Charity Cake Show. I was first prize in the raffle—actually the raffle prize was termed "Pie a Pollie" and tickets were sold to win the enviable right to throw a pie at my face. May I say that a picture paints a thousand words—it was a great success but a messy end to the day.

Project Youth has been operating in the Sutherland shire for 20 years. It operates in the Heathcote, Miranda and Cronulla electorates with a centre located in my electorate at Menai and other offices in Miranda and Kurnell. Kellie Checkley, the chief executive officer of Project Youth, and the organisation are committed to, in her own words, "Helping young people to realise their potential." One initiative offered by Project Youth is Cafe Y in Menai. The cafe opened in 2014 and offers opportunities for previously disengaged local youth to learn skills and gain valuable experience in the hospitality industry. The cafe is supported by Project Youth staff and a number of volunteers. Young people are offered the opportunity to obtain a TAFE certificate III qualification in hospitality and participate in Responsible Service of Alcohol and Responsible Service of Gambling courses, as well as gain barista qualifications. I commend the outstanding work of Kellie and her team with local vulnerable youth.

I have a lot to do with Southern Youth and Family Services [SYFS], although the organisation is not in my electorate but in the Illawarra. Chief executive officer Narelle Clay does an amazing job and I have had the opportunity to observe the incredible work her organisation does with homeless youth. I was astonished to see the appreciation of these young people who had an opportunity of a place to call home and their respect for Narelle and her staff. Last year I had the pleasure of hosting a group of young people from SYFS in Parliament and they were in awe of the entire experience. Many had never been to Sydney before, let alone believed they might visit Parliament House. This opportunity was facilitated by SYFS and it would not have been possible without Narelle and her team.

CBD AND SOUTH EAST LIGHT RAIL PROJECT

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) [11.46 a.m.]: In recent months I have decried the shambles that is characteristic of this Government's chaotic and poorly planned CBD and South East Light Rail project. As I am sure the House is aware by now, I and my colleagues on this side support the concept of light rail—that is to say, a light rail line which is properly planned and part of an integrated solution. Unfortunately, the current light rail line as proposed by the Government is not properly planned and it is not part of an integrated solution. I recently met with the general manager of Randwick City Council to listen to the council's concerns about the current light rail line and to hear their proposals to improve on the Government's plan.

Originally the light rail route went through the intersection of Alison Road and Anzac Parade, Kensington to proceed in a southerly direction along Anzac Parade towards Kingsford, and on the other hand to turn east from Anzac Parade and proceed along Alison Road. It was proposed to construct a light rail stop in front of Randwick racecourse, a reasonable proposition. The only problem was that, as I indicated to the previous Minister and as did Randwick City Council in writing, there was insufficient space because there was a building in the way—the Australian Turf Club administrative building. My views and those of the council were ignored. It was only when the Government let the contract to its successful tenderers, Altrac, that—guess what—they discovered a building was in the way.

It was then decided that they would construct the light rail stop on the other side of Alison Road and take part of Centennial Park, part of the open space gifted to the people by Governor Macquarie, the cradle of Federation. In the process they propose to remove some 50 100-year-old historic trees, footpaths and bike tracks. The concept of racegoers leaving Randwick racecourse and streaming across a busy seven-lane road is just absurd. Is there a better way? There is. Randwick City Council proposed even prior to this debacle that the light rail route should proceed down the centre of Alison Road. It proposed this as a viable alternative when the Government did not understand there was a building in the way. It was proposed again as an alternative to destroying 100-year-old trees in taking part of Centennial Park. Transport for NSW just ignored the council. Randwick council even offered to make a financial contribution to try to remedy this stupidity. It was ignored. Do members know why it was ignored? The Government did not want to spend \$7 million on moving Sydney Water services from Alison Road. However, the Government paid Centennial and Moore Park Trust \$9 million in compensation.

One-hundred-year-old trees are being destroyed and part of Centennial Park is being seized because the Government does not want to move a sewer. This is a disgrace. I am advised that Randwick City Council did a significant amount of work preparing a proposal that would serve the community at less cost to the New South Wales Government. I wonder whether or not the current Minister even looked at the submission made by Randwick City Council. Imagine a council that can see the benefit of a properly implemented piece of State infrastructure, that is eager to take part in its development and willing to make a contribution to ensure it is as effective as possible. Local knowledge is worth its weight in gold but the Minister has to listen. He does not know best. He needs to listen to council engineers about what will work in an area that he has only visited in order to grab a picture in a hard hat.

I have outlined to the House many errors in respect of this light rail project. They include matters

such as: the lemon which is the Albert Tibby Cotter Bridge, which the Auditor-General found was \$13 million over budget, and was nowhere near a light rail stop; the fact that despite an alternate proposition being put forward, \$60 million worth of flood-prone land was acquired from a developer to stable the light rail carriages; or the time when the project was announced at \$1.2 billion and is now \$1 billion over budget without one inch of track having been laid. This is an important project that will change the face of the city for generations. Done right it will transform our community for years to come, but continuing to get it wrong will see it go the way of Sydney trams.

COOEE MARCH ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY RE-ENACTMENT

Mr KEVIN HUMPHRIES (Barwon) [11.51 a.m.]: Yesterday, at the eleventh hour of the eleventh month the Cooees marched into Martin Place to mark 100 years since the Cooee March set out from Gilgandra during World War One. The march commemorated the young men who joined the ranks of the original Cooee March and the communities that provided support during the march. The original march was the idea of brothers R.G. and Bill Hitchen, two Gilgandra locals. They saw the poor response to recruitment rallies in the wake of many casualties at Gallipoli and in France. They came up with the idea of marching from Gilgandra to Sydney in order to enlist recruits along the way. It was the first recruitment march in Australia. They started with 26 recruits and finished in Sydney with 263. As a result the Cooees, as they were called, encouraged similar marches to happen across New South Wales and Queensland, greatly increasing recruitment numbers.

I take this opportunity to recognise those from the Barwon electorate involved in the Cooee March. In particular marchers: Brian Bywater, OAM; Eric McCutcheon; local council general manager, Paul Mann; Rusty Jones; Andrew Newstead; Alan Smith; Grahame Yager; Ross Stockings; Jack Burrell; Gavin Glover; and, Stephen Holmgreen. I commend the support crew: Margo Piggott; Barbara and Geoffrey Kheine; Janet Cheal; Don Kennaugh; and, Lucie Peart, the editor of the local paper. The 2015 Cooee March re-enactment set out on 17 October from Bridge Street, Gilgandra. There was a ball the previous night as part of the 100-year re-enactment. It was held at the same place the march started from in 1915. There were 37 marchers in total, the oldest being 76. Even though the conditions are very different today they followed the original route as much as possible and walked more than 650 kilometres in 26 days.

The marchers passed through Balladoran, Eumungerie, Mogrigny, Goonoo Forest, Dubbo, Wongaroon, Geurie, Maryvale, Wellington, Dripstone, Mumbil, Stuart Town, Mooker Hill, Euchareena, Boomey, Molong, Cabonne, Orange, Millthorpe, Blayney, Newbridge, Bathurst, Yetholme, Portland, Wallerawang, Lithgow, Mt Victoria, Blackheath, Katoomba, Springwood, Blaxland, Penrith, Parramatta and Ashfield, to reach their final destination, Martin Place in Sydney. Towns along the way welcomed the marchers with great hospitality. Schoolkids came out to cheer them on and towns commemorated the occasion with parades and services. Even though the marchers say they found it physically tough, as they were marching almost marathon distances every day, they said it was a once in a lifetime experience and an important tribute to the service of those young men who left from Gilgandra 100 years ago.

Following the departure of the march on 17 October from Gilgandra, I departed for Turkey on a trip to Gallipoli. It was a Turkish public holiday. The Turks knew we were a bunch of Australians. They took a step back and described all Australians as being both courageous and reckless. I wore that as a badge of honour. One could say that the 37 marchers that left Gilgandra in October exemplified that spirit of courage and recklessness, in the sense that it took a lot of spirit to undertake that march. Some of the marchers are direct descendants of the Hitchens brothers. They have done the community proud. The young people that they met along the way received a fantastic history lesson about the Cooee Marchers. I am sure the member for the Blue Mountains saw them along the way.

Ms Trish Doyle: I was a roadie.

Mr KEVIN HUMPHRIES: Well done. Lest we forget.

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Cootamundra—Parliamentary Secretary) [11.56 a.m.]: I commend the member for Barwon for raising this important issue in the House this morning. The re-enactment of all nine of the marches from various parts of New South Wales included the Cooee March, Kangaroo March, Wallaby March and the Kurrajong March, among others, and was a testament to the respect that our nation and regional communities have for the history of war and the memory of those who fought for our country. A couple of mates participated in the Cooee March: Dusty Jones, from Mendooran and Jeff Rookyard from Dunedoo. They walked every step of the way from Gilgandra to Sydney, staying in some pretty average accommodation on the way. One night they were supposed to sleep in some sheds but it turned out to be a cricket pitch and they had to find somewhere else to sleep. They walked 630 kilometres. I take my hat off to them all and everyone who helped to make the centenary of Anzac year so special.

TRIPLE CARE FARM

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) [11.57 a.m.]: Today I will speak about an event I attended last weekend which was a fundraiser for Triple Care Farm. An iconic business in Camden, Hennings Jewellers, hosted the event at the Camden Valley Inn. Hennings Jewellers began in Sydney in 1891 and moved to Camden in 1935. In 1957 Peter Hennings, the third generation of the Hennings family, and his wife, Barbara, took over the business until their recent retirement. With four stores in the Macarthur region the business still provides that old-fashioned service. With over 200 years combined experience, the close-knit team knows what it takes to craft and choose the perfect piece of jewellery for every occasion.

Triple Care Farm is a residential facility that offers treatment programs for alcohol and drug rehabilitation and specialises in treating clients with co-morbid mental illness. The model is a holistic psychosocial rehabilitation based on harm minimisation and health promotion catering for youths aged 16 to 24. At any given time there can be up to 300,000 youths dealing with drug, alcohol and mental health issues. In most cases, by the time youths in need come to Triple Care Farm they are at rock bottom, but that is not to say there is no hope. The farm offers these youths a home that, in some cases, they may have never experienced before. They learn basic living skills such as cooking a meal or simple hygiene. The intensive three month program gives the youths the opportunity to learn how to look after themselves, get some vocational education or training and work with a coordinated team of specialists to kick their habit and recover their minds. Even though the farm accommodates only 18 youths at any one time, it receives up to 6,000 calls annually seeking assistance.

The Triple Care Farm is part of the Sir David Martin Foundation. Sir David Martin was appointed Governor of New South Wales in January 1989 after his long and illustrious career in the Royal Australian Navy, and he sadly passed away while in office in August 1990. In his last days, Sir David Martin made arrangements for the foundation to be established. His wish was that the foundation would assist young homeless and disadvantaged Australians. It was Sir David Martin's dream to see an Australian community where children could grow up in safety with hope and opportunity; the foundation does just that. Its aim is to get more young people off the streets, away from unhealthy situations, and into care and rehabilitation. An environment is created where young people can grow up safely with hope and opportunity. It provides the programs and financial resources necessary to enable young people to achieve their full potential and to live happy lives. I am sure Sir David Martin would be very proud of the Triple Care Farm and what it has achieved.

Of course, no fundraiser is possible without the support of sponsors. I thank Sacha Drake, the Sydney Theatre Company, Kleenmaid, Seiko, Thomas Sabo, Opera Australia, Barenz, Birdsnest, Select Wholesale Meats, Julies Place, Curtis Aviation, the Enzo Italian Restaurant, Rydges Campbelltown, Featherdale Wildlife Park, Taronga Western Plains Zoo, Pandora Jewellery and the Greater Western Sydney Giants, who all contributed to the night. Special guests on the night were Anna and Michael Beaumont, who represented the Sir David Martin Foundation. Anna is Sir David's daughter and Michael was the special guest auctioneer. Triple Care Farm community worker Linda Jackson also attended with

a graduate of the Triple Care Farm who gave a very moving speech on her journey through life.

I extend special thanks to organiser, and close friend of mine, Jody May, and Michelle Lyons, Liz McHugh, Lisa Armstrong, Sophie Lansley, Clare Lansley, Rebecca Meredith, Eileen Romeo, Olivia Cameron, Lauren O'Dea, and Lucy Moore. The event raised \$20,000, which will fund a new piece of workshop equipment and a number of scholarships for the 2015 graduates of Triple Care Farm. I also congratulate Craig and Alessandra Moore, who are the current owners of Henning's Jewellers and who do an outstanding amount for our community. I also thank the wonderful emcee for the night, local identity Linda Ebling. It was a wonderful night and I am proud to have been able to attend. I thank all involved for a great evening.

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Cootamundra—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.02 p.m.]: I congratulate the member for Camden on an excellent contribution and for telling the House about Henning's Jewellers' history. It was extremely interesting from a small business perspective. The Triple Care Farm, which is in his electorate, was established by the Sir David Martin Foundation. It is incredibly valuable for the local community for those youths to be shown how to grow up and look after themselves, and how to pursue education and training. The farm is well loved not only by the Camden community but also by people in Wollondilly and beyond. A number of organisations raise funds for the farm. My husband recently attended a Kollege of Knowledge Kommittee for Kids lunch held in Mittagong and organised by Tony Springett, which is held every year to raise funds for the farm. I once again congratulate the member for Camden on bringing Triple Care Farm to the attention of the House.

SYDNEY SECOND AIRPORT

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) [12.03 p.m.]: On behalf of my Blue Mountains community, I draw the attention of the House to the questionable value of a second Sydney airport at Badgerys Creek. Now that the Abbott-Turnbull Federal Government has decided to go ahead with the airport, I will place on the record the unacceptable impacts my community will be forced to bear as a result of that decision. The recently released environmental impact statement shows that there will be a concentration of arriving flight paths above Winmalee, Springwood, Blaxland, Glenbrook and Warrimoo in the lower Blue Mountains, with planes flying over at 5,000 feet to 7,000 feet. By 2030, there will be 100 incoming flights each day. That is an average of one every 15 minutes. By 2050, there will be 280 flights; that is, there will be a flight every five minutes.

The political decision has been made by the Abbott-Turnbull Government that this airport will operate without a curfew. That means there will be flights throughout the night, which will cause constant disturbance to my constituents. That is demonstrably unfair. It is not good enough that the people of the inner city live by one set of rules while residents of Western Sydney must live by another. If Sydney Airport at Mascot is to retain its curfew then Badgerys Creek airport must also have one. On the question of the environment, the environmental impact statement analysis says very little of any substance about the potential impact on the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area of aircraft overflight above our national parks. Given that substantial sections of the world heritage-listed area and our drinking water catchment will be beneath the new flight paths, the environmental impact statement must address ways to protect these areas instead of pretending that because the proposed flight paths are indicative only that it cannot yet analyse those impacts.

If the airport goes ahead in spite of all these valid concerns, we will see congestion on our roads exacerbated because of the conservatives' ideological aversion to building rail infrastructure. If Malcolm Turnbull is to build his airport then he must build public transport links to the Sydney central business district, Parramatta, Penrith and the Blue Mountains. Otherwise, he will not only be building an airport many locals do not want, he will also be blighting Western Sydney and Blue Mountains residents with crippling traffic congestion. Our local Federal member, Louise Markus, has failed in her duty to represent her electorate. She has allowed her Government to plough ahead with an airport that had long been off the agenda. It is imperative that the Blue Mountains community makes it clear to Mrs Markus what they

think of her plan to build an airport on our doorstep.

In fact, residents who have yet to digest the significance of the airport proposal and the impact it will have on their homes and their lives have no option other than to contact Mrs Markus directly because the window of opportunity to respond to the environmental impact statement will close very soon. Our community has been given just one month to respond to a 4,000-page document which, if implemented in the form and function it describes, will permanently change our local villages. As my old friend Councillor Mick Fell pointed out recently to a packed audience of concerned residents at Blue Mountains council chambers, there was a longer consultation period for the council's new green bins initiative than has been provided for the airport proposal. This sneaky, rushed job smacks of a cynical, high-handed Federal Government that is run by a wannabe aristocrat from Point Piper. He is a wannabe aristocrat who, it must be remembered, is madly trying to deliver on the captain's calls made by his failed predecessor, the member for knights and dames.

My message on behalf of the people of the Blue Mountains is this: We will not be blindsided by the ludicrous proposals in Mr Turnbull's environmental impact statement. We will not sit back and let our way of life be irreversibly destroyed. We certainly will not let any airport development jeopardise our pristine world heritage environment, or interfere in the efforts of our Rural Fire Service to protect us from bushfires. I have been distributing an environmental impact statement submission template throughout the lower mountains towns to those who will be directly impacted by the airport development so that the voice of the Blue Mountains is heard loud and clear on this issue.

In conclusion, I pay tribute to the hard work of many committed activists and our local representatives who have taken up the fight against the proposals in the environmental impact statement: Mayor Mark Greenhill, Susan Templeman and, of course, our local aviation experts Annette and Geoff Bennett are just a few. This Parliament is not the forum in which the argument about whether to build an airport will be won or lost. Unfortunately, the decision is out of our hands. I implore members in this place whose communities will be impacted to contact their counterparts in the Federal Parliament and to stand up for their constituents.

TRIBUTE TO GRETA HAYES

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.08 p.m.]: I have raised in this Chamber on many occasions the significant contribution people in my electorate have made. I refer to volunteers, emergency service personnel, carers, fundraisers—people who go above and beyond the call of duty to help improve or to sustain the quality of life of people a little less fortunate than themselves. There have been many famous names included in these pages of people who deserve much more than just a few words because they have tirelessly given of themselves and therefore should be recognised. My contribution today will be no different as I draw the attention of the House to a special person who has served not only my electorate but also the people of New South Wales, and especially those who are a little less fortunate than us.

On this occasion the person is someone I have known for many decades and who came to work for me as my personal secretary when I was first elected to Parliament in 2007. Greta Hayes, who is present in the gallery today, together with my wife, Wendy, has been an inspiration in my office and is adored by all who come in contact with her, especially me, my wife and my staff. Greta is a special friend to everyone. But, above all else, the empathy she shows for people in need is truly inspiring and deserves special mention. In early 2007 I asked Greta to work for me. She initially refused, stating that if we worked together it would spoil a great friendship.

I said, "I do not think that is the case, as you will run the office and tell me what to do and I will go out and do it. It would be a perfect arrangement, similar to being married." She laughed and then agreed. From that moment on we have had a perfect relationship which has resulted in numerous achievements and outcomes for our community and in my electorate being the safest Liberal seat in the country with a

margin of 30 per cent. This, in large part, is due to the work of my staff, in particular Greta, who starts well before 8.30 a.m. every morning and usually has to be pushed out the door after 6.00 p.m. most nights. At times in our office, it has been a gruelling schedule and commitment but we have achieved so much for so many, and we could not have done it without the support of the office boss, Greta.

Greta has been more like a mother to all my staff members and a guardian angel for my community. There is nothing we have not been able to achieve on behalf of our constituents. It is this dedication and application to every issue that has endeared Greta to the many people she comes in contact with daily. Our office's justice of the peace work would make an insomniac tired. Greta has insisted that every staff member becomes a justice of the peace [JP] in order to handle the enormous number of JP authorisations we complete every day. When Greta finishes her daily office duties she is often busy in her volunteer capacity on the board of the Special Olympics or at her local church, again tirelessly working on behalf of others. As a single mother for the past 10 years she has raised two very special young adult children who also are an extension of my own family and we love them dearly.

Ours has been a wonderful association, much more than just an employer-employee relationship. If there is ever something that needs attention, Greta will be the first to apply herself to the task and we just get on and get it done. Gretsie has set the benchmark for others to follow. It is fitting that she is recognised for achieving so much while our New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government is setting records of achievement. Ten years ago Greta lost her husband, Don, a loving husband and adored father and one of my best mates. Like Greta, Don was a great supporter of mine. He would be incredibly proud of the legacy we have all achieved on behalf of our community, which was also his community, but especially proud of Gretsie and her enduring legacy of compassion and care that she continues to espouse.

Sadly, Grets will retire on Christmas Eve and will leave very large shoes to fill. One thing we will not miss is her Kramer-like displays of excitement, such as that shown when she backed the winner of the recent Melbourne Cup—then again it is not every day a 100 to 1 winner comes along, and Gretsie is quite partial to the occasional punt. It is often said that no-one is irreplaceable, but Greta is no ordinary person and she will be sadly missed. I have always felt the "a" in her name was misplaced—she is simply great. No words, no awards and no cards can thank her enough for the commitment and contribution she has made on behalf of my office and particularly my electorate, but today we wish her well in retirement. Happy punting in the future, you deserve nothing less. God bless.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Congratulations, Greta. Anyone who has survived the member for Castle Hill is doing exceptionally well.

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Cootamundra—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.13 p.m.]: I was going to express similar sentiments, Mr Assistant-Speaker. Greta Hayes is to be commended and applauded. The work of our electorate officers cannot be underestimated. Their workload is enormous and we should commend them every day for their conscientiousness. I particularly applaud the qualities, work ethic and determination of Greta Hayes. It is thanks to wonderful people such as Greta that our communities thrive and succeed. Greta, you make Raymond sound good. I know that he will miss you dreadfully. On behalf of the Government and all members of this House, I wish you all the very best of success and a very happy retirement.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): I acknowledge the presence in the gallery of Mr John Minns and his friend Barry Higgins. John is the father of the member for Kogarah. I would suggest he talk to his son about his behaviour during question time. I welcome Mr Minns and Mr Higgins to the Parliament.

DEMOCRACY IN BURMA

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [12.14 p.m.]: The people in my electorate care deeply about

human rights. They care also about a democracy free from corruption. That is one of the reasons I am hosting the Human Rights Human Dignity International Film Festival in Leichhardt at the Italian Forum on 11 December this year. I was in Myanmar—Burma—in June this year where I attended the Human Rights Human Dignity International Film Festival in Rangoon. I was moved by the powerful films that were on display. I returned yesterday from Burma having been an observer to the democratic elections that have taken place in that country. Hopefully, this first free and fair election marks a momentous change in the country and a momentous shift in human rights for millions of displaced people, for ethnic minorities and for the environment.

Since 1962 the people of Burma have laboured under colonialism and then dictatorship, with the national uprising of 1988 setting the scene for the previous general election, which was not respected by the military. The military failed to recognise that historic win by the National League for Democracy [NLD], led by Aung San Suu Kyi. A repressive crackdown followed, which filled jails with political prisoners, and The Lady, as she is known, was placed under house arrest for the next 15 years. Politics was deadlocked between the NLD and the military, with many ethnic groups maintaining armed opposition. A political stalemate ensued for more than two decades.

In 2011, after years of international sanctions and economic stagnation, the impasse was broken when Aung San Suu Kyi was released and successfully contested the 2012 by-elections. The military-backed government also committed to this year's November 8 election as part of its road map to democracy. I was pleased to have an op-ed piece published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 8 November which outlined my views on this issue. I have been a long-time observer and am a founder of the Australian Coalition for Democracy in Burma. Using my rudimentary Burmese, I had the opportunity last week to be part of that historic day. There are problems, however. The military-drafted constitution reserves 25 per cent of the seats for the military. The results of the election are being drip fed, but it is clear the NLD will emerge as the largest party in the 664 seat Parliament. Before last Sunday's election Aung San Suu Kyi highlighted that any future government should focus on national reconciliation. She said:

Even if we win 100 per cent, we would like to make a government of national reconciliation in order to set a good precedent for our country. It shouldn't be a zero-sum game where winner takes all and loser loses everything.

Despite the tensions, the election was conducted relatively free from violence. However, there remains a risk the country could descend into inter-religious or ethnic conflict. The current constitution allows for the military to declare a state of emergency at the slightest threat to what they call "national unity". As Australians, we need to do everything we can to promote pluralism and democracy in that country. My colleague in the upper House will be moving a motion which I am confident will be supported, as I am confident the motion moved in the Legislative Assembly will be supported. The motion notes the election and the deeply flawed constitution, calls on the military to respect the election, and expresses support for the National League for Democracy, those ethnic parties that have successfully contested the election and all who took part in that election.

We need to redouble our efforts to ensure change to the constitution, which currently does not allow the leader of the National League for Democracy to become president of that country, even though her party will receive the majority of votes. The opportunity to select Ministers is still in the hands of the military elite and the budget for the military will still be determined by the military alone, not by the Parliament which was elected by the people on 8 November. I acknowledge the work of all those in my electorate and across Australia who have struggled for so long to see this important step forward. During her recent visit to Australia, Aung San Suu Kyi acknowledged the importance of the international sanctions campaign to the progress that has been made.

I also acknowledge the role of the Burmese community in Australia and in Sydney in particular, trade unions, faith-based organisations, in particular Caritas, members of The Greens and all those who

have supported the campaigns for democracy and freedom in Burma. Finally, I thank the members of my local community and I encourage everyone to come along to the Human Rights Human Dignity International Film Festival in Leichhardt. We will be showing four award-winning films made by young Burmese filmmakers who have the support of a range of international organisations such as Polish Aid, USAID and others to make sure they can tell their story and we can keep progressing the story of this incredible country.

PORT STEPHENS MARINE RESCUE

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) [12.19 p.m.]: Members will recall that on 20 April this year Port Stephens and the rest of the Hunter was hit by a destructive east coast low, causing millions of dollars in damage. Tragically, four people lost their lives in the floodwaters in Dungog and Maitland. Many people have said they are amazed more lives were not lost. I can say with certainty that the reason more lives were not lost is due to the heroism and hard work of many people from our emergency services such as the NSW State Emergency Service [SES], the Rural Fire Service [RFS], Fire and Rescue NSW and the NSW Police Force. I will share one of the stories of heroism and bravery that averted further loss of life. It is the story of the actions of volunteers from Port Stephens Marine Rescue, which is another organisation that was on duty that night and into the following day.

Marine Rescue NSW boasts that it has more than 3,000 volunteers serving at 45 bases around the coastline and rivers of New South Wales; 160 of those volunteers are connected to Port Stephens Marine Rescue. The volunteers maintain a 24-hour-a-day presence on the waters of Port Stephens and the surrounding areas. The two lifeboats operated by Port Stephens Marine Rescue were kept busy on 21 April, attending a number of call-outs. In the afternoon, as daylight began to fade, the marine rescue team received a mayday from two crew members on a 15-metre catamaran named *Reef Dragon* that had run aground in Fame Cove. It was one of three maydays they received from the area at that time, which gives a good indication of the severity of the conditions they faced. The team assessed the status of each emergency and determined that *Reef Dragon* was their priority. The marine rescue team was soon aboard the larger of their two boats, *Danial Thain*, as they powered through four metre swells in Port Stephens waters, not the open seas. I share a description of the experience provided by the crew's navigator:

As the *Danial Thain* departs the marina and rounds the breakwater to head west, the severity of the conditions become all too apparent as she pitches and rolls violently in a very short and steep 3 to 4 metre sea, whipped up by a howling wind from the southwest, registering 45 to 55 knots (92 kph) and gusting to 78 knots (140 kph). Visibility is also a concern, severely restricted by the driving rain and sea spray to barely 50 metres. To top it off, the last remnants of daylight are quickly disappearing. *Danial Thain* is pushed hard, given the urgency of the situation, but even so she can make only about six knots in the conditions. She pitches violently in the short heavy sea, sheets of water hammering the wheelhouse windows and the fly bridge.

While en route, the marine rescue team received word that the crew of the *Reef Dragon* was preparing to abandon ship as the catamaran began to break up under pressure from the encroaching storm. Visibility was low as the marine rescue team approached, even though the ship's powerful spotlight was used to illuminate the scene. The two crew of the *Reef Dragon* had abandoned ship and a small Y-boat was launched to retrieve them as the *Danial Thain* fought against the wind, which was driving it towards the same rocks that had claimed the *Reef Dragon*. The speedy work of the launch team to retrieve the two crew members from the *Reef Dragon* allowed the *Danial Thain* to begin powering home towards the base. However, conditions worsened on the return leg of the trip. It took nine approaches for the *Danial Thain* to berth and was only achieved after a crew member jumped from the bow of the ship onto the berth to help secure a mooring.

The crew of the *Danial Thain* were recognised with an Australian Search and Rescue Award for their actions. This prestigious national award is well-deserved recognition for their skill and bravery and

for putting their own lives at risk in order to help the crew of vessels in distress. I was honoured recently to meet the crew responsible for the rescue as well as unit commander Tony O'Donnell. I was impressed by the crew's humble and matter-of-fact description of their actions on the night—they said, "We just did what we are trained to do"—as well as the genuine respect they have for each other. Given the skills they apply in their role and the expertise with which they apply them, it is easy to forget that they give all their time voluntarily.

I recognise and bring to the attention of the House the work of duty skipper Mike Smith, first officer Rob Johnson, navigator Richard Pizzuto, radioman Barney Pinney, and crew members Laurie Nolan, Barbara Cole, Peter Merlino and Paul Sullivan, as well as the radio operators at the base who provided support. Laurie and Barney were the two crazy men who jumped into the Y-boat to effect the rescue. I thank the crew for the role they played in protecting lives during the April storm and for their ongoing role in keeping our community safe on the waterways. I am honoured to have been asked to be a patron of Port Stephens Marine Rescue and I look forward to supporting their activities in the future as they support our community.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): I acknowledge in the gallery the real member for the electorate of Clarence, Debbie Newton, who has been recognised for her 20 years of service. I am sure the current and previous members for Clarence, from Ian Causley to Chris Gulaptis, owe their success to her dedication and hard work. Congratulations on your award today.

MID NORTH COAST STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE AWARDS

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [12.25 p.m.]: I also pay tribute to Debbie Newton. Recently I had the privilege of attending the award presentation ceremony for the NSW State Emergency Service [SES] mid North Coast region. I recognise the phenomenal job they do in our community. Over the past 12 months, the mid North Coast units have responded to 1,356 requests for assistance, which equates to 25,596 hours of volunteer service. I congratulate Regional Controller Stefan Hart and Deputy Region Controller Anthony Day; from Taree Garry Fajks and Doug Noble; from Harrington Kryssy Jones; from Wingham Gary Greene; from the Great Lakes Ben Matters; from Forster Pacific Palms Kevin Sinclair; from Nabiac Ron Threadgate; and from Stroud Stephen Harris.

