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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 17 November 2015

The Speaker (The Hon. Shelley Elizabeth Hancock) took the chair at 12 noon.

The Speaker read the Prayer and acknowledgement of country.

COURTS AND OTHER JUSTICE PORTFOLIO LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2015

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

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

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Notices of Motions

General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) given.

Pursuant to sessional order private members' statements proceeded with.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

CAMDEN RSL SUB-BRANCH REMEMBRANCE DAY CEREMONY

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) [12.13 p.m.]: Last week I attended the Camden RSL Sub-branch Remembrance Day ceremony at Macarthur Park. Macarthur Park was officially opened on 10 October 1906. The original fence, which was constructed to make the park sheep proof, still stands today. The park was a gift to the people of Camden by Mrs Elizabeth Macarthur-Onslow, a grand-daughter of John Macarthur. The ceremony was held at the memorial in the park, which was constructed by Camden Council in 1920 after receiving suggestions from the community for a soldiers' memorial. A grant of £50 from the New South Wales Government and another £50 from the community enabled trees and shrubs to be purchased and planted. On this the ninety-fifth anniversary of the unveiling of the memorial in the park, we remembered and thanked those who gave their lives for our country during First World War.

It was known as the Great War and at that time no-one thought there would be another war. At 11.00 a.m. on 11 November 1918, when the guns of the Western Front fell silent after more than four years of continuous warfare, the world was finally rid of the scourge of war. The first Remembrance Day was held in 1919. An added significance was given to Remembrance Day in 1920 when the remains of an unknown soldier were returned from the battlefields of the Western Front. Sadly, when our soldiers returned from the war they believed they would be coming home to a prosperous country. However, they witnessed unemployment, homelessness and many other issues that led to the Great Depression. Australians being Australians, they pulled through those dark days and we have built a wonderful and generous country of which we can be proud.

This is also a time to thank all the men and women in our armed forces who died while defending our nation, and those who are currently overseas in the Middle East or on peacekeeping duties. We all owe so much to them for their commitment, bravery and dedication. As expected, the Camden RSL

Sub-branch ceremony was exceptional. Mr Iain Richard-Evan, president of the sub-branch, directed the morning with absolute precision. Iain's dedication to the RSL and its members is to be commended. He gives his time to the veterans, war widows and their families, assisting them with any hurdles they may encounter. I thank everyone who took part in the ceremony.

Mr Lee Evans: Name them.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON: I shall do. I thank Gail Kimbers, who read a commemoration to the fallen. I thank Ken Foster, OAM, justice of the peace and warrant officer, who gave a commemoration address with great reverence. They both did an outstanding job in paying tribute to our fallen. I thank the talented Tasha Hodges, who led the gathering in the hymns. I thank Muir Sound and the Camden Community Band for supporting Tasha in the service with sound and music. They did an outstanding job. I thank piper Laurie Wood, who was magnificent on the bagpipes. I thank the Leppington Public School Choir group. I thank Principal Christine Easther for the wonderful guidance she provided to her students, especially the students who gave a memorable performance, even without back-up music.

They include Mariah Giles, Eloise Jeretic, Shelby Galway-Quinn, Brock Galway-Quinn, Ruby Su Dennon, Hunter Su Dennon, Carolynne Uelese, Jenny Zhu, Rhianna Stafford Di Cello, Lauren Yeatman, Annette Huang, Mehakpreet Kaur, Anita Lin, Katarina Arnautovic, Jamie-Lee Hadchiti, Sienna Manno, Amani Elayoubi, Chris Paterson, Zac Baloglow and Darren Huang. They all sang beautifully. Well done. Cadets took part in the ceremony and did not let anyone down. They were stoic and professional; our veterans would be proud. Carrington Care Retirement Village and Nursing Home was represented by chief executive officer Raad Richards. Last but not least, Diane Richard-Evan read the dedication and benediction with great dignity. Even though the Remembrance Day ceremony does not last long, the impact of its meaning does. We all take away with us the memory of a loved one we have lost or who has served in our armed forces. I thank everyone who attended the ceremony in Camden to pay their respects. Lest we forget.

WORIMI CONSERVATION LANDS

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) [12.18 p.m.]: While performing my official duties I do not often stand with bare feet and warm sand between my toes, surrounded by the staggering beauty of the rolling sandhills of Stockton, which extend for miles in each direction, with the sparkling sea in the distance. But this weekend was an exception for an exceptional celebration. I was on Worimi country for the launch of the Worimi Conservation Lands first plan of management. We were welcomed to country by Worimi elder Uncle Neville Lilley. As a precursor to Uncle Neville's welcome, his son, Jonathan Lilley, spoke to us in the traditional language of the Worimi. It is a beautiful, undulating language, which reflected the landscape around us. There was a smoking ceremony and each of the 200-plus attendees was cleansed as he or she walked through the eucalyptus-laden smoke before enjoying the drama of Indigenous dancers.

The Worimi Conservation Lands were created in 2007 following a land claim that was lodged in 1995. The 4,200-hectare site was returned to the traditional owners to manage and protect the natural and cultural values of the Stockton Bight landscape, in partnership with other interested parties. The Worimi Conservation Lands are managed by the Worimi Conservation Lands Board of Management. The fundamental goals of the board are to protect, respect and connect country. The board was responsible for the creation of the plan and, in developing it, the Worimi Conservation Lands board identified the three valuable aspects of the lands that it sought to protect: Worimi cultural values, the natural and heritage values, and the recreational and tourism values. The lands have a large number of cultural features, including middens, stone tools, artefacts and burial sites.

These sites also provide important opportunities for strengthening the Worimi community connections to country. The natural and heritage values of this region include the spectacular sand dune system and wetlands, which provide an important habitat link between the Tomaree Peninsula and the

Hunter Wetlands. The Worimi Conservation Lands are home to 21 threatened animals, including migratory shorebirds and three threatened plant species. Visitors to the Worimi lands are also familiar with the range of important historic sites, which include a shipwreck, the *Sydney*, as well as Second World War-era defence structures and artefacts.

The board has also recognised the importance that tourism and recreational activities will play in the long-term sustainability of the lands. The lands are a well-known destination for fishing, camping, four-wheel driving and quad biking. The Worimi Conservation Lands form an important part of the Port Stephens tourism economy, and provide a source of revenue for the board of management to use in conservation activities. The popularity of this region as a tourism and recreation destination is also one of the primary challenges faced by the board. More than 250,000 people visit the lands each year, and the numbers are increasing. In developing this plan of management, the board has taken much care to balance the needs for conservation with the desire for tourism.

The plan seeks to reduce and eliminate the damage that has previously occurred, such as the destruction of Worimi cultural sites, the loss of beach vegetation and increased erosion. In the past when my family and I visited the dunes our enjoyment was marred by the lack of respect shown by some other users. Rubbish and detritus was regularly left there, and there were four-wheel drives going in every direction. Rob Quirk from National Parks and Wildlife Service described it well on the weekend when he said it was "like Mad Max gone wrong". Something had to be done and, through the hard work and commitment of many, the complex issues have been addressed and rolled into a cohesive, cooperative plan for the future. The plan the board has developed will see cultural sites protected, dunes restored, threatened species protected and habitat improved.

All this will occur while also allowing up to 30 designated camp sites, 22½ kilometres of continuous beachfront four-wheel drive [4WD] and horseriding access, and 350 hectares of dune driving and quad-bike access in the recreation vehicle area. I acknowledge the work of the board: Aboriginal owner and chairperson Petrice Manton; Aboriginal owner and deputy chair, Jamie Tarrant; and Aboriginal owners and board members Anthony Anderson, Lennie Anderson, Lorraine Lilley, Bev Manton and Val Merrick. Alongside the Aboriginal owners sit Andrew Smith, chief executive officer of the Worimi Local Aboriginal Land Council; Rob Quirk from the National Parks and Wildlife Service; and councillors Sally Dover and Robert Turton. Many years of consultation have been invested in the plan of management, which I am confident will achieve the outcomes desired by the board: to protect, to respect and to connect.

The importance of what has already been achieved was best encapsulated for me on the weekend when I spoke with Susan Russell, a Worimi Aboriginal owner. Sue told me that she had started working on the conservation lands in February and that she is happy to go to work there, because now she is working on country. Her son Jamie Tarrant also works on the conservation lands, and Sue has been learning from her son. Before she came to work there, Jamie would tell her that the dunes spoke to him. She thought he was being silly, but she described to me how the dunes are now also speaking to her.

MYALL LAKES YOUTH FRONTIERS SHOWCASE 2015

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [12.23 p.m.]: I inform the House of the Myall Lakes Youth Frontiers Showcase 2015 and congratulate Mel Hanger, the coordinator of the program in Myall Lakes. The New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government's Youth Frontiers mentoring program focuses on leadership and civic engagement. It targets years 8 and 9 students who have the capacity to benefit from having a mentor. Young people participating in Youth Frontiers receive a minimum of 30 hours mentoring, including at least 15 hours of one-on-one mentoring. The program gives mentees an opportunity to build life skills and self-confidence by working collaboratively with mentors to undertake a community project that makes a positive difference in their local community.

The Youth Frontiers program would not be possible without the time and commitment of the wonderful volunteer mentors. The mentors come from a variety of backgrounds—for example, university and TAFE students, retirees and professionals. These amazing community members dedicate their time to provide their mentees with support, encouragement and the confidence to undertake their community project. Fifteen young people and their mentors were involved in the Myall Lakes program. I was proud to attend the showcase and to meet those young people. It was also a time to be proud to be a member of The Nationals, as this is an initiative of the Liberal-Nationals Government. The young people participating in the Youth Frontiers program included Jessica Adams and her mentor, Melissa Newlan. Her project, in the category of youth mental health, was an education campaign to highlight mental health issues and to raise awareness of resources around the school in a more accessible way for young people.