At the awards presentation 25 members were presented with long service awards, which are national medals and clasps, and NSW State Emergency Service long service medals, clasps and certificates. Together they represented more than 350 years of diligent service to the NSW State Emergency Service. Kryssy Jones, Trevor Holder, Jenna Batman, Alan Vindin, Leonie Hill, Cindy Wrigley, Samuel Blayden, William Dodd and Alan Vale received the long service award for five years of service. Ricky Clarke, Wendy Diggs, Tjalke DeWitte and David Cooper received the long service award for 10 years of service. Howard Shultz, Paula Rush and Stephen Hart received the long service award for 20 years of service. Stephen Hart also received the long service award for 25 years of service. Doug Noble, Darren Wilson, Peter Watson, George Sheldon and Colin Thompson received the national medal for 15 years of service. Ian Tinson received the national medal—clasp 1 for 25 years of service. Gregory Snape received the national medal—clasp 2 for 35 years of service. Stuart Hay received the national medal—clasp 3 for 45 years of service.

Other members of the SES were also present. The units from the mid North Coast SES attended the floods we experienced recently at Bulahdelah, Stroud and Dungog and down into the Tea Gardens and Hawks Nest area. Lives were lost in those floods, but more lives would have been lost if it were not for the dedicated service of the SES. The Local Land Services removed and destroyed more than 550 head of cattle. Many more stock were lost and killed during the floods. Many homes were lost. The State Government has been working with local councils and the SES to implement programs and replace infrastructure, roads, bridges and showgrounds and to provide temporary housing to assist those who lost their homes.

The local SES on the mid North Coast does a phenomenal job, particularly in the Manning-Great Lakes area. SES Commissioner Adam Dent, who was present at the awards ceremony, spoke about his pride in the work that is performed by the local SES units in the most trying of circumstances. Most members of the SES are volunteers and they put their lives at risk for their community. They do so without hesitation. They do not wish to receive accolades or rewards, but it is fitting that they are recognised for their great work by the people of New South Wales. Their accomplishments deserve to be acknowledged. I commend them all.

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.30 p.m.]: I could not help but seek the call in order to comment on and endorse the words of the member for Myall Lakes. I congratulate the member for Myall Lakes on bringing to the attention of the House those extraordinary individuals who came to the assistance of his local community in such a difficult, traumatic and trying time. The words of the member for Myall Lakes could be said of every SES team throughout this great State. I highlight the volunteers who serve in all spheres of our community—in emergency services, in sporting teams, and in the arts. All of these volunteers give of their time and make New South Wales a rich, wonderful place in which to live. I congratulate the member for Myall Lakes on his comments.

CHERRYBROOK CHINESE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) [12.31 p.m.]: As many would be aware, I represent a diverse electorate in Epping. It is truly a multicultural success story. The Epping community is a great place to live, work, and raise a family. It is also a safe, welcoming, and harmonious community. None of this success would be possible without the contribution of the local Chinese community, one of the largest migrant communities in my electorate. Last year, as a candidate in the State election, I joined my friends in the Chinese community as well as those in the Korean community to celebrate Lunar New Year. It was my first experience at being immersed in the Lunar New Year celebration. My family and I found it very memorable. We enjoyed experiencing the different foods on offer and witnessing the performances—the highlight being the dragon dance in Eastwood Plaza. There were some truly magnificent events.

One of the local Chinese groups that I came to know very well during the campaign was the Cherrybrook Chinese Community Association. I cannot thank them enough for the friendship and support they have offered me over the past year and I look forward to continuing to grow and strengthen our relationship in the years to come. The Cherrybrook Chinese Community Association was established in 1989 and incorporated in 1990. At that time there was already an emerging community of Chinese residents living in the area, largely attracted by the quality of the schools and the educational opportunities in the electorate. There was a clear need for a community organisation that offered them a social outlet and a support network, run by people who understand their unique cultural needs. So the Cherrybrook Chinese Community Association was formed.

The association has endeavoured to promote community participation, to share Chinese culture, and to encourage members to engage with the wider community. Its first projects were to establish a Chinese language school for children and organise English courses for adults. Many projects and programs have been developed since. Membership of the association is open to all persons who subscribe to the purposes and objectives of the association, regardless of race, religious belief and place of residence. I know that there is a very good relationship between the local Indian community and the Cherrybrook Chinese Community Association. That relationship is assisted in many respects by Bob Waller, who has acted as a wonderful intermediary between those communities.

Last month I hosted a delegation of seniors from the Cherrybrook Chinese Community Association. They enjoyed a tour of Parliament and we finished by enjoying good company and conversation over lunch. I thank Edward Lam, who is the current treasurer of this association, for assisting me to organise the visit and making sure it was such a success. There were about 25 elderly Chinese residents who had never been to Parliament House. They enjoyed immensely the tour of this place. In particular, they enjoyed the opportunity to visit the media room downstairs and both of the

Houses. I also recognise the contribution of Angelbaby Lau for giving up her morning to help me communicate with some of the seniors by providing translation services.

One of my fondest memories from last year was being invited to play table tennis with the Cherrybrook Chinese Community Association seniors. I thought that this would be an event in which I could participate, and at which I would be reasonably proficient. I thought that I could hit a table tennis ball, but I was not in the same league as the other participants. They were extraordinarily talented. They had about 10 table tennis tables set up. It was a great experience, in any event, and I look forward to a rematch. Some of the other activities the association is regularly involved in include badminton, tai chi, a Chinese language school for children, dancing, opera singing classes, seniors activities, and women's groups. Annually, the association is involved in the Cancer Council's Biggest Morning Tea fundraiser.

I also recognise the current executive of the Cherrybrook Chinese Community Association including the president, Jenny Lau; the vice-presidents, Peter Chung and Peng Lou; the treasurer, Edward Lam; the secretary, English, Stephen Lang; secretary, Chinese, Polly Chan; assistant treasurer, Alice Ho; and co-ordinators Patrick Ng and Ken Ng. I cannot finish without also acknowledging my friend Ken Yap, who is the former president of the association. I cannot thank him enough for his advice, support and encouragement during my campaign and since I have become the member for Epping.

BANKSTOWN REMEMBRANCE DAY SERVICE

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) [12.36 p.m.]: On 11 November 2015 I had the great honour and pleasure of attending my local commemorative Remembrance Day service at the City of Bankstown cenotaph. I was given the opportunity to address the service and to lay a wreath to commemorate our fallen soldiers for their allegiance to Australia and for the sacrifices they made. On Remembrance Day, as always, we stood united as proud Australians to put aside our cultural, religious and ideological differences so that we could commemorate all those brave men and women who have served this country with courage and chivalry in all theatres of war across the globe.

Remembrance Day is a very significant day. On this Remembrance Day we commemorated the ninety-seventh anniversary of the ending of World War I, also known as Armistice Day. It marks the cessation of hostilities on the Western Front, which took effect at the eleventh hour, on the eleventh day, of the eleventh month in 1918. On that day, at the eleventh hour in 1918, the guns on the Western Front fell silent after four years of continuous fighting with the German invaders, who were ultimately driven back by allied forces and pressured into accepting the terms of an unconditional surrender.

Remembrance Day rose to historical prominence on a universal scale because it allows allied nations on its anniversary to reflect and pay tribute to all the men and women who gave their lives so that we may live in a democratic and safe society. The one-minute silence which we observed on Remembrance Day is an opportunity for us to reflect upon those brave men and women from local communities, the State and around the country who have fought for our freedoms. We will forever remain indebted to their service. This is a time to renew our pledge to the fallen heroes by remembering all Australian servicemen and servicewomen who have lost their lives in armed conflict across the globe.

We live in an era where many of us fail to understand the true perils, experience and cost of war. There is an opportunity for young Australians and school students to show their appreciation of their lifestyle, by attending commemorative events across the country and carrying on the legacy of all Australians who have died in armed conflict. I was particularly pleased to see that many schools sent students to lay wreaths at the Bankstown service. Those schools included Condell Park Public School, Christ the King Primary School, Bankstown North Public School, St John Vianney Catholic Primary School, Greenacre Public School, Bankstown West Public School, Chullora Public School, Wattawa Heights Public School, St Felix Catholic Primary School, Yagoona Public School, St Brendan Catholic Primary School, Bankstown Public School, Georges River Grammar, and Birrong Public School. All of those schools attended and laid wreaths to pay respect.

I acknowledge the Bankstown RSL Sub-Branch and its President, Jack Bedford, OAM, who has, for many years conducted many services, including Anzac Day services and Remembrance Day services. He is well into his nineties but despite no longer being able to see properly, he always makes sure that he recites the oath at these services. I also acknowledge the treasurer and secretary, John Woodley, as well as the entire executive for once again organising a very well attended Remembrance Day service. I also acknowledge the War Widows' Guild, Bankstown Legacy representatives, council representatives and others who attended yesterday's Remembrance Day service in Bankstown. It is also very significant that we wear the red poppy on Remembrance Day to honour our fallen soldiers. The red poppy is particularly significant because it was among the first flowers to grow on the battlefields of northern France and Belgium following the cessation of hostilities.

We wear the red poppy not only to commemorate the sacred dead who rest in Flanders fields but also to keep memories alive of their sacred cause and as a mark of respect for all soldiers. I take this opportunity to thank my local RSL sub-branch. I am delighted to be the patron of the Bankstown RSL and to have been given the opportunity to address those in attendance yesterday as well as to meet school students. As I mentioned earlier in my speech, school students are attending commemorative ceremonies in ever-increasing numbers. Moreover, they understand the significance and importance of the tradition of perpetuating the remembrance of our fallen soldiers and appreciating the part those soldiers played in establishing the lifestyle we have. They understand that we live in a democratic and free society thanks to the men and women who sacrificed so much to preserve our way of life.

WOLLONDILLY ELECTORATE RURAL FIRE SERVICE BRIGADES

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) [12.41 p.m.]: I acknowledge our local Rural Fire Service brigades for their commitment and dedication to the protection of the people of Wollondilly. Just last month I was afforded the opportunity to catch up with the Bargo Volunteer Rural Fire Brigade, see their operations station and discuss the shortcomings of their existing shed at Bargo. It was an amazing opportunity for me to gain an understanding of the difficulties that our volunteers face on a day-to-day basis to ensure they have adequate equipment and stations to be able to best fight wild bushfires and protect our community. I also recognise the efforts of members of the Bargo branch, with whom I have worked closely over a number of years, to achieve the purchase of land for the unit's new shed so they will be well equipped to fight bushfires for many years to come.

In particular, I acknowledge Donna Allen; the brigade's treasurer, Svetlana Ballard; Nathan Benson, Elizabeth Booth, Levi Brown, George Chrisolm, Robert Colville, Andrew Duncan, Gary Duncan, Blain Grant, Teresa Harvey, Kristy Osseweyer and Brian Page as well as the brigade's equipment officer, Mark Porter, and the brigade's Rural Fire Service Association [RFSA] representative, Kevan Preston. I also recognise Gemma Small, Wayne Southwell, Sandra Stevens, Peter Sully, Amy Sulman, Adam Tinsley and the brigade's health and safety officer, Gregory Tinsley, along with Marianella Vinals Vega, Hayden Wood, Stuart Yorkston and Captain Gregory Green.

I also acknowledge the brigade's MyRFS administration and permit officer, senior Deputy Captain Stephen Snow; the permit officer, Deputy Captain Brian Davis; the brigade's MyRFS administration and permit officer, Deputy Captain Matthew Duncan; Deputy Captain Michael Gamola; the brigade's MyRFS administration officer, brigade executive member and brigade secretary, Deputy Captain Nathan Grundy; Deputy Captain Tracy Hoggarth-Green; the brigade's executive member, Deputy Captain Peter Pankhurst; Deputy Captain Paul Rogers, who is the brigade's community engagement officer and brigade executive member; and Deputy Captain Brian Tinsley, who is the brigade executive member and brigade president.

I thank them all for their commitment to the protection of our community, the safety of the people generally and our community's young families. I personally thank Superintendent Martin Surrey, the district manager. I have every faith that Martin will continue to do an amazing job of being at the forefront

of protecting our community. As we head into the next fire season, I look forward to working very closely with him. The local Wollondilly and Wingecarribee Rural Fire Service units are no strangers to fighting bushfires that often occur in our area. During January this year, members of the Camden, Campbelltown and Wollondilly brigades, which constitute the Macarthur Rural Fire Service, sent 25 of their members to South Australia to combat devastating bushfires that claimed 13 homes in Sampson Flat, where they were stationed. Their actions showed their absolute dedication to the people of Australia. It is truly commendable that those volunteers were willing to put their safety and time on the line for the livelihoods of others.

I acknowledge the efforts of Stuart Chadwick, who is the Southern Highlands district's technical officer, for taking time to travel to South Australia and for helping to save the lives of strangers. I also acknowledge the devotion of Helen Fenning, who has been an active member of our community for more than 30 years. Helen currently volunteers with the Buxton Rural Fire Service unit and was recognised on the 2015 Hidden Treasures Honour Roll. The honour roll recognises the integral role that women play in a volunteering capacity throughout rural communities in New South Wales. This is an absolutely amazing outcome. I congratulate her on this amazing achievement and thank her for her dedication to our community. I encourage all members of this House to make regular visits to their local rural fire services, as I am sure they do. Rural Fire Service units provide an invaluable service in protecting our homes and lives. The community of Wollondilly, by merit of being in regional New South Wales, is at risk of bushfires occurring throughout the year. Thanks to the dedicated local brigades who look after us we are able to live in safety.

In conclusion, I mentioned that a few years ago the Hall Road bushfires devastated many parts of the Wollondilly and Wingecarribee shires. By taking quick action, brigade members saved the Yendarra school. The fire came right up to the front of the school. The children were evacuated well and truly in advance of the fire front progressing towards the school, with all credit due to local brigade members. Although we should have lost many homes, taking into account the ferocity of the bushfire, that did not happen, but only because local brigade members took action early and they know their community and know about fire conditions. When all the years of service of brigade members are combined, the community benefits greatly from thousands of years of experience. Rural Fire Service brigade members truly are heroes. Today I honour them and thank them for their commitment.

NORTH WEST GROWTH CENTRE ROAD NETWORK STRATEGY

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) [12.46 p.m.]: I update the House and the community about the proposed road network strategy for the North West Growth Centre, particularly as it affects the township of Riverstone. Long-term members of this House may well remember the saga of the proposed replacement of a level crossing at Garfield Road in Riverstone, which was first announced as a priority in the late 1990s. Since then the proposal has been an unresolved issue. Part of the reason for that is the unfortunate geography and topography of the township, which suggests that the most natural course of the arterial road corridor should traverse the centre of the town, which the townsfolk are unwilling to accept. There has been any number of attempts to find an alternative strategy and a breakthrough in traffic management to meet the demands of a growing region while at the same time preserving the township and the country feeling of that very old town.

Over the past year a great deal of consultation has been undertaken with the community. A strategy has been released that I think will go quite a long way towards resolving concerns. Throughout the whole of the region between Quakers Hill in the south and Vineyard in the north there are five proposed crossings of the Richmond railway line. From south to north, those crossings will be at Burdekin Road, Schofields Road, Westminster Street, Garfield Road and Bandon Road. The differences between the current proposal and previous proposals are that the northerly crossing at Bandon Road is a new proposed arterial road that will direct much of the heavy traffic around the town of Riverstone rather than through it, and that the proposed use of the existing Westminster Street bridge to connect to the western side of the railway line at Garfield Road will divert much of the lighter local traffic away from the Garfield

Road crossing. Between them, those two initiatives stand to make a huge difference to the future of the township of Riverstone.

I am very pleased that the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, the Hon. Duncan Gay, listened so carefully and tried so hard to find a way to resolve the traffic problems of the greater region while addressing the legitimate concerns expressed by the townspeople of Riverstone. In my opinion, the proposal brought forward by the Minister and his staff is to be commended. Importantly, some timing issues must be understood. In the short term work will begin on the connection with the Westminster Street bridge and the completion of the Schofields Road project that is currently underway. Schofields Road is being built as a four-lane divided road that will connect the arterial corridors of Windsor Road and Richmond Road.

Stage two of that project will result in Schofields Road going underneath the Richmond railway line and connecting to roads on the western side by early 2017. That will be the first additional crossing and it will relieve traffic pressure in the region and in particular on the Garfield Road corridor. It will allow heavy vehicles, which have no business going through the centre of Riverstone, to find another way to cross the railway line. At a similar time I hope that the light traffic connection at Westminster Street bridge can be connected to the western side of Garfield Road so that as traffic is diverted from Westminster Street bridge to Schofields Road traffic can also be diverted from Garfield Road to Westminster Street bridge. If those initiatives are coordinated life will be simpler for commuters, residents and businesses in the centre of Riverstone who are trying to survive a difficult transition period.

In the medium term the arterial road to the north of the town will be built using an abandoned road corridor to cross the railway line at Vineyard and connect to Richmond Road at Marsden Park coordinated with the development, we hope, of the Marsden Park north precinct, which is currently the subject of discussions between the Department of Planning and developers about a precinct acceleration protocol. If that is coordinated then much of the road corridor will be privately funded by the developer and planned in a way that meets the needs of the greater district and will be beneficial for all concerned. This coordinated approach means that the long-term decision about Garfield Road can be made after other connections are completed. It may be found that Garfield Road needs a railway crossing—that decision is probably about 20 years away—but in the short term there will be significant traffic relief for the people of the town of Riverstone.

CESSNOCK ELECTORATE SCHOOLS

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) [12.51 p.m.]: While others are elsewhere singing the praises of Prince Charles it is a privilege for me to speak about the wonderful opportunities I had last week to attend events at schools in my electorate of Cessnock. I spent Wednesday and Thursday visiting schools and I encourage members to visit schools in their electorates and see the good work happening in our schools. It is a great way to recharge our batteries. I started my visit at Cessnock High School's year 10 authentic assessments for which students put together a résumé with a compilation of their completed work for the year. Students included samples of their work and self-assessment of that work. They presented the work they were most proud of and some of the challenges they had faced. They were asked to talk about their goals and career choices. I found the future career part of the exchange most fascinating and exciting.

Often it appears that the ceiling is set very low for students in the electorate of Cessnock and so they do not aspire to reach high enough goals. But some of the young people I met at these authentic assessments had some very exciting career plans. Some wanted to be bricklayers or work in retail but some wanted to do software game design. One young woman wanted to be a television news host or "anchor woman", as she put it. Another young woman wanted to work in sports science and assisting international sports teams, potentially working at the Australian Institute of Sport. One student wanted to be a world-class chef and identified a number of restaurants where he wants to work. These are the dreams of the young people at Cessnock High School.

On Wednesday I attended the West Wallsend High School years 9 and 10 gifted and talented enrichment showcase event. Gifted and talented students have been working throughout the year on projects in their areas of interest, and what diverse areas of interest they are. One young fellow was intrigued by architecture and so had researched two world-renowned buildings and written and published a book on one of them. Two young lads had written separate short fiction and at the event read parts of their stories to give us a taste of their work. I can tell you the quality of their work was incredibly high. A young fellow in year 10 had made a cabinet using old-fashioned tongue and groove joinery methods so there was not a nail in sight. His work was said to be of a year 12 presentation standard so he has an exciting future ahead of him. One young girl in year 10 had her art work showcased at the University of Newcastle and she has been guaranteed a place at the university when she finishes year 12. There were dancing and choreography and urban planning projects. One young fellow had built a robotic arm and a year 9 girl performed a piano piece she had composed.

On Thursday morning I attended Cessnock Public School's celebration of the Aboriginal program that has run throughout the year thanks to Gonski funding. The school had the funding to allocate a teacher to pull together the Aboriginal program as the school has a large Aboriginal population. It was indeed a celebration and I take my hat off to the teacher who has been working on this program, Mr Phil Cooke, and all the hardworking staff. Phil has been teaching for about 20 years and the celebration of this program excited him, as it has given him a new lease on life. One thing students have learned about is traditional Aboriginal methods of healthy cooking and eating thanks to the Deadly Cooking van funded by Community Building Partnerships. It is great to see the money being used for the benefit of students. I say well done to the schools in the Cessnock electorate.

CONCORD HOSPITAL UPGRADE

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.56 p.m.]: In my inaugural speech in 2011 I mentioned the importance of Concord Repatriation General Hospital services to the residents of my electorate. A year later I made a contribution lobbying for better services at Concord hospital. In August 2014 I stood in this place again advocating for better hospital services for people in the inner west. With high-density developments in the area adding pressure across the inner west, growth projections in many suburbs, particularly Breakfast Point, and other suburbs at breaking point, this Government is dealing with many of the problems resulting from years of neglect under the Labor Government. We are dealing with transport issues as quickly as we can, such as upgrading rapid transport and ferry wharves. We are also delivering new schools. However, I will continue to advocate for the upgrade of Concord hospital and I do not care whose noses I put out of joint because I am embarrassed about the current state of the hospital.

Concord hospital deserves a lot better. While I congratulate the Government for the upgrades of Liverpool Hospital, Westmead Hospital, Royal North Shore Hospital and St George Hospital, to mention a few, it is not good enough that Concord hospital is put in the never-never basket for commitments made over a long time. We have seen this time and again. As the local member, am I supposed to be quiet? Am I meant to pretend that everything is going to be okay? Am I meant to say something that I do not believe is correct? That is not me. Quite frankly, something has to be done and done soon. Despite all the population pressures, some parts of Concord hospital are working beautifully. There have been attempts to upgrade a number of areas but the main hospital needs a major renovation.

The Government has committed \$150 million but what that means is not certain. Does it mean it will be delivered in an election cycle or started in an election cycle? When will it be finished? Who knows? The Government must do more. It must listen to the local member, who is in the best position to advocate for his or her constituents. I will continue to fight wholeheartedly. I entered this place for the right reasons: to deliver the best services for my community. I am frustrated and I expect answers in the not too distant future. Frankly, it is not good enough just to talk the talk; it is time now to act. I hope the Government will deliver on these vital services.

It is frustrating for physicians and nurses, who are doing the best they can in difficult circumstances. They have cutting-edge technology but the infrastructure is not there to support the necessary service delivery, which is disappointing. The population in the inner west is growing and Concord hospital deserves an upgrade as soon as possible. It should occur in this parliamentary term. I will return to this subject in the not too distant future in order to remind the Government of the need to ensure that Concord hospital is properly resourced from a staff and an infrastructure point of view.

PENRITH VALLEY PRIMARY SCHOOLS PUBLIC SPEAKING COMPETITION

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa—Parliamentary Secretary) [1.01 p.m.]: I inform the House of the hard work and dedication that was once again put in by the local public schools in the Penrith Valley district. The Penrith Valley Primary Schools Public Speaking Competition, which has been running for 14 years, is an opportunity that opens many doors for younger generations across 22 schools in Penrith Valley. It is a golden opportunity for the children to gain confidence and become active members of their local community by improving their public speaking skills and helping them to voice their opinions in a positive manner. The public speaking competition is an opportunity for these younger citizens to build social networks and meet new people. It encourages them to think outside the box and solve problems in a way they would not have thought of before.

The competition ran for many weeks and involved more than 3,000 students. After many weeks, 24 students remained—six from each of the four age groups. The grand final of the competition was held at Glenmore Park Public School and was organised by Kristine Beeby of Werrington County Public School, Catherine McCann-Smith of Surveyors Creek Public School and Katrina Dimeck of Regentville Public School. The event adjudicators were David Bamford of Regentville Public School, Stephen Lockley of Samuel Terry Public School and Mark Arnold of Glenmore Park Public School. Regentville Public School, Surveyors Creek Public School and Glenmore Park Public School participated in the finals. I am delighted to say that eight of the 24 finalists were from schools in the Mulgoa electorate, and I am even more proud to say that two of those eight students gained first place in their age group.

I will name the Mulgoa students who came in first and second place. The six year three students prepared a two-minute speech on a topic of their choice. The winner of this age division was Regentville Public School student Mia Connell. Mia spoke about Japan and its culture while sporting a very anime Japanese hairstyle. Her speech was absolutely brilliant. In year 4 the first-place winner was from Glenmore Park Public School. Matthew Smith spoke about having youngest child syndrome and explained to the audience that it was not his fault that he had been born last. Matthew's speech was extremely creative, humorous and well-written, and engaged the entire audience from the start. The second-place winner was year five student Torrance McLean from Surveyors Creek Public School. Torrance gave a creative and immensely well thought-out speech that allowed us to step into her shoes and imagine what it would be like if your mum was your teacher.

I congratulate the teachers, staff, talented students and sponsors from Penrith City Council on their wonderful efforts and achievements that help to make the Penrith Valley Primary Schools Public Speaking Competition possible. I thank sponsors Fiona Scott, Federal member for Lindsay and Stuart Ayres, member for Penrith, who purchased the prizes with me. I applaud the families of the finalists who, without a doubt, supported and encouraged the students to do their absolute best. I thank everyone who was involved for their ongoing support and once again congratulate the students.

Private members' statements concluded.

Pursuant to resolution Orders of the Day (Committee Reports) proceeded with.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE REGULATION OF BROTHELS

Report: Inquiry into the Regulation of Brothels

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

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) [1.04 p.m.]: I speak today in my capacity as chair of the Select Committee on the Regulation of Brothels. The committee was established to examine a wide range of issues involving the current sex work industry in New South Wales. The committee presented its report to this House on Tuesday. As part of this inquiry the committee received submissions and held public hearings. The committee received evidence from current and former sex workers, brothel owners, healthcare providers, local councils and sex work support organisations, to name but a few. The committee also conducted two visits of inspection in Melbourne and in Sydney. This presented the opportunity to meet a number of relevant stakeholders and get first-hand experience of some of the issues raised during the inquiry.

From the outset, I stress that the committee does not propose changing the overarching principle of decriminalisation of sex work in New South Wales. How consenting adults freely, and with informed consent, conduct their sexual activity is not for government to dictate. The evidence presented to the committee identified three main problems that drove our recommendations. First, we heard of worker exploitation. The typical scenario of sex slavery in New South Wales involves predominantly Asian women being lured to Australia under false pretences. When they arrive in Australia their passports are confiscated by criminals and they are forced to work in brothels. The women involved either live on the brothel premises or at a location near the premises and are transported to and from the brothel in a controlled way. The sex workers are not allowed to interact with the community outside the criminal's control and are invisible to established sex worker organisations and public health clinics.

The Federal, New South Wales and Victorian police each gave evidence that sex slavery was an under-reported crime. The nature of sex slavery is concealed criminal conduct. The Federal Police gave evidence that one-quarter of its current sex slave inquiries concerned New South Wales brothels. The New South Wales police said that reports to them of sex slavery had increased. In a private briefing we were given specific details by the New South Wales police of current sex slavery investigations, which we were not able to include in our report for fear of compromising operational police work. Sex slavery is a real and present problem in New South Wales. Compassionate government cannot turn its head away, even if loud interest groups pretend that there is not a problem. We also heard consistent evidence from several quarters about other unsatisfactory workplace conditions.

Brothels in New South Wales have a high proportion of sex workers who are foreign nationals, particularly from Asia. These workers are culturally vulnerable to exploitation. We heard reports from several different sources that these workers were exploited in their workplaces by their wages being reduced to only one-third of what was due to them because of fines imposed upon them for contrived and trivial workplace offences. Their occupational health and safety is also compromised as they are encouraged to perform unprotected sex. Secondly, we heard from New South Wales police intelligence that 40 brothels in New South Wales have connections to outlaw motorcycle gangs and that the cash nature of the business is particularly attractive to laundering money. There was also evidence of groups of massage parlours operating around Sydney that do not have approval to operate as brothels but which offer sexual services.

Thirdly, the majority of local councils that provided evidence to the committee noted the recent rapid increase in the instances of so-called massage parlours offering sexual services without any development consent to do so. These unapproved massage parlours are even located in the City of Sydney, which was held up by sex work groups as a model for the planning approach to sex worker premises. In other council areas unapproved massage parlours have sprung up in council areas where no brothel applications have been received for six years. Many of these premises are operating in unacceptable locations for sex services premises. For example, the committee heard about premises that are alleged to be providing sex services in close proximity to schools and other areas frequented by school-age children.

The regulation and enforcement of the current system is left almost solely to local government. Councils indicated that they had great difficulty shutting down these premises due to unreasonably high burdens of proof and ill-equipped council staff. Furthermore, even when the premises are effectively shut down, they will often reopen in other premises nearby and the whole process must begin again. This is a costly and frustrating situation for councils and local residents. To combat those problems the committee has made a number of recommendations to introduce a system of licensing sex services premises in New South Wales. This system will ensure that there is a comprehensive record of all sex services premises operating in the State. This will help shut down premises that are masquerading as massage parlours or karaoke venues while providing sexual services. A licence will be issued only if the premises has planning consent to operate. It will also include a fit and proper person test for operators of sex services premises to ensure that the criminal element does not infiltrate the industry.

The committee recommends that similar provisions to those currently in force under the Tattoo Parlours Act 2012 be introduced along with the proposed licensing regime to give the authorities more powers to investigate potential licence breaches and to act against those operators who are found to be acting illegally. It also recommended new powers for courts and evidentiary changes. Together these initiatives will further protect sex workers and help to close down rogue operators. The committee is confident that the recommendations will substantially improve this industry from the point of view of vulnerable workers and the community. I commend the report to the House.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) [1.11 p.m.]: I was pleased to be a member of the Select Committee on the Regulation of Brothels. I thank my fellow committee members for an open and frank committee process. My electorate of Sydney has brothels and street sex work, and is the base for a number of sex worker health and advocacy organisations, of which I am extremely proud. I acknowledge that some representatives of those organisations are in the public gallery today. Given the small number of complaints that councils receive about brothels, it is not clear what sparked this inquiry. However, its aim was to examine the regulatory framework for brothels and to make recommendations for change. The member for Gosford, the member for Summer Hill and I were dissenters during the committee's consideration of this report. The final report does not reflect a balanced view of the evidence. It recommends licensing of brothels and giving police officers powers of entry despite overwhelming evidence that this would put sex workers at risk. Indeed, yesterday a respected figure referred to the report as the "Kaldas report".

New South Wales is considered a world leader in sex industry regulation. The decriminalisation model has produced significant health and welfare benefits, and sex workers have very low rates of sexually transmitted infections when compared with the rest of the population. They also have good health and welfare outcomes, and are able to report violence to police without fear of sanctions. All sex worker health, welfare and advocacy organisations support retaining the current regulatory framework and provided evidence of its benefits. Sex work was decriminalised 20 years ago in response to the Wood Royal Commission into the New South Wales Police Service, which dealt with police corruption. The criminal system encouraged corruption and intimidation of sex workers in what was an underground industry. We should not return to that situation without strong evidence that deregulation is creating problems.

The committee was not presented with evidence that trafficking and sexual servitude happen more in New South Wales than in jurisdictions that have a licensing regime. Trafficking and slavery are the responsibility of the Australian Federal Police [AFP], which told the committee that it has sufficient powers to enter brothels. The six sex trafficking investigations conducted in New South Wales by the AFP did not result in any convictions. The committee heard from Victoria Police that criminal activity occurs in both licensed and unlicensed brothels, and the AFP is investigating 10 cases in that State. NSW Police Force Deputy Commissioner Nick Kaldas claims that his call for licensing and powers of entry is designed to ensure that all brothels are law abiding, but licensing will never cover all brothels. The committee received extensive evidence of that in Victoria and Queensland. It will not reduce criminal activity; it will

only create a two-tiered system of legal and illegal brothels. Much weight was given to Deputy Commissioner Kaldas' comments, yet he provided no concrete evidence of criminal activity, referring only to anecdotes and morals-based stories.

The committee's report merely infers that deregulation makes the sex industry a haven for trafficking, servitude and drug taking. While councils could use assistance in applying planning laws to brothels correctly, it is a major leap to suggest that this means the sex industry needs to be overhauled and that licensing and enforcement powers should be handed to police. Councils need enforcement guidance from the Office of Local Government, and there should be better coordination between regulatory bodies. The committee was presented with strong evidence that creating a licensing system with criminal sanctions will discourage sex workers in unlicensed brothels from accessing services or from telling medical professionals about their work. The proposed licensing system fails to acknowledge the serious impacts licensing would have. There is no evidence licensing would reduce criminal activity.

I believe the committee's report has taken a moral approach to sex work. Recent research undertaken by the Australian Institute of Criminology found that most migrant sex workers sampled were satisfied with their conditions and that stigma, fear of deportation, language barriers and limited access to safe migration pathways risked marginalising them. Human trafficking is a global problem that will not be solved by a licensing system. All licensing will do is create an underground class of sex workers who will be at risk of harassment and intimidation. If implemented, the report's recommendations would compromise the health, wellbeing and safety of sex workers. I oppose the report.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley) [1.15 p.m.]: It is my pleasure to support the report of the Select Committee on the Regulation of Brothels. I agree with the member for Sydney that it was a very interesting inquiry. It certainly involved a great deal of full and frank dialogue. I commend the member for Ku-ring-gai for his chairmanship of the committee in his first six months in Parliament. However, I am a little sad that the member for Sydney believes the committee took a moralising approach in its findings. I do not believe that is true. I note that representatives from Touching Base are in the public gallery. I genuinely and sincerely say that their comments and their dialogue with me and other committee members very much informed the report. They had a big impact on me.

This is not a moralising report. The committee was cognisant of the fact that in 1995 this Parliament, following another select committee inquiry, took a brave step and put New South Wales at the leading edge of protecting sex workers and reforming the law in this area. That always was the committee's starting point. The strongest message I received from Touching Base was that it did not want a licensing system for sex workers. That message was heard loudly and clearly, and the committee's report contains no such recommendation. Committee members listened carefully to the argument and understood and respected it. The committee also understood and respected the argument that sex workers should have the right to work in their own homes. The committee supported that recommendation and that arrangement will continue. As a small business owner, I acknowledge the importance of being able to make choices. Sex workers should not be forced to work in a brothel where they are required to hand over a portion of their earnings.

I am gladdened that we are following the New Zealand model. New Zealand has also decriminalised the sex industry and sex workers and has a licensing system for brothels. Strong evidence indicates that there are at least 350 brothels in New South Wales, and most of them are outside the legal planning system. The committee's recommendations address the concerns raised in the 1990s about police association with the brothel industry because of its involvement in criminal activity at the time. All the committee's recommendations have been made in that context. I disagree with the member for Sydney in that I believe the Federal and State police forces must work together to wipe out sex slavery. Sex slavery is an issue in this country, but it is a bigger issue in other countries. We must work together and share information and resources.

I thank committee manager Elspeth Dyer, research officers Leon Last and Kieran Lewis, and

committee officer Jenny Gallagher for the assistance they provided to members in the preparation of this report in an extremely short time frame. I genuinely enjoyed my engagement with my fellow committee members. I believe the committee has arrived at a genuine approach that is designed to ensure bad people are not involved in the sex industry. That includes tax dodgers and organised crime figures. The committee has had the protection of sex workers at heart throughout this process. [*Time expired.*]

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) [1.19 p.m.]: It has been an honour to serve on the Select Committee on the Regulation of Brothels and to gain valuable insights into this important area of public policy. The committee received a great depth and breadth of evidence from a range of experts, stakeholders and workers to gain better insights into the regulations around sex workers and brothels in New South Wales. However, it has become apparent over the course of the past few weeks that this inquiry appears to have been established with an outcome in mind—that is, the licensing of brothels. I make it clear that the findings of this report were not supported unanimously and that I, along with the member for Sydney and the member for Gosford, have significant concerns about recommendations that we believe water down the system of decriminalisation that has delivered such positive outcomes for sex workers and the community in terms of safety, health and police integrity.

The Wood royal commission in the 1990s made the determination that removing police as the regulator of brothels was in the community's best interests. The current system of decriminalisation makes the regulation of brothels the purview of local councils, which manage brothels under their local environmental plans [LEPs]. On the whole, the evidence presented to the committee was that this system works well, with very few complaints about authorised brothels impacting local amenity and communities. A small number of problems arise with unauthorised brothels, with councils often feeling ill equipped to monitor and regulate brothels operating outside the scope of the existing regulatory framework.

While I understand the community's concerns about unauthorised brothels—concerns that are shared by the sex industry, I might add—the Government appears intent on beating up the issue. This is an approach that I believe is unhelpful at best. The final report makes claims of criminal activity and sexual servitude in unauthorised brothels. Of course, any such reports are deeply concerning and any incidence of sexual servitude or criminal activity is unacceptable. However, there is no evidence that New South Wales sees a higher rate of criminal activity or sexual servitude than other jurisdictions, including Victoria and Queensland, which employ a licensing system. There is also no evidence to suggest that licensing will limit the incidence of unauthorised brothels, with Victoria's licensing system having little impact on the number of unauthorised brothels in that State.

Introducing a licensing system here will only diminish the positive health outcomes that decriminalisation has afforded, making it more difficult for sex workers to engage with outreach organisations and propagating an underground industry that poses risks to sex workers. I do not want to see the safety and health of workers in the industry compromised. I do not want to go back to the bad old days, when a large section of the sex industry was underground. The committee heard compelling evidence from a range of health experts, including the NSW Chief Health Officer, Dr Kerry Chant, and the AIDS Council of New South Wales [ACON], who raised serious concerns about the potential public health impacts of licensing brothels. ACON said:

We believe a licensing system would be a dangerous and retrograde step, as experience elsewhere shows it to almost inevitably produce a second tier (often larger than the official licensed tier) of sex industry premises which are difficult for outreach programs to access, increase the potential for crime and corruption and do little to increase public health outcomes or improve sex worker health and safety.

I have the utmost respect for the NSW Police Force. However, we cannot overlook the significance and the success of the reforms emanating from the Wood royal commission—reforms that were difficult yet necessary. The NSW Police Force has made significant efforts to restore the public's trust and the community will not tolerate any watering down of hard-fought safeguards against corruption. We can do

more to improve existing regulations, including better resourcing of councils to give them the expertise to deal with unauthorised brothels. Introducing licensing is driven not by logic or evidence but by ideology, and I completely disagree with it. I oppose the report. [*Time expired.*]

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) [1.23 p.m.], by leave: I make a brief contribution to debate on the report of the Select Committee on the Regulation of Brothels entitled "Inquiry into the Regulation of Brothels". I can honestly say that I never thought my first six months in this place would have me considering subject matter in the sphere of brothels or the sex industry, but I can also say that I have learned a lot and am heartened by the committee's recommendations for reform. On day one of public hearings Deputy Commissioner Kaldas told the committee:

We feel that regulation of the industry is necessary and currently where the responsibility for that regulation sits is ambiguous. Regulation is necessary because in that industry much could go wrong if unregulated and the rules are not enforced.

Some issues that could arise, obviously the use of under-age workers, the use of drugs and sometimes forcing workers to take drugs against their will, and most seriously, sexual servitude.

For me, the evidence about sexual servitude was the most alarming. With this in mind, it is particularly disappointing that the members of the committee from the Australian Labor Party did not support our recommendations to protect workers from sex slavery and exploitation. Nor did those opposite put up any proposals to protect these vulnerable workers. This highlights the fact that the modern Labor Party has fallen a long way from its original intent to protect workers. I am proud of the work Coalition members have done on this committee to put forward sensible recommendations to eliminate such serious problems.

There has been much public interest in the committee's recommendations referring to sexual servitude. Those opposite were extremely sceptical with respect to the evidence of the NSW Police Force and the Australian Federal Police. I am personally disappointed by this. With the House's indulgence, I will paraphrase the remarks of Deputy Commissioner Kaldas. He made a comment that raised the question of how many women being subjected to sexual servitude are enough for us to take this issue seriously and enact change. His comment will always stay with me. No woman should be subjected to this behaviour in our State.

I turn to the regulatory framework that the committee has recommended. I reinforce that we are not proposing any change to the state of decriminalisation within which the sex industry operates. New Zealand has a decriminalised system of sex work and also has the kind of regulation that our committee has recommended. We received evidence from a number of sex workers that the New Zealand system operated well from the point of view of sex workers. Nobody raised issues to do with public health or police corruption surrounding the New Zealand system. The system of regulation proposed by our committee has no greater regulatory impact than the New Zealand system, which has been in operation since 2003.

To use an analogy from a different industry, nobody suggests that the consumption of alcohol is a criminal offence but there is regulation around hotels, with licensing laws and other rules around their operation. Our proposed regulation is very similar to those around hotel operation. Again, I stress that the proposed licensing relates only to the brothel owners, not to the sex workers. The police will not be regulating workers, so they can still be their protectors. I add how disappointed I am at the lies from those opposite and the crossbench that came out before the committee's report was tabled. I conclude by commending the chair of the committee, the member for Ku-ring-gai, and thanking him for his leadership. I also acknowledge the hard work of my colleagues, the deputy chair and member for Oxley and the member for Holsworthy. We did not always agree but I truly believe our recommendations are necessary to do what is best for this State.

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

Report noted.

[Temporary Speaker (Mr Lee Evans) left the chair at 1.28 p.m. The House resumed at 2.45 p.m.]

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I welcome all our guests to question time this afternoon. I welcome Lotta Jackson, General Manager of Tenterfield Shire Council and Peter Petty, Mayor of Tenterfield Shire Council, who are guests of the Deputy-Speaker, and member for Lismore. I welcome Jenny Dowell, Mayor of Lismore City Council, and Gary Murphy, General Manager of Lismore City Council, guests of the Deputy-Speaker, and member of Lismore. I welcome the Oran Park Probus Club, guests of the Government Whip, and member for Camden. I welcome John Walker, General Manager of Richard Valley Council, guests of the Parliamentary Secretary for the North Coast, and member for Clarence.

I welcome Kayla-Maree Oshana, a year 10 student from Cecil Hills High School, who is conducting her work experience week with the member for Mulgoa, a guest of the Parliamentary Secretary for Youth Affairs and Homelessness, and member of Mulgoa. I welcome Les Dion from the Illawarra Business Chamber, a guest of Parliamentary Secretary for the Illawarra and South Coast, and member for Kiama. I welcome 13 students and their teachers from Gorokan, Wadalba and Wyong high schools, guests of the member for Wyong.

I extend a warm welcome to the family of the member for Upper Hunter—his wife, Zenda; daughter-in-law, Sarah; and grandchildren Willow and Ned, guests of the member for Upper Hunter. I also welcome Leeca Higgins from the Maitland and Wallsend electorate offices, who has received a parliamentary service award for 30 years of service, and her mother, Ann, guests of the member for Maitland.

PARLIAMENTARY SERVICE AWARDS

The SPEAKER: I wish to advise the House that this morning, together with the President of the Legislative Council; the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly; the Clerk of the Parliaments, Mr David Blunt; and the Executive Manager of the Department of Parliamentary Services [DPS], I had the honour of presenting many of the annual service awards to staff of the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council, to electorate staff throughout the State, and many people working in DPS. Legislative Assembly staff member, Danny Heldal, also received an award this morning. Well done, Danny. On behalf of all members here today I congratulate all electorate officers and members who received awards this morning. It would be a fantastic ceremony to come to next year, if you have time. If members or anyone else you are associated with in this Parliament receives an award, please come along next year.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE STATE

The SPEAKER: I report the receipt of the following message from His Excellency the Governor:

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Governor

dney, 22 October 2015

HURLEY
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General David Hurley, AC, DSC (Ret'd), Governor of New South Wales has the honour to inform the Legislative Assembly that he has re-assumed the administration of the Government of the

State.

DATA SHARING (GOVERNMENT SECTOR) BILL 2015

Bill received from the Legislative Council, introduced and read a first time.

Second reading set down as an order of the day for a later hour.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Notices of Motions

Government Business Notices of Motions (for Bills) given.

QUESTION TIME

[Question time commenced at 2.53 p.m.]

ATTORNEY GENERAL AND REAL ENERGY SHAREHOLDING

Mr LUKE FOLEY: My question is directed to the Attorney General given that the New South Wales Ministerial Code of Conduct expressly forbids a Minister holding or acquiring an interest in any company without a ruling from the Premier, on what date did she seek a ruling from the Premier to hold or acquire an interest in gas company Real Energy?

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Keira that this is not his question, nor his argument.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. I refer him to my first answer to this House yesterday.

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn Opposition members that if they continue to ask the same question I will be forced to rule those questions out of order.

NEW SOUTH WALES RACING

Mr GREG APLIN: My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier. What is the Government doing to ensure that New South Wales is the premier racing State?

Mr TROY GRANT: The member for Albury is a wonderful supporter of the racing industry in his electorate in that beautiful part of southern New South Wales. I had the pleasure of visiting, with the member for Albury, the home of the Albury Gold Cup just recently. It is one of the many cup days that occur across regional New South Wales. It is one of those carnivals that are very important to the social fabric and economic diversity of our country communities. We have the Wagga Wagga Cup, the Grafton Cup, the wonderful Scone Carnival, and the Championship series. This Government was very happy to support and work with Racing NSW when it introduced eight country qualifiers and five provincial races because it will give people in the country the opportunity to aim for a grand final appearance race at Royal Randwick a part of the championship series.

We are aiming to support New South Wales racing so that this championship series will rival the Melbourne Cup. Out my way the word is that the Wellington Boot next March will be an absolute cracker of a race. Every person in this Parliament should mark that as a destination in their diaries. Country and provincial racing is the lifeblood of the industry. It is where many of our champion-winning strappers, trainers, jockeys, breeders and horses are born and bred. In the bush, more so than the city—I say that

with some bias because I am the member for Dubbo—there is a community-wide connection to horses and horseracing. Many country kids still grow up on horseback, with the dream of one day being involved with the winner of the local cup, the local derby or having a runner—this dream was realised just recently—in a prestigious event like the Melbourne Cup.

Although the dreams are still there, the reality has been hampered in the past by an unfair hand dealt by previous New South Wales governments. New South Wales has spent 155 years looking over the border at the Melbourne Cup because it has captured the dreams of the nation—it is the race that stops the nation—but no longer, under this Government, will a racing tax unfairly burden New South Wales. As we have spoken about in this House, we are bringing about parity between New South Wales and Victorian tax regimes.

Ms Linda Burney: Whose idea was it?

Mr TROY GRANT: Not yours.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Keira knows that this is not an argument.

Mr TROY GRANT: It is good to be the Minister for Racing as this State embraces a renaissance of racing in New South Wales. We are bringing equality not only to New South Wales and Victoria but in an environment where women like Michelle Payne are breaking down barriers. I can inform the House that out in the bush, nobody would blink an eye before backing a female jockey. We have so many female jockeys, where employers are opening the doors to female employees.

The SPEAKER: Order! I am really surprised that members are interjecting during the Minister's answer. I am especially surprised that female members are interjecting. The Deputy Premier has the call.

Mr TROY GRANT: Although non-Government members will not, I recognise that our female winners should never have been relegated to Fashions on the Field only at metropolitan events. They are the ladies who can drive a steed and steer a horse to the winning post.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order. There are far too many interjections in the Chamber.

Mr TROY GRANT: One would think that Labor members would be interested in the answer. I know that the Minister for Women will be interested in statistics that show women comprise more than a one-third of jockeys in New South Wales. That is a wonderful statistic for an industry that would be very proud to have that level of representation.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will cease interjecting.

Mr TROY GRANT: The talent of women on the track is evidence enough, but only one female jockey competed in the Melbourne Cup this year, Michelle Payne. It is time those odds got better, and the New South Wales Government is backing in those better odds. Female jockeys are strong business women who play a crucial role in racing and in our regional economies, as do female trainers—such as the legendary Gai Waterhouse, who is well known to everyone as a pioneer who actively is encouraging women to become racehorse trainers.

Pursuant to standing order additional information provided.

Mr TROY GRANT: Generations of young women look upon Gai Waterhouse as an exemplar, a mentor and an iconic trainer as well as a business person. Gai Waterhouse has made an immense contribution to racing in New South Wales. Aside from New South Wales having one-third of all female jockeys in Australia, the State will have a new generation of female jockeys coming forward to pursue

their passion and look up to Michelle Payne as a leader. In the advent of a new racing industry in New South Wales, I look forward to the future of racing in which the numbers of jockeys of both sexes will be in balance and will more accurately reflect talent and sportsmanship.

Country provincial racing leads the industry in female workforce participation. As a member who represents a regional electorate, I am enormously proud of that fact and I will continue to support that participation. New South Wales is embarking on an absolute renaissance in racing that will inject into the \$3.3 billion racing industry in New South Wales broader representation and greater benefits for communities. In 2020 New South Wales will achieve complete parity with the wagering tax between Victoria and New South Wales. No longer will New South Wales have to be second best.

ATTORNEY GENERAL AND REAL ENERGY SHAREHOLDING

Mr LUKE FOLEY: My question is directed to the Attorney General.

The SPEAKER: Order! I must listen carefully to the question. The member for Keira will come to order. The Leader of the Opposition has the call.

Mr LUKE FOLEY: I ask the Attorney General: Has she divested herself of her 400,000 shares in the gas company, Real Energy, given the company's statement in its March 2015 quarterly report to the Australian Stock Exchange of its intention to supply the domestic east coast gas market?

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. I refer to my answer to his previous question.

RURAL AND REGIONAL JOBS CREATION

Mr DARYL MAGUIRE: My question is directed to the Treasurer.

The SPEAKER: Order! I cannot hear the member for Wagga Wagga. Comments being made by the member for Keira are uncalled for. The member for Wagga Wagga has the call.

Mr DARYL MAGUIRE: My question is directed to the Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations. How is the Government delivering on its commitment to grow the economy and jobs in the regions?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I thank the member for Wagga Wagga for his question. I know that he and all other members of this House, especially those who represent regional electorates, appreciate that this Government is creating jobs in every corner of the State. I have received additional information that is hot off the press. Today's job results show that New South Wales is creating more than half the jobs in the nation. New South Wales is creating three times as many jobs as the State with the next highest jobs creation ranking. The State's unemployment rate has decreased to 5.5 per cent. The Government recognises that there will always be challenges, especially in regional areas of New South Wales related not just to job creation but also job retention. However, I am pleased to inform the House on the types and number of jobs that have been created in all regions of the State.

I acknowledge that the question was asked by the member for Wagga Wagga, but I know that other members who represent electorates in the Riverina region are very pleased that this Government has created almost 7,000 jobs in the region. On the mid North Coast, the Government has created more than 21,000 additional jobs, which means a lot to our communities. In the Coffs Harbour-Grafton area—a region that many members really care about—the Government has created 4,400 jobs. In the Far West and Orana regions, which comprise a huge part of our State and where jobs are so critical, the Government has created 3,700 jobs. In places such as Newcastle-Lake Macquarie, the Government has created an extra 2,200 jobs. In the Illawarra, where recently the Government supported retaining many

jobs, more than 14,000 jobs have been created. On the Central Coast, the Government has created more than 12,000 jobs.

The statistics highlight that when this Government came to office and inherited the mess left by Labor, New South Wales was ranked last in job creation. But now this State is leading the nation, and not just in Sydney. When the Government refers to New South Wales having the strongest economy in the nation, we are talking about every single corner of the State. I am pleased that the regions are benefiting from the economic uplift provided by this Government. We know that creating and retaining jobs will be achieved only by hard work. It is all about providing infrastructure and ensuring we are doing as much as is possible to create jobs. I note the challenges that exist in regional areas of New South Wales, which is why Opposition members should get with the program.

When the Government says it wants to create jobs in the Upper Hunter, Labor members should support the funding that the Government is investing in the Hunter region. It is extremely disturbing that when the Government announces major infrastructure investment Opposition members refuse to support that investment. It is also extremely disturbing that last week in this House the Labor Party tried to rewrite history in relation to jobs. When it comes to jobs creation, it is important to deal with the facts. During Labor's last term, it created 26 per cent of the jobs created in Australia. It is interesting to note that last week Labor members attempted to rewrite history.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: In the Labor Government's last term, it created 26 per cent of the jobs across Australia, but what is the current trend in job creation across the nation? The New South Wales record was 26 per cent under Labor, but currently the Government is trending at around 65 per cent. We know that Opposition members do not care about that news.

Pursuant to standing order additional information provided.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order, especially the member for Rockdale. The Treasurer has the call.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: When the member for Maitland interjects about job creation, my response to her is: Support the infrastructure in which the Government is investing in the Hunter because infrastructure creates jobs.

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

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Kiama will come to order. The member for Maitland's point of order will be heard in silence. Members who shout interjections at the member for Maitland will be removed from the Chamber. What is the member's point of order?

Ms Jenny Aitchison: My point of order relates to improper motives. I have been supporting infrastructure in the Hunter and I have been calling on the health Minister for some two years to deliver the hospital that she promised five years ago.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Let me finish this answer on a positive note. Members on this side of the House care about jobs and regional New South Wales and we will keep delivering.

ATTORNEY GENERAL AND REAL ENERGY SHAREHOLDING

Mr LUKE FOLEY: My question is directed to the Attorney General. I refer to the Attorney's answer on Tuesday when she stated:

My disclosures are on the record. Members are free to check them. Everything is there to see. ... Government members place everything on the record.

Will the Attorney honour those words and now place on the record the disclosures she has a duty to provide under clauses 6, 7, 10 and 11 of the schedule to the New South Wales Ministerial Code of Conduct?

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: I refer the Leader of the Opposition to my previous answer.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Keira will come to order and control his temper.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMALGAMATIONS

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD: My question is addressed to the good, reformist Minister, the Minister for Local Government. How will regional communities benefit from local government reform?

Mr John Robertson: Point of order: The question contained irony and I ask that it be ruled out of order.

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: I thank the member for Myall Lakes for his question and his interest in local government across New South Wales. This question gives me a great opportunity to update the House on this Government's reforms of councils across the State. If we have stronger councils we will have stronger communities. We have had four years of consultation, analysis and independent reviews.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will cease interjecting.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART] report showed that 56 per cent of councils in regional New South Wales are not fit for the future. This Government has given councils a final chance—

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: —to respond to the IPART report and put forward their merger preferences. I have to say it is encouraging that many regional councils have responded positively to the IPART report. They have opened up discussions with neighbouring councils and the Government on the benefits of merging. We are speaking to councils such as Armidale, Bombala, Bega, Uralla, Walcha, Boorowa, Harden and Young. Some of these councils are showing leadership in their communities. They want to see their communities benefit from merging by being provided with better services and more infrastructure. Many people in regional communities speak about the benefits of reform. Yesterday I spoke about a report which showed that 64 per cent of respondents to a survey said that there are far too many councils in Sydney. Today Mr Mal Peters wrote in *The Land*:

Farmers have had to adapt and modernise and in many cases buy out neighbours to maintain viability, and as this trend continues it is unrealistic to think local government can remain the same.

Amalgamations could achieve larger improvements to our council's general income and reduce the need for rate increases for farmers.

Many councils are not fit for the future because they continue to run a deficit and their infrastructure backlog has grown over the years. I hear Opposition members calling out but that is because they are embarrassed about their record when they were last in government. They did nothing to help the local government sector. They left local government in a mess and councils were on the verge of bankruptcy. They left councils with no funding, no support at all.

Mr Guy Zangari: Point of order: I ask that the Minister be directed to address his comments through the Chair.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will address his comments through the Chair.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: In 2004 Labor sacked all councils, and faxed the dismissal letters to them. This Government has a real partnership with councils in this State to provide better services and more infrastructure to our communities.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. Members will not argue across the Chamber.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: The men and women of local government are getting on with the job and making sure that the mergers will be a success. Areas like Tamworth have received funding to provide a \$30 million equine and livestock facility and \$10 million has been provided for a sports dome. These facilities would not have happened if a larger entity did not exist. There are obvious benefits to mergers and I commend those councils that are showing leadership. Why does the Opposition want local government in New South Wales to remain weak and fractured? Why does the Opposition want families to be slugged with higher rate increases? It wants to take the easy way out, which would mean rate rises for mums and dads, families and pensioners across the State.

Pursuant to standing order additional information provided.

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: Unlike the Opposition, this Government will not take the easy way out. We will take the hard road and ensure that strong reform is delivered in this State. Why does the Opposition want communities to miss out on better roads, better footpaths, better playgrounds, better facilities? Our communities deserve better. Our communities deserve to be put first—

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order: I ask that the Minister be reminded to direct his comments through the Chair.

The SPEAKER: Order! I can hardly hear the Minister because of the interjections.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: The Minister is quite loud.

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: I could not be as loud as the member for Maitland. This Government is supporting councils in New South Wales. Labor has an appalling record in local government, with bungled forced amalgamations, whereas the Baird-Grant Government has taken a consultative approach to genuine reform. I can hear a lot of noise from those opposite. There has been a conga line of Labor members coming to my office to tell me which councils should be merging. I can see the heads dropping; I will not name them. Those members should not pay the price because the Leader of the Opposition is

weak and is showing no leadership in this area. The Labor Party needs to decide whether it wants strong communities, better services and more infrastructure. The members opposite have to stop thinking of themselves and start putting their communities first.

The SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order. The member for Sydney seeks the call. He no doubt will ask a sensible question.

Ms Noreen Hay: Teacher's pet.

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

WOOLLAHRA MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

Mr ALEX GREENWICH: My question is directed to the Premier. Given that the Fit for the Future process highlighted that the Liberal Party-led Woollahra Municipal Council is strong and financially sustainable and residents overwhelmingly want the council to remain a stand-alone council, will the Premier inform the House if the Government will rule out sacking this democratically elected council?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I welcome the new member for Woollahra. All of a sudden he is interested in Woollahra. I love it.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I consider that the member for Sydney actually believes, as a general principle, in looking after the ratepayers in this State. The question is: If we want to look after ratepayers in the State and we have a capacity to deliver better services, more infrastructure and lower rates, or a combination of all three, why would we not do that? I understand there are people involved who have individual interests. The last thing politicians want to do is vote for more politicians. This side of the House is interested in looking after the ratepayers of this State, and the Government makes no apologies for that. I know that there are people who stand against us. The member for Maitland stands against the Government on everything, which means, as a general principle, that the Government must be right on everything.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73.

Mr John Barilaro: What is the point of order?

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will not tell me how to do my job. What is the member's point of order?

Ms Jenny Aitchison: The Premier of the State is making a personal reflection on me. He said that I stand against everything the Government proposes. I have voted with the Government on sound policy, but I would not vote for this sort of stupidity.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The member for Maitland understands that debate in this Chamber is robust. The Premier has the call.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I acknowledge the member's point of order. I agree with the member for Maitland, she does sometimes support the Government. In terms of achieving stronger councils, the Government wants to introduce better management.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The Government wants councils with the best management and greater

responsibility in order to deliver better outcomes for the community.

Mr Alex Greenwich: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! Is the point of order on relevance?

Mr Alex Greenwich: Yes, it is on relevance. My question was clearly asking whether the Premier would rule out sacking the democratically elected Woollahra council.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier is being generally relevant to the question. The Premier has the call. There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: With the best management in place, we can import best practice. Currently, some councils take 90 days to process development applications while others take 40 days. The Government wants best practice across the State because that will improve the economy. The Government is addressing housing supply, which is a great thing for the overall economy. The Government wants better strategic planning and to attract quality people and to put savings to work for the ratepayers of the State. We are encouraging every council in New South Wales to back the ratepayer.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will come to order or they will be removed from the Chamber.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I know that the Opposition members would not have read the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal report because it is more than a couple of pages. It is a serious report, so I know that Captain Serious will be reading it. When he has read it, he will tell the Opposition members of the significant benefits for communities across the State. The Government looks after the interests of the people of New South Wales and the ratepayers and that involves delivering better services, more infrastructure and lower rates, or a combination of all three. That is great news for the people of this State.