Shannai Aggar, working with her mentor, Emma Lakeman, ran a community harmony project. She organised a BasketbALL Together afternoon to break down social barriers and to help students feel as though they belong. Mitchell Brown, working with his mentor, John Parer, organised a music showcase event to expose young people to classical music and to increase young people's interest in learning to play a musical instrument. He raised \$900 to purchase musical instruments for schools. Riley Curtis, working with his mentor, Murray Difford, in the youth mental health category, organised a social group to maintain the school community garden and to help students with depression or those who were on the social fringe to build a supportive network through gardening together. Angus Davidson, working with his mentor, Allister Currie, in the category of empowering young women, ran an awareness and education campaign to help young guys understand the inequality faced by women across the world by engaging them in creating an awareness video.

Tahlea Ellem, working with her mentor, Debbie Mastrippolito, in the category of youth mental health, produced a brochure for school students about specific areas of mental health and resources. Kiara Hollis worked with her mentor, Donna Ballard, in the category of environment and conversation. Her project aimed to increase the number of temporary carers of rescue dogs in the community to take pressure off the pound and to ensure the dogs found new homes. Griffin Humphreys, working with his mentor, Timothy McLean, also in the youth mental health category, produced a new students' survival kit. This is a mental health kit for students new to the school to help them transition smoothly. Thomas Neal, working with his mentor, Geoff Heron, ran a project in the sporting engagement category. He organised a day of school when young people who do not normally like sport could rotate through different sports and socialise.

Teagan Phillips, working with her mentor, Janelle Atkins, ran an education campaign about sport that aimed to engage people in sport while they are quite young by inspiring them and showing them its benefits through providing accessible information. Braith Ralston, working with his mentor, Murray Difford, in the environment and conservation category, aimed to improve the quality and sustainability of the school's community garden for broader school use of the vegetables and fruit. Shae Stevens, working with her mentor, Michelle Bird, ran a campaign to recognise multiculturalism in sport through a video that showed how different cultures work together in sport and encouraged people to accept each other. Stanley Tan, working with her mentor, Amanda Evans, ran a project on the Centenary of Anzac. He produced a pamphlet and map of all the Anzac memorials in the Taree area to encourage the general public to visit those memorials and to pay their respects to the Anzacs.

Emershae Telfer, working with her mentor, Ruth Supner, ran a project on the stories of the elderly. This encouraged students to connect with the local elderly through hearing their stories. Mikaylee Towers, working with her mentor, Emma Lakeman, produced a Go-to Kit—a survival kit for new year 7 students to help them transition smoothly to high school. It was a wonderful showcase that displayed the ability of young people. The year 8 and year 9 students came up with their own ideas and worked with mentors. They devised their community projects and delivered on them. At the showcase they had to address the audience, which helped to build their confidence. It was an absolutely inspirational program, and I commend Youth Frontiers to all members.

MENAI BUSHFIRE BRIGADE SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) [12.28 p.m.]: On Saturday I attended a very special event: the Menai Bushfire Brigade station opening. I was joined by the member for Miranda and the member for Heathcote, whom I am pleased to see is in the Chamber. The Mayor of Sutherland Shire, Councillor Carmelo Pesce, and the Commissioner of the Rural Fire Service were also in attendance. This event commemorated 75 years of the Menai Bushfire Brigade and was also the Sutherland Shire area awards presentation day. So there was a lot happening, and it was a great day. On the day we helped them to open the best seventy-fifth birthday present they could have possibly received—a new bush fire brigade station, located at Barden Ridge in my electorate. This new station, funded by the New South Wales Government and the Sutherland Shire Council, was much needed.

I remember when I was first elected to council going to my first meeting with the bushfire brigade. We sat in the old station. It was cold, too small and out of date—so much so that they had to chip away part of the wood foundations to fit the fire truck into the converted building, which was impractical. I was pleased to turn the first sod on the new building earlier this year, and am even more pleased now having seen it completed. This new, state-of-the-art facility was purpose built for the Menai brigade, and I am thrilled to see volunteers getting to enjoy it ahead of the upcoming bushfire season. I made a point of saying on the day that our community exists only because of the work of the volunteers in our bushfire brigade. They have helped our community too many times to mention. We are a bushland community and they have come to our aid and saved us on numerous occasions. We thank them for that.

On the day, we were able to acknowledge 41 award recipients who together had given 924 years of service to the Sutherland Shire Rural Fire Service. The awards given on the day included the national medals and clasps and long service medals and clasps. National medals are presented to recognise the years of diligent service of members who go above and beyond what is expected of active members in the brigades. Long service medals are presented to members of the service in recognition of their years of active service. All recipients should be commended for their dedication, commitment and service to the local community.

The recipients of the national medals and clasps on the day included John Kool, Mark Pryor, Daniel Grant, Heather White, Robin Tuckfield, Stuart Glanfield, Peter Kneale, and David Brown. I pay particular tribute to Daniel Grant, who joined Menai Bushfire Fire Brigade in January 1992 at the age of 14. Daniel has been an active and valuable member of the brigade and has held the role of deputy captain since 2009. Daniel has shown what volunteering can do to help young people achieve; it can help them grow into passionate and dedicated adults.

I also recognise the long service medal and clasp recipients, who included: for 11 years of service, Deborah Sharpe and Pamela Gilchrist; for 12 years of service, Mathew Angus, Tim Christison, Roslyn Dow, Joshua Dodd, Gregory Last, Blair McDonald, Katie Reece and Peter Ross; for three years of service, Mark Coppock, Eugene Hormazabal and Joshua Soondarum; for 15 years of service, Jennifer Dolden, Todd Gibson, Charles Rowe and Robert Vale. I was very pleased to give a big hug to Robert as he is the husband of Danna Vale, the former Federal member for the area. It was lovely to see him honoured for his service.

The recipient of the long service medal and clasp for 20 years of service was Jennifer Donald. Recipients for 21 years of service were Leslie Derwent, Peter Moore and Natasha Seidel. Natasha is an old school friend of mine and I was thrilled to present her with her medal, as I know how dedicated she is to volunteering. For 24 years of service the recipient was Peter Lees. For 25 years of service the recipients were David Brown and Graeme Frappell. For 30 years of service the recipient was Peter O'Connor. For 32 years of service the recipients were Robert Paterson and Stuart Townsend. For 33 years of service the recipient was Graham Kearns, and for 34 years of service the recipients were Glen Freeland and William Flaherty. The 35 years of service award recipient was Ian Burke; for 40 years of service, Reginald Holmes; and for 54 years of service, Robert Rossini.

I give thanks especially to Robert Rossini, who has given more than half of his life in service to the community. What an amazingly dedicated man. Robert joined the Rural Fire Service in March 1961, at 23 years of age, at the Menai Bushfire Brigade. Robert has always been an enthusiastic and active member and has held the positions of senior deputy captain and deputy captain, a role that he has held since 1983. Robert was made a life member of Menai Bushfire Brigade for his outstanding service to his brigade and local community. All the recipients on the day and the volunteers in the local area should be congratulated on the outstanding work they do in helping save lives and homes. Once again, thank you to the local bushfire brigade volunteers.

ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) [12.33 p.m.]: In the past few days I have been reflecting on speeches I and others in this House made in September. Members may recall the image of three-year-old Aylan Kurdi, a Syrian boy washed up on a beach in Turkey. It moved people around the world. It prompted me to speak and share my personal experiences of asylum seekers and refugees. Later that week the member for Sydney moved a motion relating to asylum seekers and refugees, which was supported by me and several members from all sides of politics.

I was proud to see a true humanitarian response. Since then, a comprehensive plan has been progressed by the State of New South Wales as we stepped up to take a strong lead in accepting a large number of the 12,000 people seeking refuge. I was particularly heartened to see the appointment of Professor Peter Shergold, AC, the Chancellor of Western Sydney University, as the New South Wales Coordinator-General for Refugee Resettlement. So what was the significance of those fine words, thankfully backed up by action? It meant that we recognised the reality of what is happening in Syria. As a Federal Government website notes:

The conflicts occurring in Syria and Iraq represent one of the worst humanitarian disasters of our time. More than 11 million people have become displaced due to these conflicts, with ... estimates that more than 25% of people fleeing conflicts in Iraq and Syria are children.

This statement is a good reminder of what motivated us to act. But since that time we have experienced tragedy in our own city, with the unfathomable murder of Curtis Cheng in Parramatta. Then over the past several weeks, tragedies have occurred in places such as Turkey, Iraq and Lebanon and, of course, the horrific murders in Paris in the past few days. Given my experience as a teacher and principal, I have recently contributed to a number of public forums and media on the topic of radicalisation. I do not claim to understand the full psychology of what prompts people to commit horrific crimes, and I have never claimed to be an expert on international policy or counter-terrorism, but I have spoken with confidence about the most helpful ways to support people, especially young people from disadvantaged and/or multicultural communities, as they find their way in this country. In my experience, a focus on building supportive, cohesive and inclusive communities will always pay off.

Over the past few weeks we have all either personally experienced or observed a full range of human emotions as we have watched in dismay the very worst of humanity. We have seen, heard and felt sorrow, grief, anger, frustration, fear and sometimes absolute bewilderment. We have heard or uttered the questions: How did this happen? How could someone do such a thing? How do we stop it happening here? No individual has all the answers, but I do have a strong view on the opportunity and responsibility that we, as holders of a public office, have to act in ways that will help rather than make things worse. What can members do to help? We can personally make an effort to interact more with people of a different faith or culture. If we do that then when we are asked to comment we will be at least a bit more informed. Let us try to visit an electorate that is different from our own. Members are always welcome to visit my electorate, and I know my colleagues feel the same way. We can and must set the right tone for the necessary debate and discussions that are underway—discussions that we need to have.