CENTRAL COAST HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

Mr ADAM CROUCH: My question is addressed to the Minister for Health. How will the residents of the Central Coast benefit from the Government's investment in health?

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: I thank the member for Terrigal for the question. It was a great pleasure to attend the twenty-fifth anniversary of the School of Nursing and Midwifery with the member and his wife, Jill. Jill Crouch, who is a registered nurse graduate of that school, works at Gosford Hospital which is one of the two major hospitals on the Central Coast. Let me begin with how the Central Coast has benefited.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. Members who wish to have private conversations can do so outside the Chamber.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: The recurrent budget across the State for health has increased from the Labor budget of \$15.4 billion to \$19.6 billion this year, which is an increase of 27 per cent or \$4 billion. That is contrary to the nonsense that is put about by Labor. Since 2011 the Central Coast Local Health District budget has grown by 34 per cent, which is an amazing increase. What has that money allowed us to do? The Government has employed extra nurses, including Jill Crouch. Across the State over the past four years 4,200 full-time equivalent nurses have been employed. On the Central Coast that is 365 nurses, and they all do a marvellous job treating more patients.

Comparing the Bureau of Health Information for Gosford Hospital for the April to June quarter this year to the same quarter in 2010, when Labor was last in office, it shows that the emergency treatment

performance—that is four hours in an emergency department before patients are either discharged or admitted—has risen from 50 per cent to 62 per cent. The same comparison for urgent surgery shows a move from 96 per cent to 100 per cent; semi-urgent elective surgery, 72 per cent to 100 per cent; and, non-urgent surgery, 52 per cent to 99 per cent. That is just at Gosford Hospital. At Wyong Hospital, under the Labor Government the figure for the four-hour provision was 60 per cent and it is now 72 per cent; the figure for urgent care was 99 per cent and it is now 100 per cent; the figure for semi-urgent care was 86 per cent and it is now 100 per cent; and the figure for non-urgent care was 89 per cent and it is now 100 per cent. Whatever the measure, there has been incredible improvement in inpatient outcomes.

As members know, hospital emergency departments experienced a major influx of patients over the winter season. For example, Gosford Hospital experienced a 9 per cent increase in demand for emergency department care, and demand at Wyong Hospital increased by 12 per cent. Despite that, those hospitals have maintained the level of service that they provided at the same time last year. I congratulate the staff on that achievement. This Government has made record investments in infrastructure. I am thrilled about the \$368 million redevelopment at Wyong Hospital. I visited the hospital not long ago and I will be visiting it again soon with the member for Terrigal. The development will involve totally reconfiguring the hospital, including the entrance. The current main entrance on Holden Street has a steep path leading to the door. The new main entrance will be on Showground Road and has been designed to make it easier for patients to enter the hospital.

Additional car parking spaces will also be provided. There will be significantly more inpatient beds, a new emergency department, a new intensive care unit, a new high dependency unit, new cardiovascular services, new maternity services and a birthing unit, enhanced cancer services and a new psychiatric care centre. That development is a proud demonstration of the Coalition Government's investment in health care and the importance that it places on providing enhanced health services on the Central Coast. In addition, the Government has committed \$200 million for the redevelopment of Wyong Hospital during this term. The planning for that redevelopment will be completed shortly, if it is not already completed. That work will be coordinated with progress on the Gosford Hospital development so that patients are not displaced across the district.

The SPEAKER: Order! There are too many audible conversations in the Chamber. If members wish to have private conversations they should do so outside the Chamber.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: A number of members opposite represent electorates on the Central Coast, but the only member showing any interest in this issue is the member for Terrigal.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will refrain from conducting conversations while the Minister is speaking. Members' behaviour is deplorable.

Pursuant to standing order additional information provided.

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Wollongong that I would normally instruct a member to leave the Chamber for that behaviour, but I will not on this occasion.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: I will not take the entire two minutes—

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

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: It is extremely difficult to think straight given the noise coming from members opposite. Visitors in the gallery should understand what members opposite are doing. They try to distract Ministers while they are answering questions, but I will not be distracted. As I said, the only person who has shown any interest in health services on the Central Coast is the member for Terrigal. I congratulate him on his robust representation of his constituents. In addition to the work being carried out at Gosford and Wyong hospitals, the Government will shortly open a new \$3.5 million renal dialysis unit at

Long Jetty.

ATTORNEY GENERAL AND REAL ENERGY SHAREHOLDING

Mr LUKE FOLEY: I direct my question to the Attorney General. I refer the Attorney General to the answer she gave yesterday—and to which she has referred me seven times—and ask: In addition to lodging that member of Parliament's pecuniary interest disclosure statement, did she fulfil even one of the multiple requirements of the New South Wales Code of Conduct for Ministers of the Crown?

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for that question, which I have already answered. Given that, I will now focus on—

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will be directed to leave the Chamber if they do not come to order.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: I will take this opportunity to focus on the real work of government. What are we here to do?

Mr John Robertson: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! I am inclined not to hear the point of order given the last attempt at irony, which was not funny. What is the member's point of order?

Mr John Robertson: I refer to Standing Order 129.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Attorney General is three words into her answer.

Mr John Robertson: The Attorney General indicated that she intended to ignore the question.

The SPEAKER: Order! No, she did not. She has answered the question about 10 times in 10 different ways. The question has been asked 10 different ways and she has continued to provide the same answer. The member for Blacktown will resume his seat.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: I will talk about the work that the Government is doing to keep our community safe and to instil confidence in our justice system. I will not list the achievements—

Mr John Robertson: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Blacktown will allow the Attorney General to continue.

Mr John Robertson: I refer again to Standing Order 129. The Attorney General has now clearly indicated in her opening remarks that she will focus on the work—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Attorney General has answered the question, but perhaps not to the member's satisfaction. However, having answered it, she is entitled to say what she wants. The member for Blacktown will resume his seat or he will be directed to leave the Chamber.

Mr John Robertson: I am entitled to argue the point of order.

The SPEAKER: Order! Not with me; you are not.

Mr John Robertson: The standing orders allow me to argue the point of order.

The SPEAKER: Order! I will not argue. The member will resume his seat or leave the Chamber.

Mr John Robertson: I am entitled to advance an argument—

The SPEAKER: Order! I have ruled on the point of order.

Mr John Robertson: You have not heard me.

The SPEAKER: Order! I do not want to hear from the member. I know what the member intends to say because this point of order is the same as his last point of order.

Mr John Robertson: The Attorney General is required to remain generally relevant to the question.

The SPEAKER: Order! I have heard six words. If the member continues to argue he will be directed to leave the Chamber under Standing Order 249. He will be escorted out of this place by the Serjeant-at-Arms. I place the member for Blacktown on three calls to order.

Mr John Robertson: But the Attorney General must remain generally relevant.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member should give up. He will not win.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: This Government focuses on looking after the community and keeping it safe. That is the work of government and that is what this Government intends to do. I will list the number of things—

The SPEAKER: Order! That was nasty. The Attorney General will continue.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: I know that members of the Opposition do not want to hear about the good work that this Government is doing to keep the community safe.

Ms Linda Burney: Point of order: I also refer to Standing Order 129. The Attorney General has been asked questions all week and she has refused to answer.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Attorney General has answered the question all week. The member for Canterbury will resume her seat. I call the member to Canterbury to order for the first time. I call the member for Port Stephens to order for the first time. I call the member for Keira to order for the first time.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: Members opposite do not want to hear about the real work of government. There are 43 seconds left on the clock. There is one thing of which I am particularly proud; that is, the work that this Government has done to protect women and children from domestic violence. This is the important work of government.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no need for such aggression. Members should tone it down. The aggression is deplorable. The screaming and shouting will cease.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The question was about the Attorney General's integrity and she is refusing to answer it.

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

REGIONAL NEW SOUTH WALES

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN: My question is addressed to the Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business. How is the New South Wales Government providing

certainty and confidence for students and businesses in regional New South Wales?

Mr JOHN BARILARO: That question was a bit of a surprise; it was not expected. However, I thank the member for Upper Hunter for his question.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members who shout or continue to interject will be removed from the Chamber, and if they are removed by the Serjeant-at-Arms they will be out of the Chamber until next Tuesday.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: He is a new member to the House, elected at this year's March election, but he is someone who has hit the ground running in representing his community and making sure that his community is part of the decision-making of this Government. The Baird-Grant Government has regional New South Wales front and centre when it comes to decision-making. Yesterday I spoke about some of the fantastic programs—not supported by those opposite—that have created more than 58,000 jobs in regional New South Wales and that have brought confidence and certainty into regional New South Wales.

The Small Biz Connect program, with 60-plus small business providers across New South Wales, is supporting small businesses, because we on this side of the House accept and understand how important small business is to the local economy, to the State economy and of course to the broader national economy. We are doing that with strong leadership from the Premier of this State and with strong policy that is creating investment from the private sector, but is matched by this Government's record investment in infrastructure across regional New South Wales.

A great State needs a great workforce, and to achieve a great skilled workforce we need a strong vocational education and training [VET] system. The Government recently announced a fee freeze on TAFE VET fees in New South Wales for 2016. This is on top of the 200,000 fee-free scholarships, the \$25 million science, technology, engineering and mathematics [STEM] scholarships, the \$10 million investment in pre-apprenticeship programs, and the \$10 million investment in making sure we have the workforce for the rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme. This Government is committed through its \$2.3 billion skills budget to make sure we create the skills and the workforce of the future.

The Government is doing it in partnership with the private sector. TAFE is doing it in partnership with private providers and group training organisations [GTOs]. A couple of weeks ago when I was in Singleton in the electorate of the member for Upper Hunter I had the opportunity to tour an engineering firm, Hedweld Engineering. It is a local company employing 75 local people, exporting to the world. It is an innovator; it is a forward thinker. This company is leading innovation in fields supporting the mining industry and agriculture.

But this company does things differently: It provides the skill sets and training onsite. It has built a number of classrooms and, in partnership with a GTO and TAFE Singleton, it is now providing education and training within its factory, providing the skill sets to apprentices, trainees and the workforce—and not only for its business. The company has offered up its space, its classrooms and its learning area for other businesses to partner with TAFE, to create the skilled workforce that we need in regional New South Wales. And that story is replicated over and over again. Members have heard me talk about the partnership with TAFE NSW and Barangaroo, the Darling Harbour Skills Exchange. They have heard about the partnership on the North Coast. This Government is committed to making sure that fees are accessible.

But when the Government announced a fee freeze those opposite bagged it. They want to see an increase in fees for students in this State. And now we see the disconnect. Teachers and institute directors support the Government's initiative to freeze fees in this State for 2016. The disconnect comes in what the union says. The Teachers Federation has said that a freeze in TAFE fees is not the answer. Those opposite and their union mates have stood out the front of campuses across regional New South

Wales with their placards—that is the greatest threat to TAFE in New South Wales—talking down their TAFE institutes, attacking the teachers, attacking the students, and now attacking the TAFE fee structure of this State. But the Government announces a fee freeze and they do not support it. They want fees in this State to increase.

Pursuant to standing order additional information provided.

Mr David Harris: Point of order: It is relevance. Can you show us where we have opposed the fee freeze? Can you show where we put a press release out and said that?

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: To have a strong workforce you need a flexible, efficient VET sector. You need choice. The Government wants a strong public provider like TAFE. But there is a place in this State for community colleges, industry groups, GTOs and private providers. We need choice, just like the member for Wyong, who chose to go to Benchmark College, because he had a choice. He has told me that he could not get that course at TAFE so he chose to go to Benchmark. The member for Canterbury went to Mitchell College; she chose to go to Mitchell College. We know the member for Wallsend went to Newcastle Teachers' College, along with the member for Maitland. It is about choice. We are giving the people in this State a choice.

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order: The Minister has now breached standing order 73 in relation to three members of this House. He has commenced a serial attack upon members on this side of the Chamber. If he wants to do that he must do it by way of substantive motion.

The SPEAKER: Order! I do not know that that constitutes a serial attack. There is no point of order.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Unfortunately for the member for Liverpool there was not a TAFE college in Moscow—or was it the Kremlin institute?

Mr Paul Lynch: There is a contest between you and Toole as to who is the most stupid member of the Government. Point of order: Once again, the Minister has breached standing order 73.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: A strong economy needs a strong workforce. To get a strong workforce we need a flexible VET system, and that is the commitment of the Baird-Grant Government.

Question time concluded at 3.47 p.m.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Christmas Felicitations

Motion by Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS agreed to:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended on Thursday 19 November 2015 to:

- (1) Permit the moving of a motion, "That the House take note of Christmas felicitations", after question time, with the following speaking time limits with no extensions of time:
 - (a) Premier—5 minutes;
 - (b) Leader of the Opposition—5 minutes;

- (c) Deputy Premier—5 minutes;
 - (d) Deputy Leader of the Opposition—5 minutes;
 - (e) Leader of the House—5 minutes;
 - (f) member for Maroubra—5 minutes;
 - (g) member for Camden—5 minutes;
 - (h) member for Cabramatta—5 minutes;
 - (i) member for Oatley—5 minutes;
 - (j) member for Campbelltown—5 minutes;
 - (k) member for Myall Lakes—5 minutes;
 - (l) up to 5 other Government members—5 minutes each;
 - (m) up to 4 other Opposition members—5 minutes each; and
 - (n) up to 3 crossbench members—5 minutes each.
- (2) Provide that from the commencement of Christmas felicitations until the rising of the House, no divisions be conducted or quorums be called.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Government Business

Motion by MR ANTHONY ROBERTS agreed to:

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

- (1) At this sitting to postpone the commencement of community recognition statements to permit the further consideration of government business.
- (2) On Tuesday 17 November 2015 to permit the resumption of the adjourned debate and passage through all remaining stages of that or any subsequent sitting of the Payroll Tax Deferral (Blue Scope Steel) Bill and the Gaming Machines Amendment (Centralised Monitoring System) Bill.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) [3.50 p.m.], by leave: I make it clear to Minister Barilaro and all members of the House that I attended the Australian National University, the University of Canberra—

Mr Anthony Roberts: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member has the right to be heard on a personal explanation without interjection.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: I also attended the University of Sydney—

Mr David Elliott: But did you pass?

The SPEAKER: Order! That comment is outrageous.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: —the Institute of Transport and Logistics. I have attended a number of educational facilities, but I have never attended a private teaching college. I understand that may enhance the reason for attacking me because the member for Monaro does not like teachers, but I would appreciate it if Minister Barilaro checked his facts before he makes allegations about members in this place.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy) [3.51 p.m.]: I am sure the member for Monaro is happy to withdraw his comments, but perhaps it is a suggestion that the member for Maitland receive further education.

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**.

Mental Health Services

Petition requesting increased mental health support for people with a mental illness who are tenants of Housing NSW and community housing, 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**.

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

M4 East Tunnel

Petition requesting that the new M4 East tunnel be constructed under Parramatta Road to ensure the least impact on residents, received from **Ms Jodi McKay**.

GAMING MACHINES AMENDMENT (CENTRALISED MONITORING SYSTEM) BILL 2015

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Troy Grant, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading

Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Deputy Premier, Minister for Justice and Police, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Racing) [3.54 p.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Gaming Machines Amendment (Centralised Monitoring System) Bill 2015. The centralised monitoring system [CMS] is the computer system that undertakes monitoring of all

gaming machines in New South Wales. A key function of the CMS is the calculation and invoicing of gaming machine taxes in addition to monitoring the gaming machine and system integrity. All gaming machines must be connected to the CMS before they are operational in New South Wales venues. The CMS licence expires on 30 November 2016 and the State has commenced a process under the Governance Framework for Major Transactions to select the next licensee. The process has a number of components—commercial, legal and regulatory. The CMS was originally conceived in the late 1990s and commenced operation in 2001. The legislative framework reflects the environment at that time.

The bill implements a number of reforms to the licensing framework for the centralised monitoring system. It is designed to introduce a modern regulatory framework that encourages innovation while also introducing important controls to reflect that the CMS operator is undertaking an important regulatory function. The bill also provides a level of commercial and regulatory certainty to CMS tenderers and ensures the transaction can be completed as designed. Before I discuss the detail in the bill, I point out what the bill does not do. Importantly, the bill does not change the Government's harm minimisation gambling policy position nor does it increase gaming machine numbers. The amendments also do not change the current licensing arrangements applying to the statewide jackpot systems operating in clubs and hotels. The statewide jackpot licences expire in late 2017 and 2019 and will be dealt with separately from the current CMS licence tendering process.

I now turn to the detail in the bill. Regarding licence grants and exclusivity, the bill amends section 136 of the Act to provide that the Minister may grant a licence for a new CMS licence, which may be granted with a future commencement date and for a term specified in the licence on an exclusive basis. The current CMS licence exclusivity provisions fall away on the expiry of the current licence, being 30 November 2016. Without a level of certainty in legislation, the value to Government may be significantly diminished and provide significant regulatory risks to tenderers. Regarding strengthening suitability and enforcement powers, the bill introduces more rigorous suitability in integrity requirements for the operator. It also allows the Minister to review the ongoing suitability of the operator during the term of the licence. This ongoing power reflects the important regulatory functions that the licensee undertakes for the Government, as well as the long-term nature of the licence.

In determining whether an applicant is fit and proper to be granted a CMS licence, the Minister must have regard to a number of criteria such as the applicant's character, honesty and integrity, the proposed ownership and Government structures, and whether the applicant has appropriate commercial and technical experience. The Minister is not limited to the matters that may be considered in determining whether a person is suitable to be concerned in or associated with the management and operation of the CMS. These new provisions are consistent with the arrangements for public lotteries and casino regulation in New South Wales as well as gaming machine regulation in other States.

Section 134 in schedule 1 [2] to the bill will remove the requirement for the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART] to be consulted during the process to determine the monthly fee that may be charged for each machine connected to the CMS. The bill still requires that the Minister consult with the Treasurer before a fee can be determined. The inclusion of IPART in the fee setting mechanism for the original licence was introduced as a consequence of the unique nature of that licence, which was granted as part of the privatisation of the New South Wales TAB in 1997.

Unlike the initial licence grant, which was without tender and in an environment where the true costs of a widespread monitoring system were not well understood, the new CMS licence fee will be determined as part of a competitive tender process. The removal of IPART from the Act and setting the fee at the commencement of the licence provides certainty of cash flows to the new licensee, which is a key element of any commercial transaction. By providing this certainty to tenderers and allowing tenderers to price the licence accurately, the potential for Government to receive an upfront fee paid to the State upon the grant of the licence is increased.

Despite the removal of IPART from the price setting mechanism until the expiry of the current

licence on 30 November 2016, the current IPART determined fee will continue to apply. Following this, the monthly monitoring fee will continue at the current level, but will be indexed at the consumer price index, not the fixed 3 per cent indexation that has been in place since the last determination in 2004. Additionally, by paying an upfront licence fee the licensee is incentivised to achieve a return on investment, and the risk of a successful licensee underperforming or not developing the CMS to the appropriate standards is significantly reduced.

As a functioning CMS is such an integral part of the industry's operation any premature departure by the next licensee, particularly if it was at short notice, could significantly disrupt gaming venues both large and small. Government's gaming taxes could also be adversely affected if gaming turnover in venues were to fall away for a period. The bill introduces two new categories of services for the CMS: mandatory and approved services. These services are separate to the key monitoring and integrity functions performed by the CMS. The framework for these services encourages innovation by the licensee, benefiting venues by allowing for new services to be offered during the term of the licence. These services are in addition to the services currently offered, such as gaming machine performance statements, which will continue to be provided to venues free of charge.

An example of approved services could be a suite of advanced reporting that provides more granular reporting of the performance of gaming machines in the venue. The approved services framework recognises that the State has provided an environment that encourages innovation and allows for smaller third-party manufacturers to thrive. It is not the intention of the Government to reduce competition in the marketplace. Accordingly, the approved services framework allows for consultation to occur with a wide range of stakeholders before a decision is made to approve, or refuse an application. This consultation framework recognises that the CMS is a monopoly licence, and that utilising the CMS infrastructure to offer services in a competitive market should not have a detrimental effect on existing businesses. The mandatory services framework allows the Government through the Minister for Racing to require enhancements to be made to the CMS. As an example the CMS could be enhanced through the provision of a venue-based voluntary pre-commitment system to be offered to venues.

Section 136E in schedule 1 [3] to the bill provides a framework that ensures, where there are sufficient grounds, that information submitted by the licensee in connection with the CMS licence may be subject to a claim of confidentiality by the licensee. These confidentiality provisions capture any information that is provided in connection with an application for a CMS licence, any activities authorised under that licence, information supporting the provision of a mandatory service or an application to provide an approved service. This framework provides that the information can only be claimed as confidential if it is considered that releasing the information could adversely impact on the competitive position of the licensee, or would result in the licensee breaching the confidentiality owed to another person.

The bill allows the responsible Minister to determine whether there are sufficient grounds for the information to be considered confidential and if not that the information may be disclosed. The bill also permits regulations to be made that would allow the information to be disclosed to a prescribed body or persons. These provisions ensure a balanced approach to the process of determining whether information is confidential and provides the licensee certainty that information provided in support of an application will be considered confidential where appropriate. It should be made clear that where information is subject to a claim of confidentiality, this claim will not preclude this information from being used to determine an application.

Section 139 in schedule 1 [5] to the bill makes it clear that all information collected by the CMS remains the property of the Crown. However, the bill also provides a non-exclusive licence to the licensee to use the CMS data for the purposes of operating the CMS and offering any approved or mandatory services throughout the term of the licence. These amendments clarify and add strength to the existing provisions on data ownership that were overly complex. The bill also introduces penalties of up to \$11,000 should the CMS licensee use any CMS information in a manner that is not approved.

The bill inserts a number of additional powers into section 172 of the Act to provide strengthened enforcement powers. Section 172 (1) in schedule 1 [7] to the bill provides that the Minister may impose a maximum daily penalty for continuing licence breaches, which will be levied for each day the licensee contravenes any of the disciplinary measures contained within the Act regulations or licence conditions. The penalty will be prescribed by regulation prior to the commencement of the bill. Expanded provisions also enable the Minister to issue a letter of reprimand without needing to first issue a show cause notice and enable a rectification order to be issued concurrently with taking disciplinary action.

Further, for egregious and ongoing matters where the integrity or public interest is materially affected, the Minister may suspend or cancel the CMS licence. Where a CMS licence is cancelled under these provisions the Minister will be able to appoint a temporary licensee to continue the operations of the CMS for a period of 12 months, which can be extended for an additional 24 months if required. The current provisions in the Act do not provide for transition at the end of the current licence. A significant risk in the process is the transition from the current CMS to a new and modernised system. Schedule 1 to the bill provides for transitional licensing arrangements to ensure appropriate management of transitional risks before the new CMS commences operation.

The incumbent licensee, Maxgaming, will continue to operate its system during the transition period under a transition licence to ensure gaming machine tax calculations, reporting on integrity events and online gaming machine authorisations continue while a new CMS system is tested and rolled out to approximately 2,700 venues across the State. The transition licence will be on the same terms as the current licence and enable the staged rollout of the new CMS. Savings provisions will also ensure the current CMS licensing arrangements remain unchanged for the term of that exclusive licence. In summary, this bill represents a sensible and modernised regulatory approach to the licensing arrangements applying to the CMS and provides an opportunity to deliver benefits to both industry and Government, including harm minimisation benefits. I commend the bill to the House.

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

GREATER SYDNEY COMMISSION BILL 2015

Consideration in Detail

Consideration of the Legislative Council amendments.

Schedule of amendments referred to in message of 11 November 2015

No. 1 OPP No. 2 [c2015-157]

Page 4, clause 9. Insert after line 33:

- (g) to provide increased opportunity for public involvement and participation in environmental planning and assessment in the Greater Sydney Regions.

No. 2 OPP No. 3 [c2015-157]

Page 5, clause 11 (4), lines 45 and 46. Omit all words on those lines.

No. 3 OPP No.4 [c2015-157]

Page 6, clause 14 (2). Insert after line 35:

- (c) the Secretary of the Ministry of Health,
- (d) the Secretary of the Department of Education.

No. 4 OPP No. 5 [c2015-157]

Page 6, clause 14 (3), lines 36 and 37. Omit "a District Commissioner as an additional casual member". Insert instead "any one or more District Commissioners as additional casual members".

No. 5 OPP No. 7 [c2015-157]

Page 13, Schedule 2, clause 5 (2), lines 1 and 2. Omit "or no stated reason and without notice". Insert instead "reason and without notice. However, the Minister must provide a written statement of the reasons for removing the member from office and make that statement publicly available."

No. 6 OPP No. 8 [c2015-157]

Page 18, Schedule 3, clause 10 (3), lines 19 and 20. Omit "or no stated reason and without notice". Insert instead "reason and without notice. However, the Minister must provide a written statement of the reasons for removing the member from office and make that statement publicly available."

No. 7 OPP No. 9 [c2015-157]

Page 18, Schedule 3, clause 10 (4), lines 21 and 22. Omit "or no stated reason and without notice". Insert instead "reason and without notice. However, the general manager of the applicable council must provide a written statement of the reasons for removing the council nominee from office and make that statement publicly available."

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning) [4.10 p.m.]: I move:

That the House agree to the Legislative Council amendments.

Various amendments relating to the Greater Sydney Commission Bill 2015 were dealt with in the other place. The Government does not oppose the amendments. Amendment No. 1 introduces an additional objective-confirming opportunity for increased public involvement and participation in environmental planning and assessment in the Greater Sydney region. Amendment No. 2 confirms that section 381 of the Local Government Act 1993 will apply to delegations to council. Amendment No. 3 confirms that the Secretary of Health and the Secretary of Education will be members on the Infrastructure Delivery Committee. Amendment No. 4 confirms that the chief commissioner may invite individual multiple district commissioners to be additional casual members of the Infrastructure Delivery Committee. Amendments Nos 5, 6 and 7 record that written explanation will be given if commissioners, State members or local council representatives on the Sydney Planning Panel are dismissed. I commend the amendments to the House.

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.

PAYROLL TAX DEFERRAL (BLUESCOPE STEEL) BILL 2015

Bill introduced on motion by Ms Gladys Berejiklian, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations) [4.12 p.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I seek leave to table a copy of the Payroll Tax Structure Payment Plan Deed, as set out in the tabled text for the bill.

Leave granted.

I reinforce the point that essentially the bill legislates what the Government already is committed to in relation to BlueScope Steel. I begin my second reading speech by acknowledging the work done by management, workers and unions to ensure assistance and ongoing viability of the 4,500 employees who were vulnerable to losing their jobs. Obviously that would have been devastating not only for them and their families but also for the entire Illawarra region. I note the presence in the gallery of a number of members of that community. I personally acknowledge their contribution to supporting the retention of BlueScope Steel jobs and to supporting the Illawarra steelworks.

The bill provides for a new Act to implement the Government's announcement that BlueScope Steel will be provided with a structured deferral of payroll tax of up to \$60 million over three years through a defined payment schedule. This targeted payroll tax deferral arrangement will assist BlueScope Steel to secure its Port Kembla operations. Payroll tax payments will be deferred over three years, commencing from 1 January 2016 on a calendar year basis. For the period 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2018, the payroll tax deferral will be as follows: 1 January 2016, deferral of up to \$25 million; 1 January 2017, deferral of up to \$20 million; and 1 January 2018, deferral of up to \$15 million. For each of the above calendar years, when payroll tax liability exceeds the applicable threshold, BlueScope will be required to make monthly payroll tax payments. From 1 December 2018 BlueScope will be required to pay its payroll tax liability on a normal monthly basis.

Following the three-year deferral period, BlueScope will be required to repay its deferred payroll tax, plus its normal payroll tax, over a period of 10 years from 2020 to 2029. The agreement between the Government and BlueScope Steel is subject to a number of terms and conditions. As I mentioned, we have seen management, the workers and the unions all doing their bit by working to maintain the steelworks at Port Kembla. This payroll tax deferral is the Government's contribution to that effort. I emphasise, as I did at the time of the announcement, that this is a one-off unique form of assistance that is designed to help Port Kembla workers move forward in the current tough global business conditions, and reflects the unique situation faced by BlueScope in the Illawarra.

Employment in the region is diversifying and it is very promising. But this outcome would not have been achieved if management, the workers, unions and the Government had not all acted collaboratively. I am pleased to inform the House that the Government also is working very hard to diversify the economy and to support diversification of the economy in the Illawarra region. Since the Government was elected in April 2011, 12-month employment in the Illawarra region has risen by approximately 14,400.

This bill highlights what can be achieved when we have a strong budget and a Government that is willing to work alongside our key stakeholders to achieve a positive result for the wider community. I

appreciate that all members of the House will support the legislation. I reiterate the Government's commitments to always work with all stakeholders in the community, even though from time to time we may have different opinions on a whole range of policy issues. But when it really matters—when many jobs are at stake and a region is at a critical point for its future—it is important for us to work together. I am very pleased that that happened on this occasion. I thank everybody for their support. I commend the bill to the House.

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

CENTENARY OF ANZAC

Debate resumed from 10 November 2015.

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) [4.17 p.m.], by leave: I cite the Gallipoli reflections of Thérèse Horsfall:

There is always something solemn about the Dawn. The world lies, hushed and dark, holding its breath for the Sun. As the stars fade, the dawn seems both inevitable and impossible. The night seems to hold the sun below the horizon, trying to smother its light. Etched on the epitaphs of thousands of men lining the shores of the Gallipoli peninsula, "Till the Dawn breaks" resonates with the uncertainty and assurance of these boys and men, who laid down their lives for the hope of a new Dawn. As I stood, in the biting winds of ANZAC cove, waiting for the dawn of the 100th anniversary of the Gallipoli landing, I turned and saw a pale pink diffuse into the grey sky, above the slopes once drenched in blood. A blood-drenched tragedy, Gallipoli could be called, for most of the men who watched the Dawn creep in, as I did, painting the world anew in colours of hope, were slaughtered. Their dreams and aspirations disintegrated into white wooden crosses upon a hill. How could they expect the break of Dawn, when their maimed corpses were buried by their mates they left behind?