It is crucial that as members of Parliament we use our public voice with care. I cannot hide the fact that I was bitterly disappointed to see over the weekend and then yesterday, calls from members of this Parliament to close our borders and to stop refugees coming into our country. It is a knee-jerk reaction at complete odds with the leadership of our State and nation. Worse still, those comments have the strong potential to make matters worse—to demonise and isolate whole communities, not improve the situation. I recently heard former Prime Minister Bob Hawke comment on the significance and success of Australia's postwar migration. He noted what an extraordinary achievement it is. His observations were echoed by the French Ambassador's comments on the ABC's Q&A last night.

I do not live in some Pollyanna universe. When I speak on these issues I am not brushing aside the reality of life. The reality is that the overwhelming majority of people, regardless of their belief or background, are simply going about their lives doing the best that they can to get along. This is a time for a rational level of concern about personal safety across all communities. I implore all members of this Parliament: Please, let us not encourage hatred, bigotry and fear where it does not exist. Let us not fan the flames of fear when people need the calm reassurance of their elected representatives. Let us stand united in these times and, above all else, let us be guided by the words of Martin Luther King:

Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that.

COMBINED TWEED NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) [12.38 p.m.]: I bring to the attention of the House a great organisation in my area, Neighbourhood Watch. Neighbourhood Watch has been going for a considerable time in the Tweed area. Many years ago, in the early 1990s, when I was the general manager of the Tweed Heads Bowls Club, the club funded Neighbourhood Watch. The organisation has continued to go from strength to strength, and now covers a very large area. There are 19 Neighbourhood Watch zones within the area, and I have been the chairman of the combined group for approximately nine years. Peter Sibilant is our vice-chairman, Gordon Levenson has been doing a sterling job as secretary of the association, and Doreen, his lovely wife, is the Treasurer. Pierina Rebetzke and Chantelle Free are on the executive of the combined groups. We have had great support from our local police, and I acknowledge the acting superintendent in the Tweed-Byron local area, Paul McDonald, and Assistant Commissioner Jeff Loy.

Last Friday it was my privilege to attend the presentation of long service and bravery awards for the Tweed-Byron Local Area Command held at the Tweed Heads Bowls Club. Back in 2011, the Tweed-Byron area campaigned vigorously and was successful in being one of the first areas to pilot Project Eyewatch—an online community policing concept using Facebook to help combat crime. Neighbourhood Watch participants can go online to report crime and receive feedback from the NSW Police Force. We have been a standout; in the past 12 months we have had just on one million hits. Last Friday at the awards presentation Acting Superintendent Paul McDonald and Assistant Commissioner Jeff Loy pointed out that our current operational strength is around 90 per cent and that most major crime categories have dropped by 20 to 30 per cent to an all-time low. This has enabled the hardworking men and women in our police force to be very proactive.

In my electorate about 400 to 500 people are actively engaged in Neighbourhood Watch—in the valleys, the smaller villages and the major urban areas. A short time ago I commenced a campaign to raise \$5,000 to purchase a new computer system to allow our Neighbourhood Watch participants to continue their great work. I am a very hopeful of a positive outcome. They do a lot of work in encouraging people to report crime, and we must continue to foster that spirit in the community. When I first came to this place I found it difficult to understand why people were reluctant to report crime. To get appropriate resources for local areas we need an accurate picture of what is going on in those areas.

From time to time I have also accompanied police on a Friday and/or Saturday night on a number of operations. I encourage members from both sides of the House to do this because it offers a great deal

of support to our police. It also helps to see one's area in a different light. I reiterate my praise for the Combined Tweed Neighbourhood Watch, in particular Gordon Levenson who does a sterling job. We are all working very hard—members of Parliament, local police and local communities—to make our communities safer both now and into the future. I commend the Combined Tweed Neighbourhood Watch to the House. We are 100 per cent for the Tweed.

SHARK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) [12.43 p.m.]: Today I acknowledge the measured and proactive response of leaders in my community and in this Parliament to the terrible shark encounters and attacks that have occurred on our beaches over the past 18 months. We have seen bravery and selflessness on the part of our first responders; we have seen persistence and dedication on the part of our community leaders to uncover the science and strategies to keep people safe; and we have seen the Minister for Primary Industries, the Minister for Lands and Water and the Premier taking action and responding adequately to this crisis on our North Coast beaches. I am very proud of my community as it has called out for an approach to shark management that seeks to protect both ocean users and our marine biodiversity. It has been the persistence and the passion of my community that has supported the Premier and the Minister to seek this balance. On behalf of my community I thank the Minister and the Premier for listening to us and for providing the resources to trial non-lethal deterrents.

I draw the attention of the House to some of the early work around shark management that has been initiated by my community this year. The Ballina Shark Mitigation Advisory Group was formed on 10 July 2015 in response to the deaths of two locals, other serious injuries from shark encounters and a number of sightings along our coastline. From this group an interim protection protocol was formed to keep people safe at our beaches in the lead-up to the shark summit. Community safety mechanisms were initiated and public meetings to inform locals took place. Our community was cool, calm and collected around this issue—beyond the hysteria perpetuated by many front pages of metropolitan newspapers and to the chagrin of the SBS *Insight* program.

Many stories have gone untold about the bravery and altruism of members of my community, including Gary Meredith, a stalwart of the Ballina Jet Boat Rescue and coordinator of Surf Life Saving NSW, who, as part of the local response protocol, leaves his place of work to head to the beach to put up signs and alert those in the water of a shark presence; the off-duty nurse who saved the life of Sam Morgan after he was bitten at Lighthouse Beach last week; and the Ballina shire Mayor, David Wright, who has paid thousands of dollars of his own money for aerial patrols. My sincere appreciation goes out to every surf lifesaving volunteer, jet boat rescue crew member and marine rescue worker who continues to serve our community no matter the conditions. I recognise the family and friends and all those who have been touched by the shark-related deaths of Paul Wilcox and Tadashi Nakahara. I also recognise the thousands of people who have gathered around those in recovery from encounters—the community rallying behind Matt Lee in Ballina and the show of support for Sam Morgan have been remarkable.

I commend the efforts of the NSW Police Force, in particular the chair of the Ballina Shark Mitigation Advisory Group, Detective Inspector Cameron Lindsay, who works tirelessly to ensure that our local police attend the beaches once warnings have been given. The passionate advocacy for the protection of our community's ocean users from sharks has been loud and clear from the Byron shire Mayor, Simon Richardson. The work of the Department of Primary Industries, headed by Dr Vic Peddermors and assisted on the North Coast by Paul Bucher, has been superb. I commend the Department of Primary Industries for its transparency in conveying information and research to both the Shark Mitigation Advisory Group and the Ballina community in the form of a community meeting at Lennox Head.

This issue has rocked my community; its psyche has been affected. Last night I spoke to some very concerned people who are worried about their children surfing over the summer school holidays. They asked me what they should do. I gave some recommendations but I had to answer them honestly

that no one thing is going to keep their kids or ocean users safe. However, trialling non-lethal strategies for shark mitigation over the next 18 months will give us a way forward. That may not be clever politics on my part, but facing the problems as a community honestly and without sugar-coating is the right thing to do.

PARIS TERRORIST ATTACKS

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) [12.48 p.m.]: Last night I, along with many other members of this place, was privileged to attend a requiem mass at St Mary's Cathedral to remember the victims of the recent atrocities in Paris. It was a credit to all members who attended the mass and to the Archbishop of Sydney, who spoke so well about the threat this poses to many of us. This attack does not represent a religion that acknowledges the existence of God; any religion that seeks to express itself in violence is godless. I want to touch on the tragedy of recent events in Paris because many of my constituents who are concerned about extremism have contacted me. Everyone is concerned. Indeed, this tragedy has shocked and saddened the whole world. I acknowledge the contribution of the member for Lakemba. His presence in this Chamber is a privilege for all of us.

Mr John Robertson: Hear, hear!

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: As Australia remembers the Lindt café attack and the recent shooting in Parramatta, we also have been shaken by the Charlie Hebdo tragedy, and now by the brutality this week in Paris as well as in Beirut. Sadly, those are just the recent examples of an ongoing global crisis. The Premier was quick to acknowledge the Paris incident this week and had this to say:

Our hearts break with yours, Paris.

But our spirits will never be broken.

Neither will our determination to stand together against these cowardly, evil acts of terror.

We are with you.

I echo those thoughts. As we approach Christmas, which is traditionally a time for celebration, we are faced with the awful reminder that there is evil in this world; and, as history tells us, evil cannot be ignored. It is almost impossible to comprehend the senselessness of this violence. To target civilians in such a manner, without any motive other than to spread fear and hatred, is a concept which feels innately foreign to any rational human being. But we must try to comprehend these things. We must try to understand because, unless we are able to identify the problem, we will never be able to take the appropriate steps to solve it.

There already have been military-led responses in Syria by the French and the United States of America in an attempt to curtail the spread of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria [ISIS]. Conflict with ISIS seems almost unavoidable: France has experienced this, Lebanon has experienced this, and the whole world now knows this beyond doubt. The terror of ISIS understands no other language than force. We cannot be meek when standing up to monsters. We must never give in to those violent bullies. But we should not become distracted by military responses alone. We must understand that we are fighting an ideology and we are fighting ideas. We cannot fight ideas with guns. We are faced with an ideology that is incompatible with our own—the ideology of Islamic extremism—and there is no way to resolve the impasse. Just as in the Cold War, when the West stood up to the ideological threat of Communism, we must once again defend our way of life that has made us so successful.

We must clearly articulate what we stand for and actively promote our shared values. There is no place for moral relativism in this conflict. We can no longer ignore the evil in this world that threatens the values of any peace-loving nation. Of course, many moderate Muslims are the victims of Islamic

extremism. Recently I spoke at the Gallipoli Mosque about our shared values and the challenges of religious freedom. Knee-jerk reactions restricting religious freedom are not the answer to this crisis. We must stand with our moderate Muslim friends and speak out against Islamic extremism. But we must also acknowledge that the terrorists are motivated by an ideology. We must come together to reject the ideology of extremism, as there is clearly no God in the violence of the terrorists. They are truly godless. As we approach Christmas 2015 let us spare a thought for the victims of this global tragedy, both at home and abroad. I hope 2016 is a more peaceful year, but the fact remains we can no longer ignore this evil which threatens our way of life.

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Cootamundra—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.53 p.m.]: I thank the member for Epping for raising this extremely serious issue in the House this afternoon. The senseless violence that was witnessed in Paris over the weekend was nothing short of shocking, devastating and heartbreaking. It followed our own dose of terrorism at the Lindt café siege late last year. The member for Epping referred to conflicts in Syria and Lebanon that are being advanced by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria [ISIS], or Daish, and I agree with his comments. We are fighting an ideology and we must speak out against Islamic extremist ideology. What was particularly heartbreaking was that young people at the Bataclan theatre—who were locked in and had nowhere to go—were senselessly murdered as the perpetrators and murderers reloaded their weapons time after time. Those images will live with us for a long time. Our hearts, thoughts and prayers go out to all the people of France, most particularly those in Paris at this tragic time.

WHITE RIBBON DAY

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) [12.54 p.m.]: I draw to the attention of the House that tomorrow week, Wednesday 25 November, will be recognised around the world as White Ribbon Day. White Ribbon is the world's largest movement of men and boys working to end men's violence towards and abuse of women and girls, and to promote gender equality, healthy relationships and a new vision of masculinity. White Ribbon Australia, as part of that global movement, aims to create an Australian society in which all women can live in safety, free from violence and abuse. White Ribbon Day also marks the commencement of the 16 Days of Activism—a campaign to further raise awareness about the prevalence and devastating impact of gender violence; to celebrate victories gained by the women's rights movement; to challenge policy and practice that allow women to be targeted in acts of violence; and to demand that violence against women be recognised as an abuse of human rights.

I will share some statistics with the House that unfortunately reflect incidents that are prevalent in my electorate of Charlestown. The New South Wales Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research recorded in its June 2015 quarterly update the number of criminal incidents for major offences over the 12 months to June 2015. For domestic violence related assault, there were 730 incidents in Lake Macquarie and 709 in Newcastle. For sexual assault, there were 178 incidents in Lake Macquarie and 132 in Newcastle. Those numbers are some of the highest in the State. To combat this, the whole community needs to come together to create a safer environment for women. That is why it is particularly wonderful to see people in my electorate of Charlestown participating in a range of activities for the 16 Days of Activism campaign.

The 16 Days of Activism in the Hunter will be launched by the Lord Mayor of Newcastle and will be followed by an afternoon of live entertainment, a free barbecue, discussions with service providers and an activity for attendees to make a visual statement about ending violence towards women. The guest speaker at the Hunter's major White Ribbon Day breakfast will be a constituent of mine, Angela—a woman who suffered horrific injuries and was near death at the hands of her ex-husband. I met with Angela earlier this year. I sat silently and listened as she shared her life and the years of abuse she suffered at the hands of her former husband. The thing that struck me most during our conversation was when she told me that, when she looks back at the photographs of what her husband did to her face, it was not the black eyes or the bruised jaw that traumatised her the most: It was the distinctive imprint of his wedding ring that he left on her forehead. She said that was the most heartbreaking part. It was a

symbol of love and promises that he had used against her.

Other activities that are occurring as part of the 16 Days of Activism include: The Sista Code Foundation's White Christmas Party, which will raise funds to help women start their lives again after escaping domestic violence. There will be a Christmas Tree of Angels, which is being coordinated by the Victims of Crime Assistance League and will bring the community together to honour and remember those touched by or lost to violence. There will be Fill the Trees, where white ribbons with victims' names and messages will be tied to pine trees. There will be a feminist trivia night to raise money for Aye We're Extraordinary [AWE], which is a Newcastle women's activist group.

AWE's aim is to champion the rights of women, challenge the culture of sexism, empower, make positive change and get active. As part of the 16 Days of Activism there will also be the Ride for Refugee Women's Rights. There will be a few flash mob renditions of Helen Reddy's iconic *I Am Woman* around the Hunter. I am honoured to be joining the women of the Charlestown electorate from 25 November—the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women—to 10 December—which is Human Rights Day—in the 16 Days of Activism to galvanise action and to end violence against women and girls all around the world. I encourage all members of the New South Wales Parliament to be part of White Ribbon Day activities, to espouse the actions and the values that White Ribbon Day is about, and to enjoy the 16 Days of Activism.

DAVISTOWN RSL SUB-BRANCH REMEMBRANCE DAY CEREMONY

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) [12.59 p.m.]: Recently, I accompanied the Minister for Veterans Affairs, the Hon. David Elliott, to meet members and guests of the Davistown RSL Sub-branch at the beautiful Davistown RSL Club. More than 30 men and women attended the luncheon. Minister Elliott addressed the guests and listened to their concerns about the difficulties that many retired service men and women face when they return to civilian life. Henry Wolarczuk was a migrant who came to Australia in 1949, at the ripe old age of three. He grew up in Tasmania in the 1940s and 1950s, in a hardworking family. Three months shy of his sixteenth birthday Henry joined the Royal Australian Navy and commenced his traineeship on HMAS *Anzac*.

He then went to the troop carrier HMAS *Sydney*, and he served his country on several trips to Vietnam. Henry transferred to the aircraft carrier HMAS *Melbourne* and served on it for the next two years. Henry's naval career led him to serve on all three of the destroyers, *Vampire*, *Vendetta* and *Voyager*, during the Vietnam War and later take part in Operation Navy Help, which was the navy's response when Cyclone Tracy destroyed Darwin at Christmas in 1974. Henry Wolarczuk retired from the Royal Australian Navy after 20 years of service to settle down in Sydney and to married life. Fortunately for Henry, he discovered the Davistown RSL Sub-branch, where he found camaraderie, sharing stories with other members.

Over the years, thousands of Henry Wolarczucs have retired and passed through the gates of the Royal Australian Navy and the other arms of the Australian Defence Force. Having served their country and with the training credentials and values of the armed forces embedded in their daily practice, they enter civilian life well equipped for new challenges. Unfortunately, some do not adjust to civilian life. After years of living a structured lifestyle, which could involve fighting at the front line, daily civilian life can be daunting. This can take its toll if the transition is not handled properly. The impact can be devastating, not only to the ex-service men and women but also to their families.

A young man, Marcus, spoke to me at length of his experiences. He had joined the army at 18 and served his country for nearly 20 years. At a young age, Marcus had had a number of tours of duty to Iraq and had seen combat firsthand. He was trained to be a soldier; he was trained to defend his country. His daily life involved structure and commands, and mateship. He and his colleagues experienced total dependency on, and trust for, one another. On leaving the army and walking through the gates to civilian life, Marcus found only a void. He is still struggling to find work to support his wife and children. He did not

have a job waiting for him when he completed his service in the Defence Force. Marcus did not have the support he so desperately needed to go through that transition.

It is estimated that 3,000 veterans are living on the streets. That is about 10 per cent of Australia's homeless population, according to Homelessness NSW. Leaving the Australian Defence Force, in some respects, is like starting all over again. Creating a new life can be complicated and daunting. There is a need for advice on how to integrate into civilian life; how to apply for a job and gain interviewing skills; how to find housing; and how to engage with health and education services. A resettlement plan is imperative. It would meet the needs of each individual. It would assist by providing workshops in curriculum vitae writing and interview technique, as well as vocational training. It would equip former service personnel with the tools and knowledge they need to market themselves to future employees.

By ensuring job opportunities are available to highly trained ex-service men and women before they enter the civilian world, the plan could provide a safety net for them. As I found in meeting with the Davistown RSL Sub-branch members, their work is invaluable in providing the camaraderie and support base our ex-service men and women so desperately need. Sometimes we undervalue the knowledge and experience defence personnel can provide in our society. Their skills are perfect for our police service, our security services and our hospitals and emergency services. There can never be enough people working in these professions.

We are most grateful for the dedication of the RSL sub-branches and their wonderful community projects. The Davistown RSL Club has a vegetable garden project—thanks to general manager Ben Bradley—and Thirsty Thursday get-togethers. These activities offer the mateship Australians are well known for and promote a feeling of belonging. We need to do more. We need to come together to value our wonderful returned service men and women. I highlight the outstanding work of the Davistown RSL Sub-branch and the Gosford RSL Sub-branch. They provide assistance to our ex-service men and women when they need it most.

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Cootamundra—Parliamentary Secretary) [1.04 p.m.]: I commend the member for Terrigal for his contribution on the Davistown RSL Club and his meetings there with war veterans and the Minister for Veterans Affairs, the Hon. David Elliott. I compliment the member on his commitment to war veterans. He showed great respect at the Remembrance Day service at Martin Place. I know that he has regular dealings with war veterans and other members of the RSL within his community. War veterans are a special and important part of our community. They are highly deserving of our respect and admiration. I compliment the member for Terrigal on his endeavours to improve the lives of veterans in his community.

PARIS TERRORIST ATTACKS

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) [1.05 p.m.]: Last night I was honoured to attend the requiem mass at St Mary's Cathedral for the victims of the Paris terrorist attacks. I acknowledge the comments of the member for Lakemba and the member for Epping. During the service, on behalf of our communities we mourned the deaths in Beirut, Baghdad and Paris. We do not need to know the numbers or the nationalities of the dead and injured people, when they died or how and in which country. We do not need to know what their beliefs were. We need to remember that every person was someone's father, mother, brother, sister, friend or grandparent. They all made a contribution. They are all important. Even one death is too many. These deaths occurred in situations where people expect to be safe: going to the football, to a concert or to a marketplace, or walking in the street. Today I draw the attention of the House to what is happening right now across Australia in the very place where we should expect to feel the safest—our home.