Did they hope for the dawn of peace, and the end of the war? Did they wait for the dawn of Australian identity, seeded from the blood they sprinkled on the beaches? Did they wait for the resurrection of their bodies at the end of Time?

Did their mates know, as they sailed home with broken hearts at the thought of forgetting the sacrifice of those they left behind, that 100 years on, the courage of these men would inspire hope in the hearts of young Australians?

For, as the sky burst into light above me, and the flags flourished in the sharp winds which whipped my hair into my eyes, I saw the light of that Dawn reflected in the eyes of the Australians who surrounded me. Their spirits rose high, transcending the barriers which time has placed between the ANZACs and us, and re-kindling the fire which lights up the Dawn. For, I know now, those men were not lost. They live now in us, and if we too are called to fight for our hope and for the hope for which our forebears died; we will rise up and answer the challenge, though it may seem the darkest hour. For, as it was 100 years ago, is today, and shall be in 100 years more; the darkest hour comes before dawn.

I join these students, and St Mary MacKillop College Albury, in thanking the New South Wales and Commonwealth Governments for making this truly memorable adventure possible as part of the Centenary of Anzac.

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) [4.20 p.m.], by leave: One story I recall from my visit to the battlefields in 2013 is the soldiers' experiences when the Germans first used chlorine gas on the battlefield. At first the soldiers did not know about the dangers of the gas and when they saw it coming across the fields in the early mornings they wondered what it was and stuck their heads out of their

foxholes only to be overcome by the gas. There were astounding fatalities from the gas in the first couple of weeks with about 30,000 men dying on the battlefields. At the end of the war it was decided that the use of gas was inhumane in warfare and I am glad that decision was taken as it would have been a terrible weapon in subsequent wars.

We visited a war grave area in Belgium set aside for Germans. I noted that none of the headstones were upright and asked the Belgian tour operator why that was so. He said, "They will never stand up in our country." The Belgians send a bill to the families of the German soldiers buried in their graveyards every year for the maintenance of the war graves. This brought home to me how the war affected people. I know people can hold a grudge but I was horrified to learn that great-great-grandchildren are now receiving annual invoices from the Belgian government for the maintenance of their forebears' graves. The Belgians will not forget what the Germans did to them. Even today Germans are not well liked in Belgium.

We also visited Hill 60 where people from my electorate tunnelled under enemy trenches so as to blow up the Germans and their allies with dynamite. This action blew Hill 60 off the face of the Earth and there is still a crater today where it stood. One of the miners came from Helensburgh, but his name has just slipped from my memory. Apparently he was only about 4½ feet tall but nuggety and as strong as an ox. He was part of the team that dug under Hill 60 and he took to digging like a fish to water. Apparently the explosion was heard up to 100 kilometres away.

Farmers are still ploughing up some remnants of the war from the battlefields including unused ordnance. The land around Flanders Fields has very fertile soils and I asked why this was so. I was told it is full of blood and bone, a terrible legacy as the ground was saturated with the blood of fallen soldiers. There was no give from either side. As I have said before, tens of thousands of men lost their lives for the sake of winning 100 metres of ground as the lines moved backwards and forwards. In winter the weather was their worst enemy with men losing their fingernails and even their fingers to frostbite. They were also plagued by mole rats the size of cats because they were eating human remains. Later in the conflict soldiers resorted to eating the rats because they had nothing else to eat. The trenches were putrid as men were forced to do their ablutions and eat, sleep and fight in the trenches.

In a museum we visited we saw parts of preserved trenches. I am not a large bloke but there is no way I could fit into and move around in one of those trenches, especially when they were knee-high in mud. This brought home to me how many men's lives were lost just because their boots were stuck in the mud and they could not get away from enemy fire. There was also barbed wire in the battlefields and ordnance being dropped on the trenches. Such a great tonnage of bombs was dropped on the area that it was completely denuded of trees, grass and all the landmarks locals had known. We visited another war graves area in which Australians were laid to rest. One headstone had the epitaph "Cheerio for now", the last line of the soldier's last letter home to his mum. It was an emotional time visiting areas of mass deaths but this headstone had a lightness to it in the words of this one young fellow whose last words to his mum meant "see you later". Unfortunately, he did not see his mother later.

We had the great honour to present a memorial at the Menin Gate Memorial to the Missing at Ypres. The service, which happens every night at 8 o'clock, has been going since 1921. There would have been several hundred people present at the ceremony but you could have heard a pin drop. The Menin Gate contains the names of all those who perished in the area and the respect shown to the memory of those men and women was inspiring. I suggest that anyone who has the opportunity to experience the ceremony should do so; it is breathtaking. During the ceremony you can hear a pin drop: the band plays, the wreaths are presented and the fallen are thanked for their sacrifice. The Menin Gate is beautifully maintained. The town of Ypres is beautiful. The Ypres museum, previously an old wool factory, was obliterated by the Germans. After the war it had to be rebuilt. The Belgians forced the German Government to rebuild it exactly as it was prior to the war. They insisted that the same stone and wood be used in the rebuild. It is now a museum.

The museum is filled with objects that have been found over the years. Some were dug up or ploughed up. A large amount of brass, belt buckles and buttons that signify a human being's life are preserved in this museum. As you walk through the museum it tells the story about how it all came to pass in Belgium. Belgium was the meat in the sandwich and was the place where the worst violence and atrocities occurred and the huge loss of life began. There was no giving way on either side. Villages were destroyed, families were destroyed and people were killed as a matter of course. It did not matter which side of the fence you were on.

Pursuant to sessional order debate interrupted and set down for a future day.

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

BLUESCOPE STEEL, PORT KEMBLA

Discussion on Petition Signed by 10,000 or More Persons

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) [4.32 p.m.]: I acknowledge the gentlemen in the gallery today. This petition is important for the people of the Illawarra and the people of New South Wales. It is not a local issue but an issue that will affect all of New South Wales. I note the box delivered to the House containing the 16,000 signatures. It shows the quality of the petition that was signed. It gives me great pleasure to lead the debate for the Government on the petition to save BlueScope Steel. The 16,000 signatures collected for this petition show the passion the people of the Illawarra have for their steelworks. As the member for Heathcote and having lived in the Heathcote electorate all my life I understand the concerns of those who signed this petition, a number of whom are represented in this Parliament.

I liken this important issue to throwing a pebble in a pond; the ripple effect of the steelworks closing would be a disaster for New South Wales. The New South Wales Government's decision to defer \$60 million of BlueScope's payroll tax payments over three years has contributed to BlueScope achieving its savings target of \$200 million a year and secured ongoing steel making operations in Port Kembla. It is not that decision alone that is responsible but also the community campaign run by the petitioners. I acknowledge our colleagues across the Chamber. All of us worked to make sure that the message was received by Government that the steelworks could not be allowed to fall on its sword. The New South Wales Government is working closely with BlueScope's management and the Commonwealth Government to minimise the impact and effect on workers, including providing information sessions and free job-seeking help for those who have lost their jobs.

Whilst there will be some uncertainty for a time, recent strong employment growth in the Illawarra of 9.5 per cent over the past year provides conditions that will foster further job opportunities. The quality of the local steel and increases in investment by Government in infrastructure requiring steel will create opportunities for locally made products and businesses, not only in the Illawarra but also in Heathcote. The \$20 billion infrastructure spend by Rebuilding NSW shows that the Government is committed to growing the economy. To further strengthen measures that ensure the quality of steel used in New South Wales Government projects and, in particular, the use of fabricated steel, the Government supports the work that is being done in the Australian Steel Institute and Standards Australia to create the first Australian standard for fabrication and erection of steelwork.

This will augment the standards the Government already specifies in contracts for raw steel. It is hoped that the Australian standards will be in place by early 2016. Once the standard is finalised the NSW Procurement Board will ensure that the standard applies throughout all Government contracts. Work is already under way in this regard. The Australian Steel Institute will work to develop its recognised open and independent testing and certification process which will support the NSW Procurement Board. The creation of the national Structural Steelwork Compliance Scheme and the establishment of the certifying entity Steelworks Compliance Australia by the Australian Steel Institute will enable local

contractors to compete on a fair basis with international and local suppliers.

I return to the effect of this steelworks on the community. The steelworks have been there for a long time and are part of the fabric of the Illawarra. As a long-term resident, albeit of the Sutherland shire, if the worst happened and this steelworks did close the ripple effect would influence not only the steelworkers and their families but those who put tyres on the trucks and petrol in the tank and those who cater for the workers. Hundreds if not thousands of people will be affected. I commend the tenacity of the people involved. BlueScope is a privately owned company but we have all worked together and recognised the importance of keeping steel in the Illawarra.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) [4.37 p.m.]: I acknowledge Ian, John, Jason and Arthur—and Wayne Philips, who could not attend. They have worked tirelessly as a group, along with my parliamentary colleagues on both sides of the House, to resolve this issue. When the Illawarra comes to Macquarie Street it does so in a big way. It is not just the size of the box but the strength of the message delivered by the contents of that box. Ian first approached me some time ago. I remember it distinctly. He came into my office and made it very clear that we were in a desperate situation. He proceeded to take me through pages and pages of small businesses and suppliers who would be affected by the closure of BlueScope Steel. I remember going home that night and thinking that for every single one of those businesses and suppliers there were families and friends that would be affected.

As parliamentarians we need to take the next step. We worked hard with the trade union movement, the private sector, and in the majority cases of cases together and with BlueScope to at least keep BlueScope open, but that will not be enough going forward. We will face continuing strong global headwinds. We will continue to face other countries around the world pushing the envelope in relation to compliance with free trade agreements. As a State jurisdiction and regardless of who is on the Treasury benches, we must muscle up and ensure that local suppliers and local companies are in a strong position to compete and to grow our local economy. I do not often agree with Christopher Pyne, but when we met him a week or so ago he said that it is important that we look beyond the bottom line when it comes to procurement; we must also look at the secondary effects and costs. There could be no better case study of that than the secondary costs and impacts that this would have had on the Illawarra region.

The trade union movement and the University of Wollongong commissioned a detailed study that indicated this would have an impact on about 10,000 workers. No-one, regardless of their political persuasion, would ever want to see that. We are not out of the woods yet; we are still facing some great challenges. I have had extensive discussions with members of the shadow Cabinet, and I am grateful that the shadow Minister is in the Chamber. I have discussed at length the importance of the Labor Party having a strong, robust procurement policy. It should heavily favour local companies; it should emphasise buying locally; and it should focus not only on the bottom line but also, as Federal Minister Pyne said, on the secondary impacts. Such a policy should go beyond what treasuries like to do. However, the case studies that Ian Waters and his group have shown me indicate that we have a problem in the way in which we procure when we are confronted with a race for the bottom line and to deliver the cheapest product.

We have a problem with quality and with ensuring that the money stays locally. To be blunt, we have a problem when we are trying to follow the rules and other jurisdictions are not. I hope that we can continue to work in a bipartisan way in addressing this issue. The men and women of BlueScope do not give a damn how we do it; they simply want it done. Our community expects us to work together on developing policies that members on both sides of the Chamber can support. There may be points on which we do not agree, but we must have at the forefront a policy of buying local, keeping the work local, keeping our economy strong, and ensuring that the workers and the hundreds of small business operators—the people that Ian referred to at our first meeting—know that members of this place put their priorities and needs first. I thank the group.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Parliamentary Secretary) [4.42 p.m.]: As the member for Kiama

and the Parliamentary Secretary for the Illawarra and South Coast, I thank the petitioners and the organisers of this petition and those who have taken the time to come to Parliament to hear this discussion today. I acknowledge Ian Waters, John Jason and Arthur Rorris, who are in the gallery. I share the concerns of the local Illawarra community regarding the potential closure of the Port Kembla steelworks. Indeed, like so many others in the Illawarra, my mum and dad met at the then BHP steelworks in 1973. This is the story of many families and those who have spent their entire lives there, as I have.

I am proud to note that, thanks to the Government's intervention and a strong commitment from local workers and BlueScope management, we no longer face the scenario that we faced when I tabled this petition along with the member for Heathcote in September. BlueScope announced on 26 October that steelmaking at the Port Kembla plant would continue, subject to the ratification of new enterprise agreements. BlueScope also revised upwards its earnings outlook, largely due to the growth in the housing sector, much of which is a result of strong housing growth in New South Wales.

The New South Wales Government's decision to defer \$60 million in payroll tax payments over the next three years demonstrates its strong commitment to the Illawarra community and to the State's steel industry. It also ensures that the Port Kembla plant will continue to supply Australian-made steel for local infrastructure projects. I recognise the vital importance of having high-quality steel products, particularly in infrastructure and housing. New South Wales government agencies set high quality standards for infrastructure projects, and the Government works with contractors and suppliers to ensure that those standards are met or exceeded. Contracts typically include Australian Standard specifications, where they exist.

This Government is supporting work being done by the Australian Steel Institute and Standards Australia to create the first Australian Standard for the Fabrication and Erection of Steelwork. This will be an important step in guaranteeing the quality of steel fabrication in infrastructure across Australia. It is hoped that this Australian standard will be in place in early 2016. Once the standard is finalised, the New South Wales Procurement Board will ensure that agencies apply it in all government contracts. Work is already underway in this regard. The Australian Steel Institute's work to develop a recognised, open and independent testing and certification process will also be supported by the New South Wales Procurement Board.

The creation of the National Structural Steelwork Compliance Scheme, and the establishment of the certifying entity Steelwork Compliance Australia by the Australian Steel Institute, will enable local contractors to compete on a fair basis with international suppliers. As members would be aware, I am very proud to have delivered on the Government's promises to upgrade the Princes Highway. Further demonstrating the Government's support for local steel, I have been informed by Roads and Maritime Services that the proportion of Australian steel used on the Foxground and Berry bypass was 54 per cent, and the proportion of Australian steel used on the Princes Highway upgrade at Gerringong was 62 per cent. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

Indeed, I am proud to be a member of the only party to commit to delivering these projects and the Albion Park Rail bypass project. I call on the Government to ensure that Australian steel is used in the bypass project when it commences. The Government's procurement reforms have also increased local involvement in infrastructure. Projects valued at more than \$10 million are required to show how they will support local industry, including local jobs and skill development. More broadly, the Government is committed to reducing regulation, business taxes and red tape. These measures lower supply costs and enable New South Wales businesses to become ever more competitive.

I have had many productive discussions with the Australian Steel Institute, the trade union movement, Mr Ian Waters and business people interested in this topic. In the interests of furthering the debate and as a local member supportive of BlueScope, its contractors and its products, I believe the Government should consider a number of policy changes to better support the industry. While I am sure

that all members of the House would agree with appropriate anti-dumping measures being implemented by the Federal Government—I thank the member for Kiera for acknowledging them—I will highlight for the House my views on items I would like the Government to consider in the context of this debate. It should include whole-of-life cost, including rectification costs, when purchasing steel products; a quality-for-quality comparison; and a fairer comparison with international suppliers that reflects artificially high costs imposed on the local industry—for example, environment costs, workers compensation costs, payroll tax, and occupational health and safety costs that are carried by local industries but not by their international competitors.

This has been an extremely difficult time for the Illawarra, and undoubtedly there will be many more tough times ahead. However, I thank members opposite, the trade union movement, the workers, the company and everyone else involved who have reached this point. I acknowledge that more work must still be done. I look forward to working in a bipartisan way with members opposite, Government members and Ministers to ensure that we get the right result for jobs, investment and industry in the Illawarra.

Ms NOREEN HAY (Wollongong) [4.48 p.m.]: I would like to make a bipartisan contribution to this discussion, but unfortunately I think I will be seen as a fly in the ointment. I believe that the Government could be doing more. I congratulate the trade union movement, the Labor Council of NSW, businesses and community activists on the work they have done. I acknowledge the economic impact that this issue is having on the Wollongong economy and also on my electorate, which is the home of BlueScope. This is not a level playing field, as I have previously stated. I have moved motions in this Chamber calling on the Government to seriously consider the procurement policy and to positively discriminate in favour of Australian steel, particularly, I would suggest, steel from Port Kembla.

I have previously pointed out in this Chamber that in Teesside in the United Kingdom thousands of jobs were lost when the steelworks there, which produced the steel that built the Sydney Harbour Bridge, was closed down. There were no discussions before its closure. We have breathing space to be able to make changes that will save our steelworks and our jobs and will have a positive impact on the economy in the Illawarra. Australia must have strong anti-dumping laws. In England both the unions and the workers told me that they truly believed their plant was shut down and their jobs were lost because of the dumping of cheap steel.

We must ensure that that does not happen or, if it is happening, that it ceases. All contracts that are issued with taxpayers money must have a committed procurement requirement. I note that the Government keeps referring to the \$60 million. I remind the House that that it is a deferred payment, it is not a gift, and it does not equate to the contribution or sacrifice made by the workers. To be fair, it took the Government long enough to come to the party on this issue. Whilst I acknowledge and commend it for that, I believe it needs to do more and with greater haste. The Government must ensure the use of Australian steel in infrastructure contracts and, wherever possible, that the steel used is produced at the plant in Port Kembla. These jobs are too important to be lost by delay or by failure to act in an urgent manner. I urge the Government to get on with job.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) [4.51 p.m.], by leave: I welcome the opportunity to make a very brief contribution to this important debate. I indicate at the outset the tremendous effort of the organisers in presenting this petition and their continued strong advocacy for the steel industry in the Illawarra. I make particular mention of the efforts of Ian Waters and his colleagues, who have done a truly tremendous job. It is a pity that this petition will not be voted on. The limitation of these petitions requires review. The organisers of the petitions work hard to get the required signatures so that the matter can be debated in this place but in the end the petitions are only noted.

This petition makes a simple request: to use Australian-made steel in infrastructure projects that are funded by the State Government. That is a good call. Over the past three months the Illawarra region has faced a very uncertain future. With the tremendous courage of steelworkers and the combined steel

unions, the workforce delivered the required cost savings and changed work practices at BlueScope Steel, and the State Government finally made good on its decision to deliver payroll tax concessions. It can be argued that the State Government's contribution, while necessary, has been the easy part of the transaction. On 4 September, my Illawarra Labor colleagues and I released a 10-point plan to secure jobs in the Illawarra. The Government has adopted point one of our plan.

The Government can, if it so chooses, adopt the remaining nine points, one of which is to change the State's procurement policy to ensure the maximum possible use of Australian steel in all State infrastructure projects. There are a range of proposals in this regard. The combined steel unions in the Illawarra have argued that at least 50 per cent of Australian-produced steel should be used; others have proposed 100 per cent use of Australian-made steel. Last month the Australian Workers Union [AWU] commissioned a BIS Shrapnel report which indicates that an achievable target of at least 90 per cent Australian-made steel could be used in State-funded infrastructure projects. It is the case now that some steel used in infrastructure projects is not produced in Australia. Critically, the precise percentage target of Australian-made steel that could be used in State-funded infrastructure projects is undetermined at this point.

As a local member of Parliament representing the Illawarra and the hundreds of workers and contractors still employed by BlueScope Steel who live within my electorate, my position is that we must put the case for the maximum possible use of Australian-made steel in State infrastructure projects, along the lines proposed by the AWU report. As indicated, a range of proposals are before us. The only thing missing at this point is the political will to determine the precise percentage target of Australian-made steel to be used in the State's infrastructure projects. In my view, Australian steelmaking is a strategic industry sector and it retains vital importance for manufacturing as a whole. The steel industry does not operate under perfect market conditions; it is corporate lick-spittling purism to pretend that it does. It is a free market. I commend this petition to the House.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): I recognise in the gallery the General Manager of Singleton Council, Lindy Hyam, and members from the Shanghai Gardens (Group) Co., Ltd. I welcome them to Parliament this afternoon as guests of the member for Upper Hunter.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [4.54 p.m.], by leave: I appreciate the opportunity to make a contribution to this debate. On behalf of The Greens I fully support the petition that has been presented to Parliament by the people of New South Wales. First, I pay tribute to the workers and unions that have made such a significant commitment as part of their struggle to retain jobs and steelmaking in the Illawarra. I also acknowledge the role that the Government has played by way of its payroll tax deferral. But, clearly, more needs to be done. Australia is the only steelmaking nation that does nothing to protect its blast furnaces from unfair international competition.

The future of tens of thousands of jobs remains at risk. It is important that governments continue their commitment to ensuring that a collaborative approach continues. Australia already has lost so much of its manufacturing industry, and the Illawarra, as a region, cannot afford to lose any more. Governments spend billions of dollars of taxpayers' money on new railways, schools, roads and hospitals. We need a commitment from government to use, wherever possible, quality steel made in Australia by Australians. That is the next step that must be taken in order to ensure the viability of our region and the viability of this State. A *Sydney Morning Herald* article on the BIS Shrapnel report stated:

Under a ... shutdown, the national economy would lose production of 5 million tonnes of steel and up to 10,000 jobs.

"This would subtract \$10 billion per annum from real GDP and significantly reduce taxation revenue to state and federal governments. In addition, the severe regional impacts in Wollongong/Illawarra and Whyalla would probably necessitate substantial extra government expenditure on large bailout packages for these affected regions," the report says.

The bottom line is that we can and must do more to support this industry. It is critical to acknowledge that, as the BIS Shrapnel report recommended, setting local steel content at 90 per cent will make a significant difference. It may cost more but it will keep local steelmakers in production and it will ensure that these jobs will continue to prosper in future. I admit that steel is a big emitter of greenhouse gases which affect the climate. However, it does not matter where the steel is made; millions of tons of carbon dioxide will still be released.

Making steel locally is preferable because of the reduced costs and smaller greenhouse footprint as a result of using local transport. New developments in steelmaking could cut the use of coal or it could be reduced or replaced with the use of new technologies. We believe the Illawarra can be a world leader when it comes to low-coal steel. Getting ahead of the rest of the world would open up new markets as industrialised nations look to cut their carbon footprints. In our view, we have a fantastic opportunity for a bright future for the Illawarra. It means committing to priority purchasing, committing to good-quality Australian steel and transitioning into the low carbon economy, which can deliver good paying green jobs.

Discussion concluded.

Pursuant to sessional order community recognition statements proceeded with.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! Before I call on members, I remind the House that in accordance with the resolution of 13 October 2015 the period for the taking of community recognition statements will be 40 minutes.

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION STATEMENTS

MICHELLE CLARKE, RETIRED POLICE OFFICER

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [4.59 p.m.]: I inform the House that Michelle Clarke, who began her police career in 1981, was presented with a NSW Police Force commemorative pin during the Retired Police Day ceremony. Retired Police Day was launched in 2012 to honour the contribution, sacrifice and ongoing legacy of retired police officers who provided diligent and ethical service over the course of their careers. Michelle Clarke held various policing roles across Australia before coming to the Manning-Great Lakes Local Area Command in 2006 as a highway patrol officer and later as a roster officer. Michelle found her love of policing came from the simple feeling of wanting to help people.

YOUTH FRONTIERS PROGRAM

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) [5.00 p.m.]: Last Friday I attended the graduation showcase of the Youth Frontiers program in Maitland. The State-funded program matches students with mentors who provide 30 hours of mentoring over six months to increase youth volunteering and civic participation by engaging young people in community projects. Importantly, it helps young people develop and strengthen their team work, communication, leadership and decision-making skills to help them further their educational and employment opportunities.

I congratulate the students involved: Jessica Gilmore, Serena Nailagoliva, Jessica Halbert, Max Young, Marsant Smit, Charmaine Philips, Lailah Hayes, Jasmine Goode, and Jennifer Armstrong. I make special mention of their incredibly generous mentors who gave their time for free. The Maitland community is very grateful to Youth Frontiers; Maitland High School; East Maitland Bowling Club; former member for Maitland Robyn Parker, who initially funded the program; and the mentors and students for their dedication in making this program and their community projects such a success.

TRIBUTE TO EVE ROWELL

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) [5.01 p.m.]: I take this opportunity to recognise my beautiful mum, Eve, who has guided me throughout my life. Much of who I am today is a direct result of my parents. As a child, mum spent countless hours helping with my homework and ensuring that I kept up with my schoolwork. She would stay up at night making costumes for me for book fairs and fetes. When I attended university, she helped me to be elected president. As I entered the world of politics she was always there to help. When I was 16 and dying, she never left my side.

When I had a severe car accident and doctors did not think I would survive, she was again by my side, ensuring I had around-the-clock care. Mum instilled in me a strong sense of justice and was fierce in ensuring that when my sister and I were kids we had an opinion on matters that counted. She taught me debating skills, and to this day we enjoy having the odd debate. Unfortunately, sons can never beat their mothers. Equally, I admire her strong sense of compassion and willingness to help others. Mum taught me to never forget where I came from and to stay true to what I believe in. I am truly blessed to have a great mum.

COOKS RIVER FOR KIDS PROGRAM

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) [5.02 p.m.]: The Cooks River is a special place in the inner west. An innovative program called Cooks River for Kids was devised by Beth O'Connor and Sylvia Perdikaris from the May Murray Early Learning Centre, a council-run childcare centre in Marrickville. The program teaches kids that the Cooks River is important for the local community and includes lessons about sustainability, safety and the rich Indigenous heritage of our local area.

Kids aged four and five have planted a native garden along the banks of the Cooks River and they spend days tending to the garden, learning how to look after the native plants and caring for the health of the river. Congratulations to everyone who was involved in the launch of the program last Friday, which included a smoking ceremony, family picnic and wonderful speeches by the kids. It is another great example of local government services supporting our community to grow and to flourish. I look forward to visiting the garden again on my next walk along the Cooks River.

HONEYBEARS EARLY LEARNING CENTRE

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) [5.03 p.m.]: On Friday 23 October 2015, the Minister for Early Childhood Education, the Hon. Leslie Williams, and I visited the Honeybears Early Learning Centre in Sylvania. The centre has received \$9,900 through a New South Wales Government initiative. Honeybears is a purpose-built architecturally designed learning centre that opened in February 2007. It is licensed to care for 39 children aged from two to six years and is open between 7.30 a.m. and 5.30 p.m. for 50 weeks of the year. The centre has a proven record of providing a nurturing, happy and stimulating environment for all children.

I commend the wonderful staff for achieving a rating exceeding the national quality standard. Maintaining such a high standard of service delivery in early childhood education is no simple task. I pay tribute to the Honeybears team for their diligence and dedication in ensuring that children at their centre are receiving high-quality care and education. I acknowledge the centre director Joanne Pasas, the manager Jodie Edwards, and the friendly staff members Lorraine Crompton, Jane Slachova and Vanessa Robinson. I thank them for their commitment to so many local families.

ASIAN AUSTRALIAN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) [5.04 p.m.]: I recognise the Asian Australian Lawyers Association [AALA]. It was established in 2013 in Victoria as part of the diversity platform which was a focus of the term of Reynah Tang as president of the Law Institute of Victoria. The AALA was established on 2 November 2015 in New South Wales at a function held at the offices of Baker and McKenzie. The

keynote address was delivered by the Hon. Michael Kirby AC, CMG, with a vote of thanks by the Race Discrimination Commissioner Dr Tim Soutphommasane.

The AALA plays an important part in the discussion about diversity within the legal profession and the need for diversity to be increased within the senior ranks of the professions. In particular, the AALA has contributed to this debate by its April 2015 report entitled *The Australian Legal Profession: A snapshot of Asian Australian Diversity in 2015*. I acknowledge the New South Wales branch committee, consisting of president Kingsley Liu; secretary Divesh Patel; committee members Saddam Hossain, Bernard Tan, Faheem Anwar, Edmond Park, Jennifer Goh, Theresa Baw, Tim Wong, Gerald Ng; and ex officio adviser Olivia Seet. I wish the association well in its endeavours.

AN AFTERNOON AT THE PROMS

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.05 p.m.]: I offer my congratulations to Greg Butcher, artistic director and conductor of the Clarence Valley Orchestra, for organising An Afternoon at The Proms on 1 November at the majestic Saraton Theatre in Grafton. The wonderfully successful afternoon comprised well-known pieces such as Elgar's *Pomp and Circumstance March No. 1*—also known as Land of Hope and Glory—*Jerusalem*, and the *Sailor's Hornpipe*, and a wonderful tribute to *The Sound of Music*. More than 70 local musicians performed flawlessly to a packed house of 1,000 people. Professional comedian and Sydney radio personality Anthony Ackroyd was master of ceremonies. It was a wonderful afternoon of music and comedy. The proceeds of the event are donated to charity and also go towards providing scholarships for local junior musicians. I congratulate Greg and his team on providing such a wonderful way to raise funds.

QUEEN OF HEARTS COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) [5.06 p.m.]: I pay tribute to the work done by the Queen of Hearts Community Foundation, led by one of my local residents Michele Ellery, who provides an amazing community service in supporting victims of child abuse and domestic violence. Queen of Hearts provides court support, counselling and a drop-in centre for victims. It has done a fantastic job in raising awareness of the complex issues surrounding child sexual abuse and the journey to recovery. Recently I was more than happy to provide support for the Penrith Say No! campaign, led by Queen of Hearts, to end domestic violence in our community. I thank Michele and everyone who supports this organisation for their work in the Penrith community. I look forward to seeing their work continue in 2016.

MULWALA NETBALL CLUB

COURABYRA WINERY

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) [5.06 p.m.]: Congratulations to Jo McCarthy and the team at the Mulwala Netball Club on winning the Netball Victoria Safety Initiative award and the Volunteer of the Year award at the Netball Victoria Gala Awards night. Jo and the team put a lot of hard work into the reconstruction of two new netball courts, with the help of the Community Building Partnership program. Well done to all involved. Congratulations to Cathy and Brian Gairn and Stephen Morrison and the team at Courabyra Wines, Tumbarumba, on winning first prize in the sparkling wine category at the 2015 New South Wales Wine Awards in Sydney. This is the third time Courabyra Wines has won the Best Sparkling Wine category. It was a great result for all at the winery.