I acknowledge the comments of the member for Charlestown in this respect. For many, home is

the most dangerous battleground there is. Last Friday yet another woman's life was ended by violence in Australia. An unnamed 69-year-old woman was found in her unit at Geraldton after police were called to a disturbance. An unnamed 42-year-old man, who police say was known to the woman, was charged with unlawful assault causing death. The assault was drawn to the public's attention by the vigilant advocates at Destroy the Joint. This organisation has drawn to our attention the deaths of 77 women by violence this year alone. Some 75 per cent of those deaths were attributed to domestic or family violence—that is, around 58 women. At least one woman every week is killed by a partner, a lover, a husband or someone she knows. This is a national emergency. As we head towards the so-called festive season, domestic violence services are bracing for one of their busiest times of the year.

Many of the recently announced programs by the Baird Government have not been rolled out in my electorate of Maitland, where police say domestic violence is a major issue. Teachers at local schools have told me that if children did not experience family or domestic violence they would achieve much better educational outcomes. In general, the conversation about preventing domestic violence appears to be focused on the two groups that receive direct government funding to address it: refuges and the police. Under their contracts, refuges are gagged from advocating, so they cannot freely participate in the public debate or publicly prove their funding crisis. It is time to start a conversation that includes refuge workers, members of the judiciary, doctors, teachers, community nurses, mainstream community services, social workers and lawyers—all those in our community who pick up the threads of this terrible crisis.

We need to add weight to the calls for more structural changes in the legal system and to start calculating the real costs to our health system, community welfare and the economy. Some workers in the field believe that more resourcing for police will not result in a reduction in domestic violence until there is real cultural change in the Police Force. According to one lawyer, police often do not act quickly enough. Specialist domestic violence officers are often not available, and general police seem to take the view that they can calm down situations without providing ongoing legal protections for the women involved. Admittedly, sometimes this may be a function of an officer's previous interactions with the judiciary, particularly in regional areas.

While the recent focus has been on the terrible death toll resulting from domestic violence, less attention has been paid to other shocking statistics, as revealed by Quentin Bryce at a conference I attended in July. Every three hours a woman is hospitalised due to domestic or family violence. Three women a week suffer head injuries due to domestic or family violence. I acknowledge that there are men who suffer domestic violence. We need to protect them as well because every person who suffers domestic or family violence is one too many. Every person who is killed is one too many.

It is deeply disturbing to reflect on the priorities of the Baird Government in the context of this attack on women and children. The best the Premier is aiming for is to reduce the rate of domestic and family violence reoffending within 12 months by 5 per cent by 2019. That is not enough. We need to ensure that everyone in our community is safe from domestic and family violence. There is a war that has been going on in homes in our communities for generations. It is time to declare peace and work towards real solutions. If we cannot protect people in their homes, where on Earth will they be safe?

STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE SYDNEY SOUTHERN REGION AWARDS

Mr GLENN BROOKES (East Hills) [1.10 p.m.]: Last weekend I was lucky enough to represent the Minister for Emergency Services, the Hon. David Elliott, at the thirty-eighth annual NSW State Emergency Service Sydney Southern Region presentation night in Bankstown. This event also recognised the sixtieth anniversary of the NSW State Emergency Service. At the event, the dedication and commitment of a number of hardworking individuals was recognised and a number of service awards were presented. The awards included the Commissioner's Awards, national medals and clasps, long service medals and other certificates as recognition of their service to the NSW State Emergency Service. Not subtracting from the individuals recognised on the night, the event also recognised the dedication of all our men and women in

orange.

The work of the NSW State Emergency Service is wide-ranging, and the past 12 months have been a very busy operational period for all those involved in the Sydney southern region. The Sydney southern region comprises 15 SES units operating across 17 local government areas. It has more than 1,200 active members who respond to storms, floods and many other natural disasters. In addition to the natural disaster assistance, the volunteer members also provide support to other emergency services, including the Ambulance Service of NSW, Fire and Rescue NSW, the NSW Police Force, NSW Rural Fire Service and the Australian Maritime Safety Authority. In the past 12 months, the units in the Sydney southern region have responded to more than 8,225 requests for assistance, including 39 flood rescues. In addition to this, many volunteers also provided support outside their area to the Sydney northern, Hunter, Illawarra South Coast, Richmond Tweed and Clarence-Nambucca regions during severe storms, demonstrating true values of mateship and community spirit.

This community spirit and the commitment to develop local strength and resilience have been demonstrated through a number of community engagement activities. The Sydney southern region volunteers are involved with supporting local community events. They are active in community education and public relations, including attending local schools and other interest group meetings. The professional service offered by these hardworking volunteers would not be possible without their extensive training. Training in the areas of search and rescue, storm and water damage, first aid and chainsaw operations are regularly conducted. The 2013-14 financial year saw more than 2,000 statements of accreditation issued, highlighting the regular training the hardworking volunteers undertake. The SES also undertakes a number of youth engagement events and courses.

Before I conclude I must also acknowledge those who support the wonderful volunteers and allow them to do the work they do. I thank the employers that grant time off for the volunteers to leave whenever they get the call. I thank also the families who spend nights without their mums or dads because they are out serving the community. I was pleased to share in this special occasion with the hardworking volunteers, and express my thanks for the work that they do.

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Cootamundra—Parliamentary Secretary) [1.15 p.m.]: I acknowledge the hardworking member for East Hills and thank him for what he does in his local community and for drawing to the attention of the House the hardworking volunteers of the NSW State Emergency Service Sydney Southern Region. As the member said, this region responded to 8,225 requests for assistance. We appreciate their hard work and acknowledge the help they provide to the Ambulance Service of NSW, Fire and Rescue NSW, the NSW Police Force, NSW Rural Fire Service, the Australian Maritime Safety Authority and others. The 2,000-plus statements of accreditation this financial year go to show just how hardworking these volunteers are. I congratulate the member for East Hills and thank him for bringing this celebration to the attention of the House.

MULTICULTURAL DISABILITY ADVOCACY ASSOCIATION TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) [1.16 p.m.]: I acknowledge and congratulate the Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association of NSW [MDAA] on its twentieth anniversary. Based in Granville, MDAA is the peak body for all people in New South Wales with disability and their families and carers, with a particular focus on those from a culturally and linguistically diverse [CALD] or non-English speaking background with disability. The association's vision for is a society where everyone, regardless of background or disability, feels welcome, included and supported. MDAA views culture and disability through the lens of diversity. MDAA sees diversity as a strength and promotes this view in all its work. The association wants to make that vision a reality.

People with disability from CALD communities face multiple barriers to daily life, employment, education and participation. To understand the importance of MDAA's work, consider that 8.2 per cent of the New South Wales population are from non-English speaking backgrounds and have disability while

42.0 per cent of people with disability are from non-English speaking backgrounds. In 1992 the Ethnic People with Disabilities Program of the Ethnic Child Care Family and Community Services Co-operative initiated a forum "Let's Speak Out Together", which brought together people from non-English speaking backgrounds with disability and their families and carers as well as ethnic, disability and generic service providers and government representatives. A major recommendation made by the forum was to seek appropriate funds in order to establish a statewide advocacy service specifically for people from non-English speaking backgrounds with disability and their families and carers.

The Commonwealth Department of Human Services provided funds to establish and auspice the Multicultural Disability Advocacy Service [MDAS] in July 1994. An advisory committee was formed and had its first meeting on 6 February 1995. An application for incorporation was accepted by the Department of Consumer Affairs on 5 September 1995 and the Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association of NSW was born. MDAA became an independent organisation and based its underlying philosophy on the Commonwealth and State disability services Acts, the Disability Discrimination Act, the Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities and the National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia.

Today MDAA has more than 500 members and many of them joined with current and former staff of MDAA to celebrate MDAA's twentieth anniversary on 4 November. There were great traditional and cultural music and dance performances, as well as a fashion parade showcasing the traditional dress of many different cultures, including Afghan, Filipino, Burmese, Arabic, Indian, Pakistani and Scottish—yes, a male staff member joined the fashion parade in his kilt and he got the most cheers. MDAA has a strong strategic outlook and has been involved in the National Disability Insurance Scheme [NDIS] rollout in the Hunter. MDAA's cultural competency has enabled it to reach culturally and linguistically diverse clients and explain the changes that are coming under the NDIS. The idea of client-centred disability support, which underpins the NDIS, is close to the philosophy that has underpinned MDAA's work for the past 20 years.

But there are challenges—the NDIS is a major change for people with disability, their families and carers. This needs to be communicated effectively to culturally and linguistically diverse communities which traditionally have not accessed disability services as readily as others due to a lack of knowledge and information about the services available, the failure to provide information in accessible forms for non-English speakers as well as the stigma about disability in some cultures. MDAA has worked with leaders from different faiths and cultures to better understand cultural attitudes to disability and their impact on people with disability and their daily interactions.

By way of example, in December last year, the National Disability Insurance Agency [NDIA] recently reported that 59 out of 2,648 participants in New South Wales identified as being from a CALD background, which is only 2 per cent of the population of NDIS participants. While the Hunter has a much smaller percentage of the population from CALD communities than Granville, this is still clearly an underrepresentation of people with disability from CALD communities. MDAA is currently advocating to ensure that access to translation services is maintained once the NDIS is rolled out and that an individual's NDIS funds are not needed to pay for translation services, further disadvantaging people with disability from CALD communities.