HUNTER MEDICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE AWARDS

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) [5.07 p.m.]: On Wednesday 4 November the regional leading researchers came together for the Hunter Medical Research Institute [HMRI] awards night. The HMRI Director's Award for Mid-Career Research was presented to Professor Phillip Morgan, deputy director of the University of Newcastle's Centre for Physical Activity and Nutrition. It is not uncommon for

Professor Morgan to be presented with an award. Throughout his career he has been presented with 30 major research and teaching accolades, including being the co-recipient of the HMRI Early Career Research award in 2009. His major obesity prevention programs have been delivered with unprecedented success. Earlier this year I participated in the DADDEE program—Dads and Daughters Exercising and Empowered—which focused on breaking down gender stereotypes and improving the self-esteem and body image of girls. It is an outstanding program. Congratulations to Professor Morgan from a proud city and a thankful father.

"BROOKLYN" DOG RESCUE

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—The Speaker) [5.08 p.m.]: Tonight I pay tribute to my community in Nowra for the rescue of Brooklyn the dog. Many members would be aware of the story that was shown in the media. Two days before Brooklyn was rescued many emergency services workers were on site, including NSW Police Rescue, Fire and Rescue NSW, PetRescue, the NSW State Emergency Service and Shoalhaven City Council. But after a couple of days with no sounds emerging from the wombat tunnels we gave up. All hope was lost at that stage until the community banded together. Volunteers came out in their hundreds to continue to dig and to find Brooklyn. At about 10.45 on Saturday night Brooklyn was rescued, much to the delight of the volunteers and all the emergency service workers who had banded together. It is a great community in Nowra, and I am very proud of the result.

YOUTH POWR

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) [5.09 p.m.]: I congratulate the organisers of the inaugural session of Youth PoWR—with "PoWR" standing for "Parliament of the World's Religions". The event brought together more than 400 young people—Baha'is, Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jews, Muslims and Sikhs—who met in a spirit of friendship, mutual respect and harmony. They spoke passionately about the need for us, as leaders, to support multi-faith initiatives and to actively fight against discrimination. One quote that particularly struck me was, "The reality of living in a multi-faith society is that we must continue to welcome people of all faiths and people of no faith in a way which not only draws on the strengths of our differences but also draws us closer together by virtue of our common humanity." Youth PoWR is an initiative of the Columban Mission Institute. St Columbans Mission Society provided the leadership and the major funding. In particular, I acknowledge the leadership of my good friend—a person I admire for his work in the interfaith activities—Reverend Dr Patrick McInerney from the Columban Mission. He always brings extraordinary energy and care to this initiative.

SHOALHAVEN SUPERHEROES FESTIVAL GALA DINNER

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.10 p.m.]: I congratulate the following volunteers who assisted in making Shoalhaven Superheroes Festival Gala Dinner on 30 September at Bombaderry Bowling Club such an outstanding success. I congratulate my good friend David Arakie, the founder and festival director; Jason Zimmerman; Charles Maxwell from 2ST, who was emcee; Emily Nye; Amanda Bellette; Andrew Dahl; Amy Dahl; Amy Evison; Zali Astley; Kimberley Baine; Makayla Baldock; Olivia Beahan; Victoria Beahan; Danieka Bell; Chloe Bishop; Ivy Bohm; Bonni Bolam; Jyana Braid; Jazmin Braid; Luca Butler; Meg Brown; Chilli Dwyer; Denva Dwyer; Chloe Elder; Chloe Floyd; Grace Fuller; Abbie Haughton; Rommey Hazell; Holly Horton; Elle Murray; Elise Norwood; Lily Oakes; Jasmine Rijnbeek; Isabelle Sabel; Ty Stratford; Jayleigh Varty; Indiana Veale; Makenzie Veale; Madison Wandless; Jordyn Young and Narelle Brown. I thank each of them for their hard work and dedication, and their contributions towards making this gala community celebration a great success.

MINGARA ATHLETICS CLUB

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) [5.11 p.m.]: I commend to the House the work being done on the Central Coast by the people of the Mingara Athletics Club. Founded in 1997 as a Little Athletics group, the club today hosts a full range of athletic sports. I have been hugely impressed by the way the

club encourages participation by people of all ages in track and field athletics. I was honoured to be made patron of the club. The club capped off a fantastic 2014-15 season by being awarded Country Club of the Year by Athletics NSW, the Hooper Cup for most successful club at the Country Championships, and Good Sports NSW Club of the Year. These awards illustrate the club's good work.

The club took part in the Central Coast Run Jump Throw event, which was a major factor in its award for Country Club of the Year. The competition is an initiative of the club and is open to all people on the Central Coast. For the past four years the club has hosted the Athletics NSW Road Relay Championships. The 2015 championships were held at the Central Coast campus and I was grateful to be invited to participate in the event. I acknowledge all the volunteers who keep the club going. I make special mention of president Greg Ash, secretary Margaret Beardslee and club scribe Paul Carr.

REMEMBRANCE DAY REFLECTIONS PROJECT

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) [5.12 p.m.]: This year's Remembrance Day was significant for more than 100 Central Coast residents who were photographed for a Reflections project at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. The Central Coast veterans are some of the country's 6,000 remaining servicemen and servicewomen from World War II featured in this wonderful project to mark their service to our country and to honour those who served. For the past 12 months selected photographers have been giving their service free of charge to photograph the surviving Australian veterans, some of whom are now in their nineties, for this project. Today I take a moment to recognise Beulah Cracknell, George Simons, Jack Christie, Muriel Flaherty, William Park, Douglas Spimmey and Wesley Weir. I also pay special tribute to 97-year-old David Henry, whom I have had the pleasure of meeting. Last week he was awarded a French Legion of Honour for his role in the liberation of France more than 70 years ago. I would like to say how proud of you we all are and, on Remembrance Day, how much we value your service to your country.

MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER HARMONY WALK

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON (Blacktown) [5.13 p.m.]: I congratulate and commend the hard work of the Moving Forward Together organisation—particularly Ernie Friedlander—in organising the fourth annual Harmony Walk, which I had the pleasure of attending on Sunday. The Harmony Walk was held in Blacktown this year and was well received by the community. Hundreds of local residents turned out for an afternoon of musical performances, moving speeches and the Harmony Walk around Blacktown Showground to show that we are always stronger together. The event was also attended by my friend and colleague the member for Lakemba and the Hon. Sophie Cotsis from the other place, and was opened by Blacktown Deputy Mayor Jacqueline Donaldson. As always, these events cannot happen without the hours and hours of volunteer work that is done by passionate activists. Our community and our State is a much greater place for the work of people like Ernie Friedlander. I look forward to attending the fifth annual Harmony Walk next year. Our rich cultural diversity makes our nation great. We should never forget that. These walks remind us how lucky we are.

CONSTITUTION HILL COMMUNITY

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) [5.14 p.m.]: I acknowledge the local community of Constitution Hill for their great work advocating for positive outcomes, their community spirit and their strong advocacy in achieving local results that strengthen and enhance the Seven Hills electorate. At the Caloola Road Reserve we have seen the power of a community teaming up with local members of Parliament and local councillors to promote and advance the interests of our community. The preservation of Caloola Road Reserve is of great benefit to local residents, and I wholeheartedly welcome the decision by Sydney Water to reconsider its closure.

Having grown up in Old Toongabbie, I find it pleasing to see such a strong sense of community spirit emanating from the local residents, and I thoroughly congratulate all those involved in the resident

group. I fondly recall the moment I was inspired to join the political process, motivated by a desire to help people in my local community. The inspiration came for an association very similar to the Caloola Road Reserve group. Back then I saw firsthand the power of a local resident group to change communities for the better, and I see it here once again.

TRIBUTE TO BARRY WALBANCKE

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) [5.15 p.m.]: I congratulate Mr Barry Walbancke for being awarded at the Football NSW 2015 state dinner the Football NSW State award in recognition of his continued service to the Blacktown District Soccer Football Association and the Blacktown City Soccer Referees over the past 35 years. I particularly thank and congratulate Blacktown District Soccer Football Association, Granville and Districts Soccer Football Association and Southern Districts Football Association for their community work in the seat of Prospect and for their outstanding contribution to the sport of football in New South Wales.

TANTI FINANCIAL SERVICES PINK BREAKFAST

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.16 p.m.]: I acknowledge and praise Adam and Tony Tanti, co-owners of Tanti Financial Services, along with the rest of their team, for successfully holding the second free pink breakfast on Saturday 24 October to raise much-needed funds for breast cancer research. At the breakfast patrons were treated to a wide selection of meal options, including pancakes, bacon and egg sandwiches, sausages and a chocolate wheel. Those who participated throughout the day were asked to contribute with a donation, the proceeds of which will go to the worthy Breast Cancer Foundation.

Last year Tanti Financial Services held the inaugural free pink breakfast, raising an impressive \$5,000. I am proud to say that that figure was eclipsed this year, with the team raising a total of \$5,500. Although Tanti Financial Services is located just outside my electorate, Tony is one of my constituents and I could not pass up the opportunity to speak in this House of how encouraged I am by the care, compassion, empathy and self-sacrifice embodied by Tony and so many of the people who reside in Mulgoa. Congratulations to everyone.

RUGBY UNION ATHLETE OF THE YEAR SEAN PAYNE

Ms NOREEN HAY (Wollongong) [5.17 p.m.]: I extend my congratulations to Sean Payne, who is a very talented young rugby union star with the Illawarra Academy of Sport. Sean was recently named the Academy's Rugby Union Athlete of the Year 2015. His results prove how extremely talented he is. This year Sean reached the high point in his age division when he was selected in the under-13s New South Wales country side. He was then awarded the highest honour for a rugby player of his age by being named the player of the tournament at the New South Wales country championships. Sean's results are testament not only to his skill but also to his commitment and dedication, and the guidance, tuition and support given to him by the Illawarra Academy of Sport, which is known for cultivating some of our sporting greats. I wish Sean well in further developing his rugby skills. I am sure we will see him playing for the Wallabies down the track. Once again, I congratulate the Illawarra Academy of Sport.

BUSHLINK

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.18 p.m.]: I acknowledge the excellent work of Bushlink, a not-for-profit community service organisation that is operated by Northside Enterprise Incorporated. Bushlink caters for people with intellectual and/or multiple disabilities. It provides an opportunity to partake in socially inclusive employment for people who need daily ongoing support to retain a job. Over the past three years Bushlink has been undertaking invaluable bush regeneration in Lionel Watts Reserve at Belrose, in my electorate of Davidson.

The site is of high conservation value and contains a threatened species, *grevillea caleyi*. I note that Bushlink's regeneration techniques have proven successful in stimulating the germination of native species. Bushlink is also developing a schools program, focusing on supporting ground maintenance and improving a school's natural environment. This also provides people with a disability an opportunity to exercise leadership and build self-esteem, as they interact with local students in an all-inclusive environment. I commend Bushlink for its wonderful work, which is consistent with the NSW Disabilities Inclusion Plan.

DELANY COLLEGE ART SHOW

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) [5.19 p.m.]: The annual art show at Delany College in Granville held last Thursday was an absolute delight, showcasing the amazing talent of the students. In addition to the year 12 Higher School Certificate [HSC] works, some of the best work done by students from years 7 to 11 was on show, including that of a former winner of the Young Archibald, Mario Sukkar. Mario is a great talent and he is clearly receiving the instruction and competition he needs to excel as an artist. The standards for art at Delaney College are very high.

The principal's award for his favourite year 12 work went to Truc Mai Nguyen for her innovative work "Game of Life", in which she photoshopped her paintings into a series of scrabble boards. Another highlight was the intricate origami work by Trang Nguyen creating the 12 zodiac animals of Chinese astrology. But my personal favourite was the photographic series "Real Body of Work" by Marienede Penoso. It showed the scars, scratches and burns of school friends and teachers. The juxtaposition of the beauty of those images against their gory content is really striking. I congratulate all the students and staff on their fantastic and innovative works.

MEDIBANK JUNIOR DEVELOPMENT SERIES STATE TENNIS FINALS

Mr ANDREW GEE (Orange—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.20 p.m.]: I congratulate Parkes juniors Jake Magill, Holly McColl and Abbey Kennedy on competing in the recent Medibank Junior Development Series State tennis finals. Jake, who is 13 years old, won his pool, playing in the 17 years and under division, and lost the quarterfinals in three sets. It was an excellent effort. Abbey Kennedy, competing in her first State finals, had a great weekend and came home full of confidence and enthusiasm for more tennis at this level. Abbey took the sixth seed to a score of 7-5, 6-4 in her opening match. She then played the eventual pool winner from Sydney. Although she did not secure a victory, she felt she was very competitive—and indeed she was. Holly is in her second year of competing at this level. She came up against some tough opponents over the weekend and looks forward to working hard on her positioning and footwork over the summer to match it with these girls next year. I congratulate Jake, Holly and Abbey. The community is very proud of them and looks forward to further great achievements in the future.

IRIS FOUNDATION

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) [5.21 p.m.]: I congratulate the Iris Foundation on its very successful barefoot bowls 12-hour marathon last Friday, which my colleague the member for Wyong and I attended. It was all in order of raising awareness and funds to promote the prevention of suicide through early intervention. The community rallied around this important event and raised a staggering \$8,000—every cent of which will be used to prevent suicide on the Central Coast. The foundation was founded in 2006 by the formidable Bev Baldwin and Dawn Hooper. Unfortunately, suicide remains the leading cause of death in Australia for men under 44 and women under 34. The incidence of suicide deaths on the Central Coast still remains too high. On a lighter note, however, I have to say that I had a wonderful time having a bowl at the event. My mentors, Bernie, Gary and Arthur, reckon I am a natural. A big thanks should also go to the fantastic crew at the Halekulani Bowling Club for hosting this great event. I am pleased that I got to know about the important work of the Iris Foundation and I will definitely be back at this event next year.

TRIBUTE TO JESSE CROSS

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) [5.22 p.m.]: I thank Jesse Cross, Sandy Point resident and student at Hammondville Public School, for his initiative in helping homeless children. Jesse has started a local campaign to bring some Christmas cheer to 100 homeless children by collecting toys, colouring books, pencils, crayons and other things he can get his hands on to help these children. I met with Jesse in my office last week. His passion for this project is strong and he is incredibly dedicated to hitting his target of helping 100 children. It is always good to see local students and children in my area taking an interest in helping the community through volunteering. It is something we want to encourage. I also love the media campaign that Jesse is running to get other people on board.

TRIBUTE TO BOB MONTGOMERY AND PETER SHEHADIE

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) [5.23 p.m.]: Last month members of the Rotary Club of Upper Blue Mountains Sunrise, friends, family and the community welcomed home local residents Bob Montgomery and Peter Shehadie. I joined them to applaud their efforts. Bob, who is in his seventies, had just completed a bike ride—with Peter nearby in the Winnebago support vehicle—from Perth to Leura. This would be a daunting feat even for people half their age. They did this to raise funds for motor neurone disease. Their journey was far from simple. Along the way, Bob's wife and support driver, Jenny, developed an acute kidney infection. She was transported to Kalgoorlie by the Royal Flying Doctor Service for treatment. Jenny was eventually taken home to Leura. Bob caught the *Indian Pacific* across the Nullarbor to make up 1,000 kilometres and join his team at Port Augusta. He averaged 150 kilometres a day. He made many new friends along the way and earned deep respect from others. Most importantly, he raised more than \$35,000 for motor neurone disease research. Bob explained:

So if I can generate some awareness of the disease and generate a few bob along the way using my energy to raise funds and awareness, then that's a good thing.

I congratulate Bob and Peter on their efforts.

SOUTH WEST ROCKS SPORT AND RECREATION ASSOCIATION

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley) [5.24 p.m.]: I congratulate the South West Rocks community on forming the newly named South West Rocks Sport and Recreation Association. The aim of the group is to act as a unified voice for the sporting community in this magnificent town. The association will represent soccer, cricket, netball, tennis, rugby league, swimming, little athletics and the South West Rocks Surf Club—and may yet even include croquet and cycling. Newly announced president Holly Gaddes is getting straight to work and has a great number of supporters, including the South West Rocks Country Club, the Chamber of Commerce, local Councillor Anna Shields and a number of other community members.

This new association in the small town of South West Rocks will mean better communication across sporting codes, will enable greater advocacy for the town and will assist in ensuring continued assistance for sporting projects from all levels of government. South West Rocks has for some time been known for its fantastic sporting events and community participation. I am proud to say that, after a short absence, the NSW Country Surf Life Saving Championships will be returning to South West Rocks in February 2016, which is a great achievement for such a small yet active town and will inject millions of dollars into that vibrant tourist region.

SOUTH SYDNEY GRAPHIC ARTS CLUB

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) [5.25 p.m.]: I recognise the outstanding contributions made to my local community by the South Sydney Graphic Arts Club. The club, technically now in its fifty-fifth year, prides itself on a meaningful sense of community and civic duty that sets it apart from many other

institutions in the area. With a proud philosophy of engagement and belonging, the South Sydney Graphic Arts Club invests heavily in local public schools, organisations and a range of community events.

I have heard from principals of local schools and from sporting clubs who say that the support they continue to receive from the South Sydney Graphic Arts Club has had a tangible effect on them and their ability to work in the community. I commend former president Basil King, a great friend and supporter of mine, who had to retire through ill health; president Deborah Atkins; and the South Sydney Graphic Arts Club for using its unique platform as a force for good and community building. It is representative of a heartfelt community mindfulness and respect that is all too often lacking in our society.

SUTHERLAND SHIRE LOCAL BUSINESS AWARDS

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Heritage, and Assistant Minister for Planning) [5.26 p.m.]: I congratulate all the winners in the recent Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards 2015. I congratulate Mayor Carmelo Pesce on winning the most outstanding cafe award for Bianchinis. "Bianchinis" means lifeguards in Italian. At Bianchinis Espresso they serve Italian-style coffee, light meals, Italian-inspired cakes and an assortment of refreshing drinks. I congratulate Jacaranda Preschool and its director, Louise Murfet, on winning the award for outstanding childcare services. Jacaranda Preschool is a three-unit community-based not-for-profit preschool licensed for 60 children per day, and offering early childhood education and care for 120 children in the three- to five-year-old age group over a five-day week.

I congratulate Syltoria Hair Glamour on winning the most outstanding hairdresser award. The salon was established by mother and daughter Sylvana and Victoria Spiteri in September 2011. Sylvana, who is the salon director, has more than 40 years' experience in hairdressing. I congratulate the Cronulla Veterinary Clinic on winning the most outstanding pet care award. This clinic was started by Dr John Kennedy and his wife, Tricia, in 1980. They worked hard and built it up to a warm, friendly family practice where patients and clients come first. Dr Jacqueline Bell joined the practice in 1998 and has worked side by side with John and Trish for 14 years. In April 2012 she took over the practice, and she continues to practise with the same level of care and compassion. I congratulate the winner of the business person of the year award: Roberta Levy from Progressive Heads Salon. She believes in quality workmanship.

ROZELLE RESIDENTS ACTION GROUP

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [5.27 p.m.]: I bring to the attention of the House the work of a local community action group in my electorate. The Rozelle Residents Action Group [RRAG] was formed in 2006 in response to the proposed redevelopment of Balmain Tigers Leagues Club. Compelled by a desire to maintain the human scale and liveability of Rozelle village—a suburb already impacted by busy Victoria Road—concerned residents organised themselves into a representative, democratic group that describes itself as "pro-Tigers and not anti-development as long as it is in keeping with the area".

For nine years the RRAG has scrutinised plans, lodged submissions and increased local awareness of repeated attempts by owners of the Balmain Leagues Club to overdevelop the site. During my time as Mayor of Leichhardt and as member for Balmain, I have stood shoulder to shoulder with the residents of Rozelle to ensure the amenity of their suburb is not destroyed permanently. I commend to the House the tireless efforts of all RRAG members, including Mark, Felicia, David, Robyn, Mick, Simon, Glenda and Tym. I thank them all for the work they do for the benefit of the whole community.

TRIBUTE TO MEL FLEMMING

Ms KATHY SMITH (Gosford) [5.28 p.m.]: Today I recognise a particularly special lady in my electorate of Gosford. Mel Flemming is a local resident of the Woy Woy Peninsula and, at 80 years of age, is still working hard to assist those in the community she feels are struggling or less fortunate than she is. Ms Flemming devotes herself to many charitable causes, including playing her ukulele at local

clubs and functions to raise money for charities that help those in need. She is a volunteer cook and prepares food for fetes and local shows to raise money for charity as well as assisting disabled members of the community. We thank Mel Flemming for her tireless commitment to our community.

WYONG YOUTH FRONTIERS SHOWCASE

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) [5.29 p.m.]: Recently I attended the Wyong Youth Frontiers Showcase at the Wyong RSL, where I had the opportunity to see the work of 15 young people from the Wyong High School in Berkley Vale that was part of their community project. Youth Frontiers is a youth mentoring program that is funded by the New South Wales Department of Education and Communities. Youth Frontiers is aimed at students in years 8 or 9, who have the capacity to benefit from youth mentoring that focuses on leadership and civic engagement.

Every year more than 1,200 young people have the opportunity to participate in the program, which is delivered across New South Wales and encompasses more than 30 hours of mentoring by a community volunteer and the development of a community project. I thank the organisers of the frontiers program in Wyong—Suzy and Julie—as well as all other mentors for taking so much time out of their lives to help our youth on the Central Coast. I also thank the schools for their participation, and of course their teachers for allowing students to take time out of their already busy schooling schedule and for helping them out with this well-run and most impressive program.

BROOKFARM MUESLI

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) [5.30 p.m.]: I congratulate Pam and Martin Brook of the Byron Bay business Brookfarm Muesli. Recently they won the New South Wales Premier's Award for Environmental Innovation as part of the 2015 Green Globe Awards. Brookfarm is a fantastic example of how a business can thrive and commit to environmental sustainability. I have been eating Brookfarm muesli—powered by the sun—for 10 years and seriously love Pam's and Martin's organic and local produce. The Brookfarm bakehouse has 288 rooftop solar panels that enable the business to generate its own clean energy. It has also installed a rainwater capture system and stores harvested water in an underground reservoir that not only provides pure water but also supports a rainforest regeneration program and 30,000 subtropical and eucalypt trees. I commend Brookfarm's efforts to date as true ambassadors for sustainable food production in our region.

ST PATRICK'S COLLEGE STUDENT PORTIA FERDINAND

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) [5.31 p.m.]: I ask the House to acknowledge St Patrick's College student Portia Ferdinand, whose gift for public speaking has resulted in her succeeding in the 2015 Quota Student of the Year competition. In August Portia competed against other students, testing her skills and passion against others in the region. Portia gave a passionate speech entitled "Postcode Discrimination", which addresses the negative stigma associated with life in south-west Sydney. I am sure many members will agree that the most enjoyable part of being a member of Parliament is engaging with our youth and supporting them in any way we can. I find it very energising and humbling to see the next generation fight the good fight and continue to be a voice in south-western Sydney as well as in the city of Campbelltown. Someone with as much passion and promise as Portia deserves the full congratulations of this House. I wish her all the best for the future.

TRIBUTE TO ANDREW GOODMAN

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [5.32 p.m.]: I commend Taree-based forest technician Andrew Goodman for joining an emergency response to assist in fighting raging wildfires in the north-west United States. Mr Goodwin works for the Forestry Corporation of NSW. He joined the 71-strong contingent of Australian and New Zealand personnel who were deployed to help to control more than 100 wildfires across California, Oregon and Washington this season. Firefighting is a

dangerous task. I commend Mr Goodman and all the crews involved for offering their willing support to our American counterparts. The New South Wales contribution of 18 firefighters as part of the contingent of 71 Australian and New Zealand personnel sent to the United States of America to assist with the wildfire situation included two firefighters from the Forestry Corporation. This is the second deployment of Australian firefighting crews this year, with more than 100 personnel recently returning from fighting the Canadian wildfires. I commend Mr Goodman.

TRIBUTE TO BILL SAVAROVSKI

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) [5.33 p.m.]: I offer my sincere congratulations to Bill Saravinovski on his recent achievement of the status of Emeritus Mayor of Rockdale at the 2015 New South Wales Local Government Conference. In particular, I acknowledge in this place the decades of outstanding service that Councillor Saravinovski has provided to the Rockdale community. Bill spent more than 30 years fighting for community interests, ensuring high standards of service, and protecting the financial assets of the council for the public good. As a result of his hard work, Rockdale City Council is providing record investment in capital works and community facilities, making our area an even better place in which to live, work and raise a family. I have known Councillor Saravinovski since I was in high school—where, as a prefect, he demonstrated his leadership skills by forcing me to pick up rubbish during recess. I probably deserved it. I look forward to Bill Saravinovski's continued service in the future.

PICTON MAGPIES RUGBY LEAGUE TEAM

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) [5.34 p.m.]: I congratulate a much-loved local rugby league team on an amazing season this year. I acknowledge the Picton Magpies for their 46:0 defeat of the Camden Rams in the first grade final of the Group 6 Rugby League Premierships. The match is believed to have attracted more than 4,000 attendees at the Campbelltown stadium. Congratulations to try scorers Michael Lett, Nick Taylor, Billy Carroll, Matt Dengate, Don Thompson, Josh McIlvenny and Rory Vale. Further congratulations are extended to hooker Anthony Provost, who was named Man of the Match. This is the Picton Magpies third consecutive grand final win. I wish the whole team the best as they go for a fourth grand final win during 2016. Go the Magpies!

ST GEORGE BRICK FAIR

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) [5.35 p.m.]: On Sunday I had the opportunity to visit the St George Brick Fair at the Hurstville South Public School. The brick fair aims to use Lego pieces to nurture a sense of imagination and creativity in young persons—and sometimes in not-so-young persons. Now in its second year, the St George Brick Fair boasts a collection of more than half a million bricks, which were used to build an array of impressive pieces. The event attracted 2,000 people who, by attending, assisted in paying for much-needed renovation programs at the school. It was wonderful to see the local community pitch in to help advertise the event, with local stores and shops putting up signs and flyers. It is events such as those, which creatively blend community participation and fundraising to benefit the local area, that other community groups should adopt as a model when undertaking their own fundraising ventures. I congratulate the parents and citizens association at the Hurstville South Public School.

SUSTAINABILITY INNOVATION FORUM YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE PARRYS RAINES

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.36 p.m.]: I congratulate Parys Raines, who will address COP21—the 2015 Paris Climate Conference—which aims to achieve a legally binding and universal agreement on climate with the goal of keeping global warming below 2^o Celsius. The December conference is expected to attract close to 50,000 participants, including 25,000 official delegates from government, intergovernmental organisations, United Nations agencies, non-government organisations and civil society. I am pleased that Parys received a \$900 grant from the New South Wales Government to support her in meeting expenses during her visit to Paris next month. Parys is on the

Sustainability Innovation Forum as the youth representative, which is a huge honour. Parys is an environmental law student and earlier this year received the Law and Community Scholarship for her environment work during the University of Wollongong Law Awards. She is also a Youth Ambassador for OzHarvest, an Enviroweek Ambassador, Earth Hour Ambassador, WWF Youth Ambassador and three times Australian Representative to the United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP].

TRIBUTE TO JANICE GOODEN

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) [5.37 p.m.]: Teachers are some of the most hardworking and under-recognised professionals in our society. Today I recognise a local teacher, Cabramatta High School deputy principal Janice Gooden. Ms Gooden has been teaching at Cabramatta High School for 28 years. She recently won the Creative Leadership in Learning Award at the inaugural Principals Celebration for her role in managing the \$7.7million upgrade to Cabramatta High School, which commenced under the Labor Government. Ms Gooden worked tirelessly to make sure the upgrades, which took five years to complete, went smoothly. On behalf of my community I congratulate Ms Gooden on her award, and thank her for her contribution to my community.

VICTOR AND MARGARET MCCUTCHEON SIXTY-FIFTH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) [5.38 p.m.]: I congratulate Victor and Margaret McCutcheon of the Central Coast on their sixty-fifth wedding anniversary. They were married on 21 October 1950 at the Church of England in Wyong, which is where their life of adventure began. Their first home was on a farm at Peats Ridge, where they raised three children—Brian, Cheryl and Lynette. Victor started the much-loved and much-needed Mangrove Mountain Produce store, where he sold his produce, fuel and groceries. Moving to East Gosford, Victor and Margaret ran a corner store. Not letting the grass grow under their feet, Mr McCutcheon established the McCutcheon Real Estate office that later became North Gosford Real Estate. In his spare time Victor McCutcheon started the Central Coast Volunteer Coastal Patrol. In the early days he used his own boat to help the police tow boats to safety. He saved many lives during his volunteer years. I reiterate my congratulations to Mr and Mrs McCutcheon on their sixty-fifth wedding anniversary, and wish them many more to come.

PENRITH ANGLICAN COLLEGE

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.39 p.m.]: I commend the Penrith Anglican College community on its recent missionary work in the Nepalese community of Nukowot. On 19 September 2015 a group of 24 students and 15 adults embarked upon a two-week journey to that small town, which had been left shattered following the earthquakes that rocked Nepal earlier this year. The main focus of the trip centred on the rebuilding and reconstruction of the local village's Shree Rastrya School, which collapsed as a result of the earthquakes. The Penrith Anglican College managed to surpass its original fundraising target of \$10,000 and raised \$12,500. The money funded the critical rebuilding efforts at Shree Rastrya School and purchased books, computers, whiteboards and readers. In addition, the Dean of Students, Ms Cathie Graydon, said that those who were on the mission cleared between 150 and 200 tonnes of rubble, which is an extraordinary effort. Those who participated should feel immensely proud. I congratulate everyone involved on the compassion they demonstrated and on their exemplary leadership skills.