Through individual advocacy, MDAA promotes and protects the rights of people with disability and their families and carers. The individual advocates at MDAA help clients ensure that their rights are recognised and respected. Advocates "stand beside" their clients and support them to make their own decisions and help people to stand up for their rights—for example, when people have problems with housing, immigration, school, work and disability services. MDAA is a leader in culturally inclusive disability advocacy in New South Wales, and I again congratulate Ace Boncato and her staff, the volunteers and management committee on 20 years of critically important support to people with disability, their families and carers.

CHINESE SETTLEMENT IN AUSTRALIA

ASIAN WOMEN AT WORK

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) [1.21 p.m.]: Last Sunday night I had the pleasure of representing the Premier at the Federation of Australian Guangdong community dinner, which hosted the premiere of a documentary called *The Change—Becoming Australian, the Chinese Experiment*. I acknowledge the attendance of members of Parliament, Liberal and Labor, State and Federal: Philip Ruddock, Senator Sam Dastyari, the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Strathfield, the member for Kogarah and the Hon. Ernest Wong from the other place, along with a host of local government councillors, including Deputy Mayor Councillor Annie Tang from Kogarah Council, Councillor Nancy Liu from Hurstville City Council and Councillor Craig Chung from Ryde City Council, together with my good friend Helen Sham-Ho, a former member of the New South Wales Parliament.

This unique documentary showcases the hard work and spirit of the early Chinese settlers in Australia and the contribution they made. It is a great way for us in New South Wales to witness the magnitude of their contribution and the cultural significance that the Chinese have in our country. Millions of people from all over the world have made Australia their home. Their lives and experiences have influenced all aspects of Australian life. Multiculturalism has contributed significantly to the working life of Australia—from the goldfields to the sugar cane fields, from vineyards and construction sites to farming and factories, as well as the steelworks and the Snowy River scheme. This great country is built on multiculturalism.

The documentary gave an insight into early Chinese settlement in Australia, mostly around Bendigo in Victoria and the goldfields of the 1850s. At one stage more than a third of the population of Bendigo was Chinese. Bendigo at one stage had one of the largest deposits of gold, worth more than \$9 billion. While many left to go back to China, many have called Australia home and this documentary is an opportunity to educate others on the struggles of early migration in Australia and to show the life and times of generations of Australian-born Chinese growing up in Australia.

The Chinese community has been a great contributor to our country for many years. Chinese people were among the earliest migrants to Australia, and people of Chinese heritage are now the largest community in New South Wales that speaks a language other than English, with more than 370,000 people. Our valuable and longstanding friendship with the Chinese community continues to evolve and to grow. I pay tribute to Mr Huang Xiangmo and the producers of *The Change—Becoming Australian, the Chinese Experiment*, for an amazing event on Sunday night. Also on the weekend I attended the Asian Women at Work annual general meeting, which was attended by members from both sides of this House. I congratulate members, volunteers and staff of Asian Women at Work on another great year of support and assistance to Chinese Australians across Sydney.

Asian Women at Work is one of the most active community organisations in my local community and its members are to be commended for their outreach programs and activities that help empower migrant women. Asian Women at Work has held many activities during the past 12 months, from the three-week painting exhibition at the Hurstville Art Gallery to the Happy Sunday program for migrant women and their families at Jubilee Community Services at Mortdale and the Riverwood Community Centre gardening workshops. Asian Women at Work is a necessary resource for many women in the local area. I wish them all the best for a successful 2016 and I look forward to continuing our partnership, working together in the future.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Hawkesbury—Minister for Finance, Services and Property) [1.25 p.m.]: Today I raise concerns over freedom of speech that have been put to me by the constituents of Hawkesbury. The Australia I know is one where diverse opinions are expressed, ideas debated and frank

discussions held and where the right to disagree is highly prized. This ability to articulate ideas freely is a defining hallmark of Western civilisation. This openness to new ideas has caused our societies to prosper, while others have stagnated. To this great tradition Australia has added its larrikin spirit—the "she'll be right" attitude—and our "live and let live" philosophy, further protecting us from the bitter political acrimony that has plagued other nations. Our respect for this freedom is evident even in our national anthem, where we proudly sing that "we are young and free". But this freedom is now under threat.

Recently in Tasmania, an unelected bureaucrat announced that the Catholic Church will be investigated for distributing a booklet in its school system outlining its views on marriage. This booklet, while articulating both religious and secular arguments to make its case, specifically calls for respect, sensitivity and love for all people. Following its distribution, Australian Marriage Equality put out a call on its website for people who were offended to come forward and make complaints to the Anti-Discrimination Commission. In other words, it deliberately manufactured a situation to use the big stick of big government against a private religious institution for simply expressing its beliefs.

The complainant was not a parent or child who received the booklet but a Greens candidate who claims to have been insulted and offended that it was ever produced. And now the church has 21 days in which to respond to these charges. Something is very wrong with our political system when a belief held for more than 2,000 years by a Christian church can now suddenly be judged "hateful" by some faceless bureaucrat. Our right to free speech comes with the responsibility not to incite violence or hatred. Arguing one's view on the definition of marriage clearly passes this test. Yet we are now in a situation where the Government is seeking to prevent a church from teaching its own beliefs in its schools.

The booklet itself lists several cases where bureaucrats have weaponised State power to prosecute and pressure religious institutions where the legal definition of marriage has been changed. In Australia this change has not yet even occurred, but this campaign of coercion has already commenced. Make no mistake: We are rapidly progressing from mere political correctness to now mobilising the machinery of big government to silence those with different views. Ironically, the people who preach most about tolerance are turning out to be the most intolerant of all. Sadly, it is our journalists, artists and academics—supposedly the stewards of intellectual liberty—who have become the most active in trying to silence views with which they do not agree.

This issue is not about religious freedom; it is about freedom itself. All parties in a debate—whether politicians, think tanks, religious institutions, lobby groups or anyone else—should be able to express their views freely without censure. The State licensing freedom to a particular group is no freedom at all. Whatever our views on the definition of marriage, we should all be uncomfortable that the Government now has the power to intimidate, investigate and prosecute us if it finds our views somehow inappropriate. Many people are offended daily by the constant stream of ridiculous ideas emanating from the political Left on issues ranging from economics to the environment. Yet they would never dream of referring their opponents to government tribunals for investigation. Either we are free or we are not. All of us, by virtue of our intrinsic value as human beings, have the fundamental right to speak our views without government, in its infinite wisdom, trying to regulate our private beliefs.

I have read several statements from Bishop Julian Porteous regretting any offence caused. He should stop apologising. It is his point of view and no-one else has to agree with him. He should not regret saying it just because some people have chosen to take offence. If they disagree, they should engage in debate. That is how free societies work. This case should be dismissed immediately and the Tasmanian Anti-Discrimination Commissioner should issue an apology to the community, followed by an immediate tender of her resignation, for this grave error of judgement. The Australian people are not stupid. We live in a vibrant liberal democracy. We are exposed to different opinions every day. It is our freedom to express our views and engage in debate that has enriched our nation in the past and will ensure we flourish in the future.

GOLDEN GUITAR AWARD FINALISTS 2016

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) [1.29 p.m.]: It was a great pleasure to attend the Sydney Opera House today for the announcement of the 2016 Golden Guitar award finalists. Also present were the Mayor of Tamworth Regional Council, Col Murray; the manager of the country music unit for the Tamworth Regional Council, Barry Harley; my good friend and vice chair of the Country Music Association of Australia, Roger Corbett; the executive producer and director of the Golden Guitar awards for 2016, Peter Ross; and, many of the talented artists who attended to hear the finalists announced.

The New South Wales Government, through the tourism and major events agency, Destination NSW, is proud to support the Golden Guitar competition and the Toyota Tamworth Country Music Festival. I acknowledge the great work of the Country Music Association of Australia and the Tamworth Regional Council in presenting the Golden Guitar awards. Doug Newton, Chair of the Country Music Association of Australia, and Roger Corbett were present today. Roger Corbett and Doug Newton are the fantastic duo in the band the Bushwhackers. Saturday 23 January will be country music's night of nights. The Golden Guitar awards are a prestigious awards ceremony for the Australian country music industry and mark the grand finale of the Toyota Tamworth Country Music Festival. It is 10 days of fantastic fun and great music.

In January in Tamworth each year the best of Australia's country music performers gather with music fans for these awards. The festival will celebrate and recognise the outstanding musical achievements of the previous year and showcase the best emerging and established talent our nation has to offer. The Golden Guitar awards and Toyota Tamworth Country Music Festival are not the only signature events for Tamworth, but they are important for our State. It raises the profile of New South Wales internationally and brings significant media coverage to the region, attracting visitors from far and wide.

It is estimated that each year more than 55,000 people visit Tamworth for the festival. They attend many performances, stay in local accommodation, shop and dine locally and enjoy visitor attractions thereby contributing to the local economy and the community. I encourage music fans and all my colleagues in the New South Wales Parliament to start planning their trip now for the 2016 event. I wish all finalists the best of luck when the awards roll around in January. I particularly wish those nominated today and the local participants Aleyce Simmons, Tom Maxwell and the very talented Ashleigh Dallas the best of luck. See you in January.

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Cootamundra—Parliamentary Secretary) [1.32 p.m.]: I thank the member for Tamworth for his wonderful contribution today regarding the Golden Guitar awards nominations at the Sydney Opera House. It is a great lead-up to the Golden Guitar awards on Australia Day, 26 January 2016. The Tamworth Country Music Festival is an institution in itself. It is the major tourism drive in January for the region and as the member for Tamworth stated, some 55,000 visitors attend the event. I congratulate the organisers Roger Corbett and Doug Newton. Over the years the festival has produced the best of Australian musicians such as Lee Kernaghan, Troy Cassar-Daley and Keith Urban—the list goes on and on. Good luck to the finalists announced today, it is a very exciting day for them and I wish them all the very best at the 2016 Golden Guitar awards.

Private members' statements concluded.

[Temporary Speaker (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith) left the chair at 1.33 p.m. The House resumed at 2.15 p.m.]

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I welcome all guests to the gallery this afternoon. In particular, I extend a very warm welcome to a very special guest, Jessica Fox, 2012 Olympic canoe slalom silver medallist, winner of three gold medals in the junior World Championships in the United States of America. In 2014 Jessica created history as the first woman to win two events, K1 and C1, at the under-23 World Championships in

Penrith, New South Wales and at the World Championships in the United States of America. Jessica is now focused on qualifying for the Rio de Janeiro Olympic Games. Recently Jessica became the first person in history to win three consecutive World Championship events in C1. Considering she was 21 this was a wonderful achievement, so well done, Jessica, and welcome.

I welcome also Graham Chapman, Jessica's manager, and Lindsay Silcox, part of Jessica's management team, guests of the Minister for Trade, Tourism and Major Events, and Minister for Sport, and member for Penrith. I welcome also Arthur and Gwen Budd, and their children, Anne, David and Robyn, guests of the member for Summer Hill. Arthur is the grandson of Arthur E. Budd, the former member for Byron in the Legislative Assembly from 1927 to 1944. Also, I welcome to the gallery 19 students and their teachers from St Mary's High School, Gateshead, guests of the member for Charlestown. I welcome as well 30 students and teachers from Callaghan College, Jesmond campus, Wallsend, guests of the fantastic member for Wallsend. Finally, I welcome to the gallery today Jill Crouch, wife and guest of the member for Terrigal.

CENTENARY OF FIRST WORLD WAR

The SPEAKER: Ambrose Campbell Carmichael, Labor member for Leichhardt from 1907 to 1919, one time Minister and Acting Treasurer of New South Wales, was among those remarkable State parliamentarians who took leave from the House to render active service. However, Carmichael not only took himself off to the Western Front where he fought with distinction, was several times wounded and won the Military Cross, but also took hundreds of others with him. As the steady tide of early volunteers began to recede, political leaders such as Prime Minister Hughes and Premier Holman encouraged a series of "recruiting marches", which were held across the State, led by prominent community figures. In the first of these marches, known as the Cooee March, 26 men left Gilgandra on 10 October 1915, led by the captain of the local rifle club. They shouted "cooe" to attract recruits as they marched through each town and by the time they had covered the 320 miles to Sydney on 12 November their numbers had grown to 263 recruits. It was very special to see that march re-enacted a century later and concluding at the Cenotaph on Remembrance Day last week.

A similar march, known as the Waratah March, left Nowra in November 1915. The 18-day march travelled along the Princes Highway, through the South Coast and Illawarra, towards Sydney. A re-enactment of this march, which the member for Kiama and I will both attend, will take place at the Nowra School of Arts on Sunday 29 November, where the speeches made by the original participants 100 years ago will be used. Carmichael initiated another march and after touring the State he had recruited the best part of 1,000 volunteers, men who were to form a large part of the 36th Battalion. He left with his recruits on the *Beltana* in May 1916 and headed, with them, directly into the front at Armentieres, serving through massive losses at Passchendaele and the glorious victory at Villers-Bretonneux. In his taking leave of the House on 23 November 1915 Carmichael spoke of:

... doing what is possible, even in a small way, towards taking one's part in the great issue which overshadows the country.

Despite his wounds, when Carmichael returned to Australia in February 1918 he immediately set about raising another contingent of volunteers, with whom he duly left these shores once again in June 1918, participating in the last days of the Great War and returning to resume his parliamentary duties in February 1919. Although he failed in his bid for re-election in 1920, Carmichael remained politically active, eventually joining the National Association of NSW, one of the antecedents of the Liberal Party. He died in Darlinghurst in 1953 at the age of 86. He was one of the 14 members of this Parliament to serve in the Great War—a man who went fearlessly where he encouraged others to go—leading by example. Lest we forget.

PARIS TERRORIST ATTACKS

Ministerial Statement

Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) [2.23 p.m.]: During the weekend all of us in Sydney and indeed across the country watched in horror as darkness descended upon Paris, and evil, cowardly attacks claimed the lives of more than 100 innocent civilians. These were hideous crimes perpetrated by those who seek to deny life and freedom to anyone who does not subscribe to their twisted hatred of the world. Whilst claiming to act in the name of religion, these are actions so unthinkable they can only be perpetrated by the totally godless. Indeed, I believe that in these actions we see the face of evil itself. This House, this State and this country stand in condemnation of these atrocities.

When our friends across the world hurt, we hurt with them. Whether it be in Paris or Beirut, in Kenya or Iraq, our shared humanity and shared values mean that a crime inflicted by terrorists anywhere across the globe is a crime committed against us all. In this we mourn together. Their pain is our pain. Their loss is our loss. And with our shared pain comes a shared determination to defend our freedoms and to stand as one against this evil. As world leaders have gathered over the past days, we can see that global condemnation is being followed by global action in hunting down these terrorist groups wherever they may hide. This global action must also be matched with global and, importantly, local unity.

The French flag flying proudly on our bridge, and the blue, white and red lights shining brightly on our Opera House are a symbol of this unity and of our solidarity. They say to those in France and indeed wherever there has been a loss of innocent lives, we are with you. They are also a reminder that in times of darkness, the light shines brightly and the darkness will not overcome it. We say to our friends in France and indeed across the world that this city, this State and this country are with you.

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn—Leader of the Opposition) [2.26 p.m.]: I join with the Premier and add the condolences of Labor members to the families of all those who were murdered in the terrorist attacks last week and we express our solidarity with them. Darkness descended on the City of Light on Saturday morning our time, Friday night French time, when 132 lives, at last count, were lost. We know that number will almost certainly rise. People were slaughtered as they broke bread, attended a concert or a football match or as they walked the streets on a Friday night. No warning was given, no mercy was shown. They were simply enjoying life in one of the world's greatest cities.

Paris is not simply a city; it is the home of the Enlightenment and it remains a crucible of culture, philosophy and religion. This was not simply an assault on the people of France or the West; it was an assault on all of us who believe in those universal values of liberty, fraternity and equality. I also want to say something about Lebanon. I joined with the Maronite Bishop of Australia on Sunday in Auburn at their Maronite parish. They were mourning the loss of many people in their homeland in Beirut late last week. I think of the words of Pope John Paul II when war broke out in 1989 in Lebanon when he said:

Lebanon is something more than a country, it is a message of freedom and a paragon of pluralism to East and West alike.

The entire idea of independence for Lebanon was the national pact, an unwritten code of harmonious co-operation between Sunnis, Shiites, Christians and Druze. That, of course, is what the terrorists seek to attack. If they are ever to fulfil their aim of eliminating the harmonious co-existence of people of different faiths and none, they must first attack Lebanon. As the Holy Father said in his exhortation, "A New Hope for Lebanon":

Lebanon is a homeland for all its people where Christians and Muslims and others live together with equal rights and mutual respect.

It is that idea that the terrorists attack. Whether in Paris or Baghdad, Beirut or in skies over Egypt, it stands to all of us to express our solidarity with the victims and their loved ones wherever they are, and

our defiance against the barbaric murderers who slaughter the innocent.

MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE WEDDING

The SPEAKER: I congratulate the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure on his wedding over the weekend to his beautiful wife. I welcome Mrs Jennifer Constance to the public gallery. It is nice to see you both enjoying your honeymoon with us.

QUESTION TIME

[Question time commenced at 2.31 p.m.]

ATTORNEY GENERAL AND SOUTHERN CROSS GOLDFIELDS SHAREHOLDING

Mr LUKE FOLEY: My question is directed to the Attorney General. On what date did the Attorney General seek permission from the Premier to hold or acquire shares in Southern Cross Goldfields, which has mining operations near Cobar, as required by section 1 of the schedule to the New South Wales Ministerial Code of Conduct?

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. I have disclosed to Parliament and to the Premier my interests in the proper way. I cannot be any clearer. I have answered that question on a number of occasions. What is interesting is that the Leader of the Opposition—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Canterbury will come to order. The member for Prospect will be removed from the Chamber if he continues to interject.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: It is interesting that before the last election the Leader of the Opposition said he would raise the standard of parliamentary debate. What a hollow hypocrite he is. I remind the Leader of the Opposition that before the last election he said.

... as a political leader, one of the greatest challenges I face is to restore the public's faith in the power of politics ... We must do better.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members who continue to interject will be removed from the Chamber for the rest of the day under Standing Order 249 (1).

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: My point of order is relevance under Standing Order 129. The Attorney General began her answer by saying she had answered the question. This is not about Real Energy; it is a different company, Southern Cross Goldfields.

The SPEAKER: I am sure the Attorney General heard the question.

Mr Michael Daley: She is answering the question from last week. This is a new company.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra will resume his seat. The Attorney General is entitled to answer the question in whichever manner she sees fit so long as she remains relevant. The Attorney General is being relevant to the question she was asked.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: Let me remind the Leader of the Opposition of what he said before the last election. I did not get to complete the quote.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order. I warn members that they will be removed from the Chamber without being called to order if they continue to interject. I will not tolerate it.

Ms Linda Burney: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! If the member for Canterbury has a different point of order I will hear it. If not, she will be placed on a call to order. I have ruled that the Minister is being relevant. Does the member have a different point of order?

Ms Linda Burney: No, my point of order is taken under Standing Order 129.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Canterbury to order for the first time. She will resume her seat. I call the member for Canterbury to order for the second time. She knows the standing orders as well as I do. I can only request that the Minister remain relevant.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: Opposition members are taking points of order because they do not want to listen to what their leader said. He said that we must do better and he said that under his leadership Labor will do better and raise the level of parliamentary debate. Those are the words of the Leader of the Opposition. In addition, the Leader of the Opposition signed the Politicians' Pledge, promising to act ethically—

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

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: He promised to put the common good before partisan interests. He has promised to raise the standard of parliamentary debate. He has broken his word.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! If it is the same point of order, the member for Maroubra will be placed on a call to order.