NEW LAND MAGAZINE

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.40 p.m.]: Australia's largest Chinese magazine, *New Land*, prides itself on quality journalism, with real stories embracing material from ancient Chinese tales to the finest Australian lifestyle information. Its mission is to link, market and brand Australian businesses with the fast-growing Chinese market, as well as local Chinese and Australian mainstream society. It assists Chinese people to be involved in and adapt to the Australian way of life, and introduces the essence of traditional Chinese culture to mainstream Australia.

The *New Land* magazine has a monthly circulation of 20,000 and an estimated readership of 80,000. There are sections in both Chinese and English languages. It will host a celebration of 100 issues next week, which I will be delighted to attend. I wish everyone associated with the magazine continued success, particularly its brand director, Michelle Lam, and publisher, Michael Li, who are local constituents in my electorate of Davidson. I hope the magazine continues to inform and entertain, as well as help to bridge gaps between Chinese and Australian cultures for many years to come.

JACK LITTLEFIELD LIGHT MIDDLEWEIGHT BOXING TITLE

Mr ANDREW GEE (Orange—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.41 p.m.]: Tonight I inform the House that Orange boxer Jack Littlefield recently claimed the New South Wales light middleweight title in Cobar, in what was an extremely convincing win. What made the win more extraordinary is that Jack is only 17 years old and in claiming this title he defeated a 27-year-old opponent. Jack is trained by his father, Dave. Although Jack says that Dave trains him pretty hard, that training clearly paid off in a very dominating performance. Jack is now turning his attention to the Australian amateur boxing league national championships to be held later in the month at which he will compete in his own age group. I offer my congratulations to Jack and Dave. I wish Jack all the best at the national championships.

Community recognition statements concluded.

Pursuant to sessional order private members' statements proceeded with.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ILLAWARRA SERVICE NSW CENTRE

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) [5.42 p.m.]: I inform the House that my constituents have been treated with utter contempt by this Government over the provision of Service NSW centres in the Illawarra. In August the Government finally confirmed what I had known weeks before—namely, that the office of the Shellharbour Motor Registry, located at Shellharbour Square, would close and that a new Service NSW centre would be established in Warrawong in the electorate of Wollongong. I do not in any way begrudge the people of Warrawong having access to this new service. However, the Government has seen fit not to establish a new Service NSW centre in the electorate of Shellharbour following the closure of the Shellharbour motor registry office. The Minister expects my constituents to visit a Service NSW centre in Kiama or in Warrawong where one is to be established.

I have requested a meeting with the Minister, but like his colleague the Minister for Skills, with whom I requested a meeting to discuss the future of the Dapto TAFE campus, he has refused to meet with me. A Service NSW centre is located in every Illawarra-based electorate. There is one in Corrimal in the electorate of Keira, two in the electorate of Wollongong and one in Kiama, but for some unexplained reason a Service NSW centre will not be established in Shellharbour. My constituents will not have these services available to them—services that other local communities enjoy in the areas in which they live. My constituents are expected to drive or catch the bus to access the services that are available to the constituents of the member for Kiama and the member for Wollongong at the Service NSW centres in those electorates.

I do not expect North Shore-based Ministers to understand the extra challenges that regional communities face. If their constituents have the capacity to hop into a Bentley, Mercedes or Range Rover, why would they care too much about a pensioner who, because public transport is so pathetic, has to catch a bus and travel for up to an hour to and from a Service NSW centre? My electorate, unlike others in the Illawarra, is essentially split into two separate communities because Lake Illawarra sits right in the middle of it. My electorate, unlike others in the Illawarra, is a population growth centre. New housing

developments are popping up in West Dapto, Tallawarra, Yallah, Flinders and Shell Cove. Yet despite this growth in population, instead of replacing a popular and easily accessible motor registry with a new Service NSW centre, the Government has decided to close our motor registry and leave it at that.

A range of criteria exists to determine the physical network of Service NSW centres. I have suggested to the Minister that my electorate exceeds the criteria for the establishment of a Service NSW centre in the electorate of Shellharbour. I am currently gathering letters from my constituents who are demanding the Minister establish a new service centre in this electorate. Indeed, my office is being flooded with letters from my constituents who are appalled by this Government's contempt. My constituents should not be treated like second-class citizens by this Government. The irony is that the Government will be forced to establish such a Service NSW centre in my electorate. It is only a matter of time.

SHOALHAVEN EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT CENTRE

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—The Speaker) [5.44 p.m.]: Last Friday I had much pleasure in attending the sod turning ceremony for the integrated emergency management centre at South Nowra. The centre is currently occupied by Rural Fire Service [RFS] and State Emergency Service [SES] operations and has a key role in the management of responses to a wide range of emergencies on the South Coast. The RFS at Nowra has 11 full-time staff and hundreds of volunteers who make up 36 brigades. They log an average of 1,500 incident calls, which requires more than 2,000 brigade responses per year. The SES has 175 members and from 1 July 2014 to 31 August 2015 they dealt with 1,131 calls for assistance. These hardworking and dedicated people are on the front line. They protect people on the South Coast and elsewhere throughout the State when they need it the most.

I was delighted to be there for the start of this exciting project, which will deliver state-of-the-art facilities to assist these key organisations in serving the people of my electorate. I was joined at the ceremony by Superintendent Mark Williams, district manager of the Shoalhaven Rural Fire Service; Mark Kielly, SES unit controller; Mayor Joanna Gash and a number of councillors from Shoalhaven City Council; Russ Pigg, General Manager of Shoalhaven City Council; Ben Stewart, director of assets and works at Shoalhaven City Council; as well as staff and volunteers. This project has been a collaborative effort and I congratulate all those involved on their hard work and dedication, which culminated in this sod turning ceremony.

The total funding from the State Government at this stage is \$2.28 million for the Rural Fire Service for two extensions and one new building at the site; and \$150,000 towards an extension of the State Emergency Service storage facilities. Shoalhaven City Council has contributed \$242,000, in addition to its 11.7 per cent towards the cost of the RFS component. The NSW Rural Fire Service Shoalhaven district headquarters improvements are funded by a grant of \$80,000 under the New South Wales Government's Community Building Partnership, which I was very pleased to support. The SES and RFS both have administration and operations rooms, plus there is a separate emergency operations centre, which is used to provide both on ground and support assistance during major incidents, regardless of jurisdiction or type.

The building will be opened up between departments to improve communications, logistics and operations, with completion by June 2016. The new extension is funded through an allocation of \$650,000 from the Rural Fire Fighting Fund, with council providing funds of \$62,000 for the SES component of the extension. In addition there is an extension underway to the RFS garage and a new SES 10-bay storage shed. A lot is happening on site at the moment. The RFS has an existing garage, but the amount of equipment it has acquired since the centre was built about 15 years ago is greater than the available space. For a long time now these facilities have needed to be expanded. The extension will also accommodate large RFS response vehicles, including the Cat 1 fire tankers.

Construction has commenced on the RFS garage-storage extension funded from the Rural Fire

Fighting Fund allocation, with work to be completed by April 2016. As I have said, at a cost of \$305,000 the new SES storage garage includes 10 bays for vehicles. Following the development consent the works will be tendered for construction, with work to be completed by August 2016. When it is completed the centre will be one of the finest in the State. It will lead the way in service delivery and the management of emergency events, whether fire or flood, in the Shoalhaven. Our volunteers throughout the State put their lives on the line to defend our lives and our properties. We want to make sure they have the best possible facilities.

But this is only the start. In the future we will look at integrating an emergency services hub, which will incorporate marine rescue and surf lifesaving as well. We recognise that all those agencies come together when we have an emergency and they all need to be accommodated together. This will happen in the near future, but at the moment the sod turning at the site last Friday is the start of a fantastic expansion of facilities, extension of facilities and internal refurbishment of current facilities. I know the volunteers are very excited that this has begun. Some stages will not begin until after Christmas because of the fire season, but this will be the start of something big. I look forward to the completion of the facility and joining with the volunteers when the services centre is completed.

MEN FROM SNOW RIVER RECRUITMENT MARCH RE-ENACTMENT

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) [5.49 p.m.]: Yesterday members of this House and citizens of this nation paused on Remembrance Day to remember those who have paid the ultimate price and made a sacrifice for the freedom and democracy that we as a nation and the world celebrate. In this centenary year there have been many opportunities to recognise moments in the history of war and with that come a number of stories. We know that during World War I recruitment marches, or snowball marches to Sydney were a feature of volunteering recruitment drives for the Australian Imperial Force [AIF] in rural New South Wales.

Between October 1915 and February 1916 there were nine marches starting from various points in the State. The most notable was the first march from Gilgandra, known as the Cooee March. In 1918, in an effort to promote recruitment, another march was staged but this was less spontaneous and the marchers in fact travelled by train. The marches were called "snowball marches" in the hope that like a snowball rolling down a hill will pick up more snow, gaining mass and surface area and picking up even more snow as it rolls along, the marchers would also collect more marchers as they progressed to the recruiting depot. In my electorate the Men from Snowy River was a story of such a march. Following the successes of the Cooee march in December 1915, 12 men set out from Delegate on 6 January 1916 to march the 220 miles to the nearest AIS training depot, currently the site of the Goulburn High School.

Marching under the Man from Snowy River banner, now housed in the Western Front Gallery at the Australian War Memorial, the recruitment march passed through the major regional centres of my electorate of Monaro with civil receptions in Bombala, Cooma, Queanbeyan, Bungendore and Goulburn. Although volunteers joined the Snowies as they passed through smaller towns and villages, massive civil receptions at larger centres celebrated the Snowy recruits, which were intended to entice further eligible recruits at the meetings to do likewise. Such was the case with recruit Timothy McMahon who, despite volunteering to march with the men from Snowy River at Michelago, was employed by recruiting staff to dramatically volunteer at several of these receptions to appeal to the patriotism of the crowd and lure other volunteers into enlisting.

The Men from Snowy River recruitment march arrived in Goulburn on 28 January 1916 with 144 men. Despite the massive media attention the recruitment march received in the local press, the end result of 144 recruits was disappointing to recruiting staff who had envisaged at least 200 men. One recruited to join the march was Ernest Albert Corey, a blacksmith from Nimmitabel. Corey later served with the 55th Battalion as a stretcher bearer, and is recognised as the only soldier in the British Empire to be awarded the Military Medal four times. The majority of recruits who enlisted during the march later

formed the fourth reinforcements of the 55th Battalion, AIF, and all of them saw service on the Western Front. Of the 144 men who enlisted in the march, 39 were later to be killed in action and 75 became casualties.

The Men from Snowy River recruitment march was revived during the Second World War when men retraced the original path of the Snowies, albeit with a diversion to Canberra. Both recruitment marches were commemorated by a re-enactment of the march and a civil reception at the hall at Delegate in January 2006, on the ninetieth anniversary of the original Men from Snowy River march. In this centenary year many in my region with a connection to men from the original marches have put together a working group to make sure we continue to recognise those who have sacrificed for this nation.

In the month leading up to Remembrance Day family members, young and old, with connections to the original marches re-enacted the march. I congratulate those who organised these marches in Bombala, Delegate, Bibbenluke, Nimmitabel, Cooma, Bredbo and Michelago. I attended the event in Queanbeyan on Sunday where there was a fantastic turnout of community members to remember the sacrifices of the men. It was an honour to stand at yesterday's commemoration service at Martin Place and watch a small contingent of Men from Snowy River with their banner.

ROTARY CLUBS OF NSW 2015 NSW POLICE OFFICER AWARDS

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) [5.54 p.m.]: I bring to the attention of the House the Rotary Clubs of NSW 2015 NSW Police Officer Awards, which were held last week. It is worth noting that among senior and junior police officers who received awards or were nominated as finalists, a number of them were from local area commands [LACs] in the Prospect electorate. I congratulate the New South Wales Police Officer of the Year from the Field Operations Local Area Command, Detective Sergeant James Asimacopoulos from the Kings Cross Local Area Command, which is obviously outside Prospect. From the Fairfield Local Area Command Detective Sergeant Andrew Barnes was a finalist in the NSW Rotary Customer Service Excellence Officer of the Year Award for his outstanding service to the local community and his actions as listed in the awards:

In December 2009, Det Sgt Andrew Barnes led an investigation into an horrific multiple homicide that occurred in Wetherill Park. From the very beginning, he went above and beyond to provide immeasurable support, care and respect for the victim's family.

During the three-year investigation and judicial process into the crime, Det Sgt Barnes remained in constant contact with the grieving family, showing the utmost determination, care, dignity, decency and honesty. The matter concluded in October 2014 but he remains in contact with the victim's family.

"As with many families who experience such an unspeakable crime, we are still battered and bruised nearly five years on," a family member wrote. "We do, however, have some hope and sense of belief that there is good in the world. Sgt Barnes has been a vital part of our healing and we ask that the respect and compassion he offered to be recognised."

Those are amazing words from victims of crime after a very sad event. Detective Sergeant Barnes is to be congratulated on this recognition. A number of other people were nominated for these awards. Amongst the nominees under the Field Operations Local Area Command Police Officer of the year were Senior Constable Rabii Haddad from Holroyd Local Area Command and Sergeant John Purcell from Wetherill Park Radio Electronics Section. Under the NSW Rotary Community Awards was Sergeant Shawn Harkins from the Forensic Services Group based in Pemulwuy.

A number of people from the Blacktown Local Area Command were nominated in the NSW Rotary Customer Service Excellence Officer of the Year category including Constable Anita Golebiowski,

Constable Darren Boyd, Frances New, Judith Dibden, Sergeant Yvette Smith, Senior Constable Deborah Lee, Senior Constable Doug Talbot, Senior Constable Elyse Houldin and Senior Constable Nathan McDonald. There were also nominees from the Fairfield Local Area Command: Constable Andrew Powrie, Constable Matthew Green, Sergeant Andrew Barnes, Senior Constable Korolyn Bottle, Senior Constable Matthew Green as well as Jessie Davis from the Forensic Services Group. There were nominees from a number of LACs for the NSW Rotary Volunteer of the Year including Frances New from Blacktown Local Area Command. There were nominees from a number of LACs for the NSW Rotary Police Employee of the Year including Dani Coghlan from Holroyd Local Area Command and Judith Dibden from Blacktown Local Area Command.

This year marks the 100th anniversary of women in policing in New South Wales, which was also acknowledged. The first two female police officers in New South Wales were Lillian May Armfield and Maude Rhodes. They were awarded the Paul Harris fellowship in recognition of their service over 100 years ago. It is wonderful to see women taking the lead in the NSW Police Force. Rotary clubs in New South Wales do amazing work, as do the police. We must acknowledge the work that they do. I congratulate the organisers on the awards night. I thank the officers of the NSW Police Force, who every day face danger to ensure the safety of our community.

REMEMBRANCE DAY AND MARSDEN HIGH SCHOOL

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) [5.59 p.m.]: A solemn and honest passage from Shakespeare's St Crispin's Day speech resonates as we remember the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month in 1918. Remembrance Day is the day when we remember the 60,000 men who departed the shores of Australia—fathers, uncles, sons, brothers, husbands and fiancés—who never returned to their loved ones. It is the day when we remember the moment when the gunfire that barked across the fields and cities of Europe for four long, wretched years ended. It is the day when we remember the lives lost in the service of this country. We remember the fallen men and our returned ex-servicemen who endured unspeakable experiences and did not shy away from their memories.

On 23 October at Marsden High School, year 10 history students and their teachers, Cimen Fevzi and Sean van der Heide, supported by principal Gus Vrolyk, had the opportunity to meet veterans Warren Collins, Steve Taylor and Bernie Fox, and survivors of the London bombing Marina and Harry Peskett. The students gained a firsthand view of life during war. Without iPhones and computers, the students participated in the storytelling program and were able to listen to and ingest the reminiscences of wartime encounters. The students lost themselves in the stories recounted by the veterans. The students who participated were Simon Becker, James Bongers, Melvin Buenaventura, Vivian Chen, Rachel Dismorr, Callum Irving, Dongju Kim, Ivy Lao, Hugh McFarlane, Sandy Nguyen, Lina Okati, Timothy Pinzone, Lisa Plummer, Saba Saeidi, Benjamin Spencely, Sarah Travis and Jordan Wass. Students were asked to give their impressions, and I have been amazed at their perceptions. Tim Pinzone shared:

These Veteran's stories will not be forgotten; we will not forget all that they fought for. We thank them for their service and feel honoured to share in their legacy. They will be remembered and their heroic stories will not be forgotten.

Benjamin Spencely revealed:

While talking to Bernie, Harry and Marina, I gained a deeper appreciation of war. Reading war journals and watching war movies can't replicate the emotion that you feel hearing their stories in person. The slight tremble in their voice, the calm look in their eyes ... It built a distinct picture in my head. I'm incredibly grateful that I was given the opportunity to form it.

Callum Irving said:

I met Harry and Marina Peskett when they visited our school for Veteran's Day. That morning, I woke up, ate breakfast, packed my bag and walked to school. In 1944, Marina was 7 years old and didn't go to school. That night when I went home, I slept in my own bed, in my own room. When Marina went to bed in 1944, she and her family were crammed into a small iron cage (called a 'Morrison' bomb shelter) to try and sleep. These days we hear a lot about resilience and Marina and Harry helped me develop a much greater understanding of what that really means.

Lina Okati reflected:

I feel grateful to be living in a time and place where I'm never going to encounter wars like that. When I asked Steve Taylor if he regretted his enlistment in the war, he answered "no", because his participation changed his life and made him a different person. Still, he never forgot his experiences during the war ...

Hugh McFarlane understood:

The mutual respect that Bernie had for the Vietnamese was very noble. I was impressed to see that after all that had happened he maintained sympathy for them, saying that they did "a pretty good job" and that you've "gotta admire them". I was struck by his understanding and forgiveness and I hope I can model it in my life.

Saba Saedi noted:

I was impressed with how full of life the veterans were that I met. They had been through so much and yet had the strength not to let their experiences interfere with the continuation of their day to day lives.

This was a very powerful learning experience for the students, who were clearly touched by the experiences and now have a better understanding of why we remember. I am so grateful for this initiative in the electorate of Ryde that allowed students to speak with veterans in our community. I saw firsthand the rapport that developed between the diggers and the students. There is only so much that one can understand from reading a book or watching a movie. Hearing from veterans about their personal experiences was an opportunity that those students will treasure forever. I thank Principal Gus Vrolyk of Marsden High School for allowing his students to take part in this valuable experience.

GREEN SQUARE HOUSING DENSITY

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) [6.04 p.m.]: I inform the House of a matter of real significance and concern—that is, the proposed population expansion and density in the area known as Green Square. The largest urban revitalisation project, I would venture, ever undertaken in this country is occurring in my electorate of Heffron. It comprises several precincts, including Victoria Park, North Rosebery and Green Square. The sum of these developments is anticipated, upon completion, to house some 60,000 residents. That is 60,000 new residents. I am talking about an average density of 20,000 people per square kilometre. To put that in perspective, a square kilometre in the City of Melbourne houses around 8,000 people. Green Square will be a brand-new electorate on its own.

I accept that an increasing number of people want to move into the city. Who can blame them? Sydney is one of the most beautiful cities in the world. Increasing the housing density is an obvious and logical solution. While I do not oppose development, I do oppose carelessness, and that is exactly how I would characterise the haphazard, piecemeal planning policies of successive New South Wales governments. These policies have not only caused unbelievable traffic gridlock but failed to address the infrastructure needs of new residents. One cannot plan for and build increased housing density without planning for the associated infrastructure. Green Square is an example of planning failure. I repeat: The largest urban revitalisation project in this country is an example of planning failure.

The increased housing density has been created without infrastructure, and huge increases are still to come. Apart from gridlocked streets, the schools and hospitals are full, ambulances cannot get through the streets, people cannot get on buses at peak periods and buses cannot move in the streets. It is an example of how planning has not worked. Planning for future population density must include planning for infrastructure to support that population. Roads, public transport, schools, hospitals, water and sewerage, social services and associated infrastructure must also be planned and paid for. In Green Square the population density has increased without a corresponding increase in infrastructure. There is no funding for that infrastructure. There are no plans or solutions.

It is not a solution to suggest that a light rail network could be built in the never-never. The solution is to plan and to fund. Funding can be by developer contributions. There must be an understanding of the infrastructure that is needed. Every school in my electorate is full, including Catholic and independent schools. The primary schools and all but one high school are at capacity. There is increasing demand for the Minister for Education to fund inner-city schools. People are crying out for places for their children as families move into areas where there is high population density. A moratorium on any further population density increases is needed right now. That will give the Government time to catch up. Without that, the current intolerable situation will become worse.

If you look at the skyline from the Eastern Distributor you will see the cranes in the air—that is fine. But what is happening on the ground is not fine. The million-dollar apartments sold in Zetland without car parking will be the ghettos of tomorrow unless infrastructure is constructed and supported. There is nothing wrong with increasing population density, but this is an example of planning failure by successive governments that have stupidly handed the decision to developers.

GRAFTON CORRECTIONAL CENTRE

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.09 p.m.]: I thank the New South Wales Minister for Corrective Services, the Hon. David Elliott, for reopening Grafton jail to its full capacity. The recent announcement of 114 more beds for Grafton jail will bring the number of inmates to more than 270, which is back to the size it was in 2012 before it was downsized to a remand centre. This is great news for Grafton and the Clarence Valley as it brings jobs to the region and boosts the local economy with the additional spend from the increased employment and the affiliated services that are required to run the jail. We know that jobs in regional New South Wales are difficult to find and this is a terrific shot in the arm for people looking for a job in the Clarence Valley.

There is no denying that the downsizing of Grafton jail had an impact on the local economy of Grafton, as well as a personal impact on the staff who lost their jobs and had to leave the area. They were part of the social fabric that makes us a great community. Their kids went to the local school and they belonged to sporting and community organisations. So I am very pleased that the New South Wales Government has listened to my requests for assistance and has responded in a very positive and direct way to the concerns of the community. Since the election in 2011 the primary focus of the New South Wales Nationals has been to deliver jobs to regional New South Wales. Jobs are the major concern for people living in regional areas and the New South Wales Coalition Government has delivered to the people in my electorate.

Public service jobs have been decentralised to Grafton with the Crown road closure program, the Rental Bond Board as well as additional jobs with Roads and Maritime Services, Service NSW and the Office of Environment and Heritage. There is more good news for Grafton and the Clarence Valley with the announcement earlier this year of a new 600-bed jail to be built in Grafton under a public-private arrangement. This will create a further 200-plus full-time jobs in the Clarence Valley and many more indirect jobs. That is in addition to the major infrastructure projects in the Clarence electorate that are due to be completed by 2020. They are projects such as the Pacific Highway upgrade, jointly funded by the New South Wales Government and the Federal Coalition Government, and the second Grafton bridge,

funded by the New South Wales Government.

The Liberal-Nationals Government is focused on regional infrastructure and regional jobs and the electorate of Clarence is a clear beneficiary of the great policy initiatives of the Baird-Grant Government. These infrastructure projects are long overdue and will move us into the twenty-first century as well as boosting our local economy and creating jobs. We know the jobs may be short term, which is why the new 600-bed jail is so welcome. It will provide regional jobs well into the future. Our jails are full and I certainly make no apology for that. The best place for those who continually break the law is jail. I do not want them lurking around my place with malicious intent in the wee hours of the morning, nor do my neighbours or the community. I welcome them to the old Grafton jail and I will also welcome them to the new Grafton jail when it is built. I congratulate the New South Wales Government on introducing tougher bail laws and I congratulate our police on catching the crooks and keeping our streets safe.

Our crime statistics are trending down because of the increased number of police and the great work they are doing in our communities and if it comes at the cost of an increase in our jail capacity then so be it. There are always winners and losers in the world and under the Liberal-Nationals Government the crooks are the losers and Grafton and the Clarence Valley are the winners. Once again, I thank the Minister for Corrective Services for the great opportunity he has afforded the electorate of Clarence. The New South Wales Nationals are delivering for regional New South Wales. They are boosting our local economies with further infrastructure, more jobs and increasing the confidence of our communities. I thank the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government for looking after my electorate of Clarence and particularly Grafton since the jail was downsized.

FAIRFAX MEDIA REGIONAL STAFF CUTS

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) [6.14 p.m.]: The former managing editor of *Time* magazine, Henry Anatole Grunwald, once said:

Journalism can never be silent: that is its greatest virtue and its greatest fault. It must speak, and speak immediately, while the echoes of wonder, the claims of triumph and the signs of horror are still in the air.

For the communities of the New England north-west, and particularly those in the electorate of Northern Tablelands, this immediacy, this virtue and occasional fault, this act of journalism, is under very serious threat. Last Thursday, 5 November 2015, will be a date forever etched in the memories of community leaders, journalists and staff at Fairfax media outlets in the north-west region and Northern Tablelands electorate. It was a day in which the axe was brandished and it is now poised to fall on many employees at many newspaper publications throughout my electorate. I made a clear statement on that day that the proposed cuts to Fairfax staff have no support: not from me, not from any political leaders, not from any quarter in our region.

The region's leaders, including me, have been unequivocal in our strident condemnation of a decision by Fairfax that will not only hurt employees and their families but also the political discourse, communication and discussion in what is a vibrant and growing region in regional New South Wales. Fairfax media wants to axe more than 22 staff across our region, the majority of them editorial staff. The company's proposal, if implemented, would result in the number of editorial staff being more than halved at the *Moree Champion*, the *Glen Innes Examiner*, the *Namoi Valley Independent*, and the *Armidale Express*, just to mention a few. They will be cutting the number of photographers employed across the region from five to one to cover a multitude of publications, which is impossible. The plan will also close the *Guyra Argis* office and the office of the *Walcha News*, forgoing the four staff there—and those cuts hurt the most.

Fairfax has announced that those mastheads will remain. The journalists covering news in Guyra and Walcha will be based in Armidale. I am not an expert but it is a bit difficult to cover local news in

Guyra when you are working from a desk in Armidale and even more difficult to cover the latest happenings in Walcha when you are sitting at a desk more than 80 kilometres away writing news for a community you do not work or live in. Given Fairfax's history, the journalist appointed will have no understanding of that community. The massive job cuts threaten to damage the quality of regional journalism and affect the ability of our local press to comprehensively and independently cover news and sport throughout the Northern Tablelands.

Many of our local newspapers have a rich and proud history that extends back more than 100 years. The dedicated journalists and staff are the greatest assets of those mastheads. They have invested years of service in sustaining these grand journals of record. They understand the communities and what makes them tick. They cover the big and small stories, and the happy and the sad: The CWA fiftieth anniversary, the cake stall at the local school fete, through to the big issues of government funding announcements, cuts and various other political intrigue. I make it clear that should the proposed cuts proceed it will be a monumental failure by Fairfax management to deal with the changing media market. It has been changing for years and they have failed to deal with that change and manage for the long term.

Management may well be about doing right, but leadership is about doing the right things. The proposal by Fairfax is useless, hopeless; it lacks vision and displays no foresight. Clearly the demand for media has not changed but the delivery method has. To this day Fairfax websites do not contain paywalls. Fairfax competitors have no trouble in establishing similar mechanisms to deliver paid online content, but Fairfax just has not been able to catch up with the trend. I make it quite clear that I will continue to urge Fairfax, as I outlined in my notice of motion, to reconsider its proposal. It is asking for community feedback within two weeks. I urge the community to give that feedback loudly, unequivocally and clearly. These cuts will not be tolerated; we need our local papers to continue to serve our communities as they have done for 100 years.

TRIBUTE TO THELMA SPENCER

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) [6.19 p.m.]: With a heavy heart today I inform the House of the passing of Thelma Spencer. Thelma sadly passed away on Thursday last week aged 108. She will be remembered as a big-hearted woman who lived each of her 108 years to the fullest. Thelma was one of this State's most senior residents. The House will remember the story of Thelma. I was very pleased to be able to recognise her 108th birthday in this place with one of my very first community recognition statements. I first met Thelma when I was doorknocking in Valentine during the election campaign. I almost did not believe her when she told me that she was 107 years old. In fact, her son, Jim, had to call out to her as she was out the back, fixing her washing machine. I could not believe it at the time.

Mrs Thelma Spencer was born Thelma Levi on 14 June 1907 and grew up in Redfern, the third of seven children. Her family moved to the Sutherland shire when she was a teenager and she later ran a corner store in Yowie Bay with her late husband, James. It was while living in the shire that Thelma began her love affair with the Cronulla Sharks. She remained a staunch supporter until the very end and was loyal through both the good times and the bad. She described to me how she ran the shop alone during the war years when James was in Tobruk fighting for the Australian Army. Her children, Tina and Jim, recounted many stories of their life in the shop and the mischief they got up to without their mum knowing—or so they thought. Thelma gave me a smile and a wink as her children shared their stories with me. She was a strong woman with a great sense of humour, a sharp mind and astute business acumen. She later worked as a piano and violin teacher, which gave her a great sense of enjoyment. She moved to Valentine when she was 65 years old to live with her son, Jim, who is now 79.

To give a bit of context to just how much Thelma saw in her 108 years, consider this: She was born the same year as the first telephone call between Sydney and Melbourne, which was also the same year the Bondi Surf Bathers' Life Saving Club was formed at Bondi Beach—the first of its kind in the world. She was seven at the outbreak of World War I and, in fact, she remembered well the Great Depression when we spoke. When I congratulated Thelma on what would be her last of 108 birthdays, I

noted that at 108 she was certainly no shrinking violet. She was tough, funny and she had a sense of wit that was up there with the best of them. Of course, she had the wisdom that belongs to 108-year-olds. We should never underestimate how important that insight is when someone has lived through so much. I personally respect that level of intellect enormously. In a lovely piece in the *Newcastle Herald*, penned by Helen Gregory after Thelma's passing, her nephew Vic Levi said the mother of two, grandmother of four and great-grandmother of six was kind, loved a joke and cherished her family. He went on to say:

Her legacy will be the love she showed for her children and all her relatives; she got on with everybody.

Her family meant so much to her, she was very loyal to her family and they were very loyal to her.

She was going the full distance; she was determined to get as much out of life as she could.

Mr Levi said the highlight of Mrs Spencer's year had been meeting the Cronulla Sharks when they played the Newcastle Knights at Hunter Stadium and receiving a hug and a kiss from captain Paul Gallen. Mrs Spencer had been planning to meet the New South Wales Governor, General David Hurley, next month at an annual gathering of centenarians. It would have been her turn to cut the cake. Thelma Spencer, you are loved by those close to you and respected in your community. May you rest in peace.

REDEEMER BAPTIST SCHOOL

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.24 p.m.]: I bring to the attention of the House Redeemer Baptist School's continual dedication to humanitarian work and its strong educational and pastoral care for the Parramatta community. As I have said before, under the guidance and direction of principal Jonathan Cannon and headmaster Russell Bailey and the work done by its great staff, Redeemer Baptist School is one of the area's outstanding schools. The school's performance and leadership continues to be a community beacon. Redeemer Baptist School has extended its reach and has developed genuine friendships with metropolitan and remote communities as they engage in charitable fundraising towards providing personal assistance for genuine needs.

For the past three years, Redeemer students have contributed to schooling expenses for students travelling from the very remote Canteen Creek Aboriginal community to Redeemer Baptist for their senior studies because there is no senior school within hundreds of kilometres of their desert home in the Northern Territory. In the process, Redeemer students are forming long-term friendships with young people from entirely different cultural backgrounds as they share study, sport and a Christian world view of education. In addition, this year Redeemer students raised sufficient funds to support the Bourke community through Pastor George Mann and the Bourke Full Gospel Family Fellowship. This Bourke church helps both drought-affected farmers and needy Indigenous communities.

In response to a request from Bourke, Redeemer students purchased an attractive black tubular metal security fence to replace the uninviting cyclone and barbed wire that surrounded the church building. They travelled to Bourke a couple of weeks ago to install the fence and to share with the locals. Redeemer students led Sunday worship in Bourke and then travelled to Gundabooka National Park for an enriching cultural experience as Bourke Aboriginal elder and park ranger Phil Sullivan shared a thought-provoking reflection while they were viewing some ancient Indigenous cave paintings. At the end of their time in Bourke the students provided a food donation to benefit a poor, remote community who had recently sought assistance from the Bourke Full Gospel church.

In recent years, Redeemer students have forged other significant friendships through rebuilding a church in the remote northern New South Wales Muli Muli Aboriginal community and through providing equipment for a youth camping program that had been gutted by the 2009 fires affecting Marysville in Victoria. Redeemer students have also supported their peers in a remote subsistence village in Papua New Guinea, providing solar power and lighting for the Itokama Primary School and a mechanical slasher

to maintain their village airstrip.

All of this is in the context of excellent Redeemer Baptist student academic achievements including, this year, a world second prize from the American Psychological Society at the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair in Pittsburgh; two more national prizes in the Dorothea Mackellar Poetry Awards; another gold award in the Board of Studies Teaching and Educational Standards WriteOn competition; a University of NSW medal in the International Competitions and Assessments for Schools English competition; another prize in the Lions Voice of Youth Public Speaking Competition in my electorate; more silver and bronze medals in the NSW Combined Independent Schools swimming and athletics carnivals; and another Western Sydney University Dean's Medal for a Redeemer Baptist alumnus.

Redeemer Baptist community has much to be proud of—from its commitment to the community to its strong academic performance. I congratulate the students on winning a multitude of awards in science, mathematics, writing, public speaking and sport, and the Redeemer alumni on receiving a number of dean's commendations and a medal from a number of metropolitan universities. I commend Redeemer's ongoing vision not only for inspiring their students to achieve personally and academically but also for engaging students to look beyond themselves as they find ways to provide practical support and forge friendships with their peers in diverse communities. I am sure everybody in this House will join me in expressing their strong support and admiration for Redeemer Baptist School.

WYONG NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) [6.29 p.m.]: I draw the attention of the House to the activities of the Wyong Neighbourhood Centre. Last week I joined representatives of the centre at a great Melbourne Cup function at Wyong Golf Club. The function raised more than \$1,300 for the centre's relief program. It included a simulated horse race, a prize for the best-dressed man and woman, and fantastic music performed by Mr Taki, a talented local singer. I extend special thanks to Glenn, Rewa, Pauline and their team from the centre and Wyong Golf Club for organising an enjoyable fundraising event. I extend particular thanks to Sharyn Burgess, who helped to organise the event. She is also a tireless advocate for the Central Coast and Wyong shire. Sharyn is an extremely hard worker for the many community groups she represents and works with. She does not live in my electorate, but in Bateau Bay, in The Entrance. My colleague the member for The Entrance is lucky to have such an active and much-loved constituent in Sharyn.

Wyong Neighbourhood Centre is a community-based organisation that supports and advocates for individuals, groups and families in and around Wyong. The centre is a not-for-profit organisation with staff and projects funded through various government and philanthropic bodies and local businesses. It is based in the grounds of the old Wyong Public School on the hill above the town. The centre offers many services, but in particular it serves my community by providing personal and financial counselling, tax help, legal aid and emergency relief products. Unfortunately, those products are in high demand these days. It also provides youth and senior support and justice of the peace services.

The centre also organises many activities in which my constituents participate, including the Wyong demonstration garden. I had the pleasure of taking John Robertson to see the gardens and its hydroponic system. A fish pond is used to provide nutrients for the garden. The produce is sold through the op-shop. The project is supported by volunteers and is part of the Work for the Dole program, which is a worthwhile initiative. The centre also presents Art on the Hill, has an op-shop, and supports Wyong Men's Shed. I was able to organise some funding for the men's shed a couple of years ago. The men have had a few problems, including that a planned ramp has not yet been approved by the local council and they cannot use their building. It has only been seven years. I support the local council being abolished, not necessarily merged. If anyone wants to appoint an administrator, I will support them.

Mr Gareth Ward: We will not tell anyone you said that.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Of course not. I have been fortunate to see the work that the Wyong Neighbourhood Centre has done for my electorate for many years. I appreciate the way in which it advocates for those less fortunate and establishes important community connections across the region. Volunteers are the lifeblood of our communities. Without dedicated and hardworking volunteers working with groups and organisations, many of the things that we as local members and residents enjoy would not be possible. I acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the Wyong Neighbourhood Centre team and thank them for the important work they do. I look forward to updating the House in the future about the work the centre does and about the many other great volunteers who help out in my community.

DRIVERLESS CARS

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.33 p.m.]: As members of the House will be aware, I rarely reflect on my disability. However, there are times when it is appropriate for members to draw on their personal experiences to advocate for changes that benefit them and thousands of others. As I have previously told the House, I am legally blind. Simple things that people take for granted like reading a magazine or a menu or a sign from a long distance, or jumping in a car to go from A to B are not activities that thousands of people with visual impairments can do. For the simple task of popping up to the shops for the groceries, a person with a visual impairment needs to rely on someone else, to use public transport or to call a taxi. If someone had told me five years ago those scenes from the famous cartoon series *The Jetsons* were not too far away, I probably would have laughed. That is now not so.

I am constantly amazed at the products and services that Google produces. However, its latest innovation—the driverless car—is now being tested and used on roads around the world. I am using this private member's statement to call on the New South Wales Government to do what Parliaments all too often fail to do; that is, to get ahead of technological developments and to prepare the legislative framework for the advent of driverless cars, and the regulatory environment that will be required to trial and eventually facilitate this new technology. The Google Self-Driving Car is a project developed by Google X that involves developing technology for autonomous cars, mainly electric cars. The software powering Google's cars is called Google Chauffeur.

These cars have sensors designed to detect objects as far as two football fields away in all directions, including pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, and even fluttering plastic shopping bags and rogue birds. The software processes all the information to help the car safely navigate the road without getting tired or distracted. Legislation has been passed in four states in America, including Washington, D.C., which has allowed driverless cars. The State of Nevada passed a law on 29 June 2011, permitting the operation of autonomous cars in Nevada, after Google had been lobbying in that state for robotic car laws. The Nevada law came into effect on 1 March 2012, and the Nevada Department of Motor Vehicles issued the first licence for an autonomous car in May 2012 to a Toyota Prius modified with Google's experimental driverless technology.

In April 2012, Florida became the second state to allow the testing of autonomous cars on public roads, and California became the third when Governor Jerry Brown signed the bill into law at Google HQ in Mountain View. In December 2013, Michigan became the fourth state to allow testing of driverless cars on public roads. In May 2014, Google developed its technology further, discarding pedals and a steering wheel. Google plans to make these cars available to the public in 2020. The Government has indicated that driverless cars will need to be investigated before they enter the market to ensure the safety of all road users. I certainly do not disagree with that. However, I urge the Government not to use this as an excuse to delay the testing of these vehicles.

A statement from the Government advised that, "Transport for NSW will consider driverless car technology for projects like WestConnex when and if changes to the market and relevant laws occur". This statement makes little sense because the use of driverless cars will be required on far more roads

than simply WestConnex. I hope that changes to laws in this State to allow for driverless cars will be a case of not if but when. I have been advised that to prepare for the arrival of fully automated vehicles in the Australian car market, Transport for NSW is working in close consultation with its Federal and interstate counterparts in examining the necessary legislative, regulatory and road design changes to ensure road safety is prioritised as the new technology is made available.

Currently, even if fully automated cars complied with Australian vehicle standards, the New South Wales road rules are the same as in every other Australian jurisdiction and require drivers always to be in control of their vehicles. However, these rules, whilst uniform in this respect, do not prohibit New South Wales from conducting its own trials. I had hoped that New South Wales could claim to be leading the nation. However, it seems that South Australia has crept ahead with its transport Minister, Stephen Mullighan, announcing on 22 September that his State will test driverless cars and introduce the necessary legislation following the trials. I appreciate that there are legitimate concerns about safety. However, given that other jurisdictions have already legislated and others are commencing trials, I want New South Wales to be in a position to take advantage of this new technology and to allow a group of people presently disadvantaged to be able to take advantage of innovation. While it was once futuristic, there is no doubt that this technology is now realistic.

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.38 p.m.]: The member for Kiama is an inspiration to everyone with a visual impairment. He demonstrates that people with visual impairments or any other impairment can do anything. Indeed, he does more than other members. He has encouraged us to rise to the regulatory challenge facing us with the advent of this innovation. It is a good challenge despite the fact that driverless cars may scare some people. The thought of the member for Kiama being in the back of a driverless car certainly scares me. New South Wales does pride itself on leading the nation, and we should treat this issue very seriously.

CENTRAL COAST REMEMBRANCE DAY SERVICES

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) [6.39 p.m.]: This year's Remembrance Day 2015 commemorations on the Central Coast were very special. In addition to the usual services conducted by the various RSL clubs and the pause for remembrance taken at 11.00 a.m., the evening service included the playing of the last post at 9.00 p.m. Australian Eastern Standard Time and was timed to coincide with 11.00 a.m. on the Western Front of Europe, marking the exact moment fighting ceased 97 years ago.

This special event was organised by senior students from three of our local public schools: Woy Woy Campus, Brisbane Water Secondary College; The Entrance Campus, Tuggerah Lakes Secondary College; and Kincumber High School. It was a fine example of the quality of public education on the Central Coast. The event was held at The Entrance Memorial and Cenotaph, the pre-eminent location on the Central Coast where we gather on each anniversary to remember those who served and our losses as a result of the wars in which this country has participated. The Entrance Long Jetty RSL Sub-Branch was very supportive of the student initiative. Mr Allan Fletcher, OAM, The Entrance RSL Sub-Branch president stated:

Your project is a very exciting initiative and promises to be an appropriate and moving tribute to Australian Servicemen and women and particularly those from the Central Coast during this year's Remembrance Day Commemoration.

The event has been an initiative of Student Voice, a collective of Central Coast senior students intent on delivering a collective voice for students on the coast. Spokesperson Lachlan Steele explained the thinking behind the event:

High school students on the Central Coast have been developing a series of Remembrance Day centenary events. Our event is unique, as we are working collaboratively with key groups within the community to connect and raise awareness amongst fellow students and the general public

on a significant and enduring historic link. To further promote and strengthen community awareness of Remembrance Day, we have invited two Menin Gate Buglers and a member of the Last Post Association from Ieper, Belgium, to visit Australia and in particular the Central Coast and join us for a series of commemorative services.

I also note the support given to the event by the Australian War Memorial which contributed to the travel expenses of some of the Belgian attendees. Dr Brendan Nelson wrote to the students, stating:

The relationship forged between our two countries from this terrible war is enduring and strengthened by what you are doing. I congratulate you on an excellent initiative and you have my full support, admiration and endorsement for this project.

Attending from Belgium were three members of the Last Post Association: committee member Carl Denys and two buglers, Tony Dessot and Christopher Wils. Carl spoke at the event. Hearing his heavily Belgian-accented voice and having the Belgian buglers play gave the event an international feel that was quite moving. The Menin Gate is located on the outskirts of the Belgian Flemish town of Ypres and it was through that gate that many Commonwealth soldiers marched on their way to the front and to the Flanders fields. After the war it was decided to record on the walls of the gate the names of those lost and recorded as missing in action. The gate holds 55,000 names, including the names of 18 soldiers from the Central Coast. Their names were read out at last night's service and I will repeat them in this House: Private John Bateup, a labourer from Wyee; Private Arthur Ernest Bushell, an engineer from Popran Park, Gosford; Private Richard George Buckton, a labourer from Wyong; Private Norbert Joseph Byrnes, a labourer from the Hawkesbury River District; and Private William Cragg, a carpenter from Mann Street, Gosford.

Also included were Private Thomas Dwyer, a teamster from Dooralong via Wyong; Private Roland James Eather, a labourer from Upper Colo; Private Frank Henry Goldsmith, a cream tester from Gosford; Private Victor Lindsay Goodwin, a motor driver from Rabbit Island on the Hawkesbury River; Private Edgar Jarvis, a labourer from Wyee; Private Herbert Augustine Kelly, a clerk from Mangrove Creek; Private Sidney Oscar Larson, an orchardist from Narara; Lance Corporal Claude Eugene Nancarrow, a labourer from Ourimbah; Private John Henry Royde, a fisherman from Gosford; Private Walter Alfred Spicer, a carpenter from Gosford; Private Hughie Charles Stratton, a shipwright from Gosford; Private Roy Williams, a bricklayer from Norah Head; and Private Stephen Bernard Wodbury, an orchardist from Spencer, Hawkesbury.

I will also briefly record the names of the students who were involved: Jack Wilson, Lauren Hayes, Lachlan Steel, Alana Hardcastle, Jemma Kowalczyk, Maddison McLeod, Gandari Gharang, Lara McLaughlan, Lachlan Motlee, Matt Jeffreys, Lillian Knight, Zac Hospes, Lillian Smith, Elizabeth Payne, and Mitchell Hayter. Connor O'Heir gave the remembrance address and Claire Rosier performed a moving song that she had composed entitled *Promises*. I commend these students who are a credit to the Central Coast, to the public school system and to their schools.

PARRAMATTA ELECTORATE EVENTS

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.44 p.m.]: Tonight I am happy to speak about the many good things that are happening in Parramatta. I bring more good news of Parramatta, the capital of Western Sydney. Last week I had the honour and privilege of presenting two NSW Carers Awards to residents in my local area of Parramatta, Lisa Atanasovskim and Eva Waterhouse. Lisa is a single mum with two autistic daughters and whilst caring for her children she is also undertaking studies in order to provide her daughters with a better future. I commend Lisa for her dedication to her daughters but also for undertaking the study, which is making a difference to her family. Eva Waterhouse left her job in order to care full time for her 95-year-old mother. She remains dedicated to caring for her mother for as long as possible and has put her own life on hold in order to do so.

More than one in 10 people in New South Wales are carers and the New South Wales Government and I recognise that no matter how much care the State may give, nothing can compare to the love and support of one's family. I pay tribute, along with members of this House, to all carers in New South Wales. A short time ago the Telopea Community Safety Forum was held, presented by the Telopea Neighbourhood Safety Network, a self-formed volunteer organisation that is looking at making a real difference in our community. We discussed important safety and security issues and highlighted the excellent work that our police and local community volunteers do to keep our neighbourhoods safe. I give special thanks to the hardworking team of the Neighbourhood Safety Network, which includes Hany Boutros from Rosehill Local Area Command [LAC]; Badrul Khan of Rosehill LAC; Maria Cuenca, from Housing NSW; Keith Reynolds, Dundas Area Neighbourhood Centre; Ambar Banerji, Dundas Library; and Patrick Soosay, Dundas Area Neighbourhood Centre. It was a wonderful night. We were all able to share information, become acquainted and address some of the local issues.

Last week I had the privilege of opening the "From the Heart" photographic exhibition as part of the Children's Hospital's twentieth anniversary. The Children's Hospital at Westmead celebrated 20 years since it moved from its historical location in Camperdown. It was first established as a hospital in 1880 in Glebe. It moved to Camperdown and then to Westmead. "From the Heart" is a photographic project that documents the hospital in 2015. Twenty photographers from the Australian Museum of Contemporary Photography were invited to capture 20 special moments in the hospital. Each photographer chose 20 of their own photographs and the hospital then selected one of each to put on display. They captured some confronting images as well as backroom scenes that one does not often get to see. Next week I look forward to welcoming the new congregational leaders of the Maronite Sisters, Sister Marie Antoinette Saade, and Deputy Leader Sister Marie Raymond Abi Habib.

The Maronite Sisters of the Holy Family came to Australia in 1968 and have served the Maronite community for 50 years. They work in areas including Parramatta, Redfern, Dulwich Hill, Marrickville and Belmore. They continue to contribute positively to Australian society. A number of dignitaries will also welcome the new congregational leader, including His Excellency George Bitar Ghanem, Consul-General of Lebanon; His Eminence Mor Malatius Malki Malki, Metropolitan Patriarchal Vicar of the Syriac Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia and New Zealand; Father John Karam, representing Archbishop Paul Saliba; Reverend Monsignors, Superiors and Fathers; the Maronite Sisters of the Holy Family; and Mr Tony Khoury and Mrs Khoury, Honorary Consul-General of Bangladesh. I am sure everyone in this Chamber extends their best wishes to the Maronite sisters. Their work over the past 50 years is truly remarkable. Everybody in the Parramatta community loves and admires the Maronite sisters.

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.49 p.m.]: The member for Parramatta has given us an insight into current activities—

Dr Geoff Lee: Great activities.

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA: Indeed, they are fantastic activities that form part of the rich tapestry of the Parramatta electorate. He also demonstrated through not being able to pronounce adequately some of the surnames of those to whom he was referring the multicultural nature of his electorate. More importantly, he has demonstrated what an active and caring member he is as he encourages support for his local community. I commend him for that.

COOEE MARCH ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY RE-ENACTMENT

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.50 p.m.]: I commend the successful re-enactment of the Cooee march across New South Wales as part of the centenary of Anzac commemorations. In particular I acknowledge the work and dedication of all the volunteers, organisers and supporters in undertaking the work required for the 515-kilometre journey, with a specific emphasis on those events that took place in Penrith and St Marys on Saturday 7 November and Sunday 8 November. The original Cooee march occurred 100 years ago in response to declining volunteers as a

result of increasing casualties in the Great War.

Initiated by William Thomas Hitchen, a member of the local rifle club in Gilgandra, the Cooee march was the first type of recruiting march staged across the State as a way to rally volunteers to fight for King and country. The Cooee march began in Gilgandra in the Central West of New South Wales on Sunday 10 October 1915 with 25 marchers embarking on the 515-kilometre journey and culminating in the marchers reaching the Domain on 12 November 1915, passing New South Wales Parliament House in the process. As the men stopped in each town and village along the way, welcomed by local officials and members of each community, many more men heeded the call and volunteered.

By the conclusion of the march, the contingent's numbers had swelled to 263, with many historians crediting the march as the catalyst responsible for the recruitment campaigns that followed in late 1915 and early 1916. Significantly, unlike the initial men who joined the war efforts who were captured by a sense of adventure and the prospect of travelling to a foreign land, those men who volunteered in the Cooee march were well aware of the devastation that war had brought about. Despite being aware of the casualties sustained at Gallipoli and the fact that one in five would likely die and two of the remaining four would likely suffer substantial physical wounds, those men still answered the call of service, volunteering as part of the march and subsequently in fighting abroad.

As part of the centenary of Anzac commemorations, a re-enactment of the Cooee march took place from 17 October to 11 November 2015, with volunteers of the re-enactment completing their journey in Martin Place and participating in the Remembrance Day service held yesterday. In undertaking the re-enactment, the volunteers participated in parades and memorial services at the villages and towns where the original Cooees recruited men to enlist in the Australian Imperial Force [AIF] during the First World War. Importantly, the re-enactment serves as an explicit reminder of the sacrifice made by all our service men and women and specifically pays respects to the men who participated in the Cooee march 100 years ago.

I now turn to the specific events held in Penrith and St Marys as part of the Cooee march re-enactment last weekend. On Saturday morning the marchers made their way from Springwood to Penrith, going down Mitchells Pass and crossing the historic Lennox Bridge, which the Cooees themselves marched over in 1915. A welcome ceremony was held for the volunteers at the old schoolhouse in Emu Plains before they continued their march in a street parade down High Street, where a commemorative service was held at Penrith Memory Park.

At both events, the marchers were greeted by enthusiastic cheers and received support from a passionate and diverse crowd that is representative of the diversity of the people of Penrith and the wider Western Sydney community. People of all ages came to see them, admiring and paying their respects to such a vital part of our nation's heritage and history. It is truly inspiring and encouraging that many of the faces in the crowd waving Australian flags and supporting the participants in commemorating these historic events were children, teenagers and young adults. Acknowledgement of and paying respect to our service men and women continues to endure—something that we must all be mindful of in this place as custodians of the freedom handed to us by those who died in freedom's defence.

The final event held in Penrith as part of the Cooee march re-enactment was a formal function and dinner for the volunteers hosted by the Mayor of Penrith, Councillor Karen McKeown, at the Penrith Paceway. I was pleased to attend the event at which two commemorative plaques were unveiled, one for St Marys War Memorial at Victoria Park and the other for Penrith Memory Park. Each of the volunteers was given a Cooee chocolate ration along with a Cooee march centenary commemorative coin as a reminder of the pride the people of Penrith and St Marys have in the efforts and dedication of all those who have participated in the march.

Once more, I express my gratitude and respect for all the brave men and women, past and present, who have heeded the call of service, exhibiting those traits that typify the Australian character:

courage, determination, sacrifice and mateship. Additionally, I congratulate all those involved in the Cooee march re-enactment, including participants, organisers and supporters. By remembering those who have volunteered in the past, we can better and more fully appreciate those who volunteer today, serving as encouragement for future generations. I place on record specifically my appreciation and thanks to Tony Fryer, Ron Kelly and the team from the St Marys RSL Sub-Branch who worked tirelessly for many months organising this, as well as my good friend Brian Cartwright who was integral to the weekend, getting there early, setting everything up, running events, coordinating stalls and packing up. Congratulations to those men, their team and the volunteers on a fantastic event.

MACARTHUR DIVERSITY SERVICES INITIATIVE

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) [6.55 p.m.]: Tonight I address the House on the wonderful work being done in my electorate of Campbelltown by the Macarthur Diversity Services Initiative [MDSI]. MDSI was established in 1983 as an outreach project of the Liverpool Migrant Resource Centre to provide services for migrants and refugees residing in the Campbelltown, Camden and Wollondilly local government areas. MDSI has been serving the local community for more than 30 years, assisting the most disadvantaged and marginalised community members in the Macarthur region. But I speak today about one program in particular run by MDSI: the Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters or, as it is more commonly known, the HIPPY program. HIPPY is a home-based early learning and parenting program for families with young children, beginning the year before children commence primary school.

It is a free and voluntary program that involves families spending 10 to 15 minutes a day engaging in educational activities. Home tutors schedule regular meetings every week or two with parents and/or caregivers to plan activities for their child and assess the child's progress within the program. The program is currently operated in Campbelltown in the suburb of Claymore, which was identified in the Jesuit Social Services *Dropping off the Edge* report as being the most disadvantaged suburb in the Sydney metropolitan area and in the top five disadvantaged suburbs across the country. However, the report also acknowledged that programs such as HIPPY are addressing socio-economic disadvantage and are helping move Claymore in the right direction.

The National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy [NAPLAN] results, which are available on the Federal Government's My School website, show just how much progress has been made in Claymore in primary school educational outcomes since HIPPY began operating in late 2009. Prior to HIPPY, the outcomes for students at Claymore Public School in persuasive writing, grammar and punctuation were substantially behind the State average. While in 2009 the average student in New South Wales was receiving a high band 4 or a low band 5 mark in these areas, the average student at Claymore Public School was only receiving a high band 2 or a low band 3. The benefits of this program in reversing these poor educational outcomes cannot be overstated. In the five years HIPPY has been operating, the NAPLAN scores of students at Claymore Public School in the areas I mentioned have risen to the point at which the average mark in Claymore is only negligibly lower than the State average.

Earlier this month I met with the chief executive officer of MDSI, Karin Vasquez. Karin is a passionate advocate for the Macarthur region and, like all the staff at MDSI, is someone who wants to see successful programs like HIPPY continue to make a difference in the lives of some of our region's most disadvantaged families. During our meeting, Karin raised her concerns with the future funding of HIPPY. Currently, HIPPY is funded by grants from the Department of Family and Community Services, and those grants are allocated on a year-by-year basis. This uncertainty in funding restricts MDSI in engaging in any long-term, strategic planning for the program.

Furthermore, MDSI has applied for a funding increase of approximately \$100,000 from the department to allow it to expand its operations from three days per week to five days per week in order to help even more disadvantaged families in Claymore and surrounding areas. I feel that the results of this program speak for themselves, and I fully support MDSI in its push for more funding to continue operating

this program. These issues were raised at a recent visit of the Legislative Council Social Issues committee to Claymore, at which time staff from MDSI spoke to members of the committee about the success of HIPPY and asked for the committee's support in their request for additional funding.

While I was unable to attend the meeting, due to other electoral commitments, I was told by MDSI staff that the committee was very supportive of the work being done by MDSI. I commend our colleagues on both sides in the Legislative Council for their support. However, support and goodwill alone is not going to cut it, quite simply. It needs to be backed up by action from the Government with subsequent funding. I invite the Minister for Family and Community Services to look into HIPPY, have a look at the difference it is making to the lives of some of Campbelltown's most disadvantaged families, and, most importantly, grant MDSI the extra funding it needs to continue this great program which does change the lives of people in Claymore.

CRONULLA RSL SUB BRANCH NINETIETH ANNIVERSARY

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Heritage, and Assistant Minister for Planning) [7.00 p.m.]: Last week I joined members of the Cronulla RSL Sub Branch to mark the ninetieth anniversary of this important and highly respected organisation in my community. The Cronulla RSL Sub Branch originally began in 1921. That year the community was mobilising to raise funds for a war memorial to be erected at the corner of Kingsway and Curranulla Street, or what is today the Cronulla mall. It was subsequently relocated in 1939 to its present-day location in Monro Park opposite Cronulla railway station.

Euchre parties were apparently all the rage in the day and the preferred method of fundraising for such a project. Sutherland Shire Council built the memorial in 1922 at a cost of approximately £900. The project to fund and build a war memorial generated considerable interest among ex-servicemen and their families living in the area and provided the impetus for the formation of a local sub-branch. The sub-branch closed in 1926, presumably due to lack of numbers, but then reopened again in 1930. The 90-year anniversary therefore commemorates the five years of operation from 1921 to 1926 and the 85 years from 1930 to 2015.

In 1975, during the fiftieth anniversary celebrations, a vote of thanks was given by one member of the sub-branch, an ex-World War II RAAF flight lieutenant and navigator by the name of Gough Whitlam. At that time Mr Whitlam was still serving as the nation's Prime Minister. He had previously served on the sub-branch committee, holding the office of junior vice-president. I commend the efforts of memorabilia genius Mr Stan Grimshaw, who is the Cronulla RSL Sub Branch memorabilia collection curator. Stan has painstakingly documented 90 years of local history to produce the booklet *In Our Hands*.

In the context of war history, it seems to be the case that local histories do not hold quite the same cachet as the bigger, global narratives of the battlefield experience or the politics of conflict. But that is not to say that local histories are less significant; indeed, quite the contrary. It is through these stories that we truly grasp the extent of the impact of war—on people, on the profile of the towns or cities in which they lived, and on cultural life. This is an excellent resource Stan has prepared, and I thank him for the time, dedication and passion he has given to its preparation.

I will not try to summarise the 90-year history of the sub-branch in my statement, but I will make a few general remarks about the RSL, which next year will mark 100 years since its formation. The RSL, as we know it today, is a high-profile body in Australian society and still commands a membership of more than 200,000. It began as the Returned Sailors' and Soldiers' Imperial League of Australia [RSSILA], which of course later became the RSL. Since its inception in 1916, the RSL has campaigned tirelessly for better pension rights for veterans and employment options for disabled returned soldiers and rallied against war profiteers, even arguing the case for war profiteering to be classified a criminal offence.

The RSL was often critical of government for inadequately addressing the issue of repatriation

and pressed its demands on behalf of members with vigour and regularity. It was the RSL that campaigned for Anzac Day to be recognised as a national statutory holiday, which was achieved in 1927. Today the RSL remains a thriving organisation that provides invaluable support to improve the welfare of service personnel, veterans and their families. The ethos of camaraderie, mateship and service that defined the Anzacs is also the foundation of the RSL. I extend my thanks to Cronulla RSL Sub Branch President Warren Thomas, the executive committee, past and present, and all the volunteers past and present who do so much to support to the men and women who have served or are currently in service to our country. Ninety years on, we remain fortunate to have this significant and esteemed organisation in the shire.

Private members' statements concluded.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 7.05 p.m. until
Tuesday 17 November 2015 at 12.00 noon.**