Mr Michael Daley: It is not, Madam Speaker. Apart from the answer being irrelevant and a very poor self-defence, might I say, Standing Order 73 precludes this line of discussion by the Attorney General.

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

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: Welcome back to the member for Maroubra. These attacks on me say more about Opposition members than me. They smack of desperation. The Leader of the Opposition is a hollow hypocrite. [*Time expired.*]

WESTERN SYDNEY SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: My question is addressed to the Premier. How is the Government delivering improved services and infrastructure on behalf of the people of Western Sydney?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I do not think there is a bigger champion for the west than the member for Castle Hill. He loves Western Sydney and he has delivered for it.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order. There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: We are very proud of what we have delivered for Western Sydney. We know the importance of the growing Western Sydney region. It is currently home to more than 2 million people and over the next 20 years another million people will come to the area, which means that in the future one in two people in this city will live in Western Sydney. We know we have to deliver for the region and

that is exactly what this Government has done. We have delivered for the people of Western Sydney and we are very proud of that. Wherever you look there is action. We have delivered housing. Indeed, 70,000 new dwellings are going into the north-west growth centre.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: There are 110,000 new dwellings going into the south-west growth centre.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Londonderry to order for the second time. She will cease arguing. I call the member for Londonderry to order for the third time. This is her last warning.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I know why those opposite are interrupting—it is because I was coming to the jobs that we have delivered in Western Sydney.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I was coming to the jobs that we have delivered in Western Sydney. I just thought that those opposite might be interested to hear that since this Government has come to power it has delivered 74,700 jobs in Western Sydney. That is what those of us on this side of the Chamber have done. The member for Parramatta is sitting behind me. He is a spectacular member for Parramatta.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The Government has delivered 25,000 jobs in Parramatta alone. The member for Parramatta did it by himself. Look at him; he is unbelievable—he was delivering jobs everywhere. He was almost handing them out.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Bankstown to order the first time. I call the member for Strathfield to order for the first time. I had asked both members to come to order.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The Government is very proud to be delivering for Western Sydney. Infrastructure is being built in almost every corner of Western Sydney.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: We know the history of the North West Rail Link. I do not want to bore those listening by recapping what those opposite did when they were in government—but they promised it in 1988 and they delivered nothing. The North West Rail Link is now being built. We have completed 20 kilometres of tunnelling. The WestConnex project and the M4 and M5 projects will make a big difference to commuters across this great State. The Government is investing \$3.6 billion, together with the Commonwealth Government, into roads around the new airport. What a difference that will make to jobs in Western Sydney. Everywhere we turn there are jobs, there is infrastructure and there is great news for Western Sydney. Jillian the builder has been out there, and we know that wherever Jillian goes, up go the hospitals. They have been redeveloped across Western Sydney. Even those on the other side love it.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I see that the member for Prospect is back from his factional meeting with the Hon. Chris Bowen. He has obviously had a good meeting with him. It does not matter where we look. At Westmead—

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order No. 73. The

personal reflections of the member for Manly are unnecessary. He simply needs to answer the question, without his usual hollow, boring waffle, at least at some point.

The SPEAKER: Order! I could not hear what the Premier was saying because of interjections from Opposition members. But I am conscious of the personal reflections made previously. Those kinds of personal reflections came from Opposition members. The member for Campbelltown will resume his seat. He should not try to talk about personal reflections, given what has been said by Opposition members.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The member for Campbelltown voted against the next stage of the Campbelltown Hospital redevelopment; he does not want it. But the good news is that we on the Government side will build it. We will build it under Jillian the builder.

The SPEAKER: Order! If Government members do not come to order they will be called to order.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The Minister for Education is upgrading and building schools wherever we look.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: School building works are going on at Bella Vista, Oran Park, Bass Hill and Spring Farm. The Minister continues to deliver. We are delivering schools, hospitals and infrastructure. Even that great cultural institution, the Powerhouse Museum, will move to Western Sydney, as it should. It is moving to Parramatta.

Pursuant to standing order additional information provided.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: There are other approaches to Western Sydney, and we saw this in the election campaign. The Leader of the Opposition put forward a very bold plan for Western Sydney. I will tell the House what it was. He is absolutely against the Sydney Metro. He does not want increased rail capacity across Western Sydney. He is against WestConnex. He does not want the M4 or the M5 to be delivered for Western Sydney. He did not have the Parramatta Light Rail in his infrastructure plan—there was no light rail in his infrastructure plan. There was no Parramatta Stadium in his infrastructure plan. Those opposite could not fund it and were not interested in it in any way. There was no upgrade to Westmead Hospital in his infrastructure plan. There was no upgrade to Arthur Phillip High in his infrastructure plan. There was no paediatric hospital in Campbelltown in his infrastructure program, and the member for Campbelltown is against this project in every way. Those opposite had no interest in a new Rouse Hill hospital.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. The member for Bankstown will come to order. I call the member for Bankstown to order for the second time. I call the member for Wollongong to order for the first time. I call the member for Strathfield to order for the second time. I call the member for Swansea to order for the first time.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: We know exactly what those opposite are against: They are against funding infrastructure and services in Western Sydney. The Government has a very different approach. It is for Western Sydney.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The Government is for it, and that means what it has to do is to fund things; and that is what the Government is doing—whether it be our hospitals, our schools or our transport

system. The Government is growing the economy so that more jobs are delivered in Western Sydney—that is what this Government is delivering. It is very proudly delivering that for the people of Western Sydney, as it is across New South Wales. There are two clear alternatives: A government committed to growing a prosperous Western Sydney and an Opposition that has abandoned Western Sydney.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Those opposite do not care about Western Sydney. They do not care about Wollongong. They do not care about people. They do not like people.

Ms Noreen Hay: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! I believe the Premier has completed his answer. Did the member for Wollongong have a point of order? Has the member for Wollongong taken offence at something?

Ms Noreen Hay: I certainly do have a point of order.

The SPEAKER: The member for Wollongong will resume her seat. The Premier has completed his answer. It is too bad.

ATTORNEY GENERAL AND REAL ENERGY SHAREHOLDING

Mr PAUL LYNCH: My question is directed to the Attorney General. Did the Attorney General disclose to her colleagues her shareholding in Real Energy at the time Cabinet considered the NSW Gas Plan, given that action No. 14 of the Gas Plan commits New South Wales to investigate opportunities to increase interstate pipeline capacity?

The SPEAKER: Order! This is a case of different words but the same question. I am tiring of this. I have not ruled the question out of order, so Opposition members should not get upset. I call the member for Shellharbour to order for the second time. Members should know not argue with me—it is a very silly thing to do.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: I thank the member for Liverpool for his question. The Leader of the Opposition now has the member for Liverpool doing his dirty work for him.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will be asked to leave the Chamber very shortly if they do not come to order. The member for Maroubra will come to order. The member for The Entrance will come to order.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: I am happy to answer every question about every interest and shareholding I own because I have made full and frank disclosures, which is more than those opposite have done—it is more than Labor Party members do.

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

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Keira left the Chamber at 2.46 p.m.]

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: This attack really smacks of desperation.

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

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

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

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

The SPEAKER: Order! I am sick of asking members to come to order. The interjections will cease. The member for Granville will come to order.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: We know why this smacks of desperation—it is because the Opposition leader and the Labor Party have not landed a punch on Premier Mike Baird in this term of government. Those opposite have no policies and no ideas.

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

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Prospect left the Chamber at 2.48 p.m.]

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: Those opposite have no ideas and no policies, and that is why they are all hollow hypocrites. They will not distract me from the important work of government. Members on the Government side of the House have policies and ideas: Those opposite should listen up.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Wyong will come to order. The member for Port Stephens will come to order.

LAW AND ORDER

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: My question is addressed to the—

The SPEAKER: Order! No-one is listening. Opposition members are trying to get a scalp, especially a female one.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: It is the job of the Opposition to keep—

The SPEAKER: Order! I know what the job of the Opposition is; and it is not doing it. The member for Maroubra will resume his seat.

Mr Michael Daley: If Madam Speaker is suggesting that the Opposition is pursuing the Attorney General because she is a woman then I am offended and I ask that the comment be withdrawn.

The SPEAKER: Order! I do not have to withdraw anything. The member will resume his seat.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, Minister for Justice and Police. What is the Government doing to ensure that our justice system protects our community? How does this compare with alternative approaches?

Mr TROY GRANT: I thank the member for his question. The member for Tamworth understands how very seriously this Government takes law and order, both policy and action, in this State. When I pondered this question I wondered what those opposite, as the alternative government, would offer New South Wales. I asked my office, "What does Labor have in the way of law and order, justice and policing policies?"

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will come to order. The member for The Entrance will come to order.

Mr TROY GRANT: It is my clear and distinct memory that when those opposite were last in government organised crime was rife on our streets and law and order was out of control.

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

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Canterbury left the Chamber at 2.50 p.m.]

Mr TROY GRANT: When those opposite were last in government they had a policy document—which my office found in five minutes because there was nothing else to find—called Designing Out Crime. I went through that policy to see exactly what Labor meant by "designing out crime" and what I found was that organised crime was running rampant; there were gangland shootings across Western Sydney—

Mr Clayton Barr: Point of order: My point of order is relevance under Standing Order 129. The Minister was asked about the progress that his Government is making—

Mr TROY GRANT: Alternative policies.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Cessnock should have listened to the question.

Mr Clayton Barr: I did listen to the question. I realise that the Government is pitching up alternatives as same sort of argument against what I am proposing, but alternatives of something that happened in 2010 are hardly alternatives of today. The Minister must address—

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

Mr TROY GRANT: I do not hold the member for Cessnock responsible for the design of this policy. Labor's idea of "designing out crime" in 2011 was to be achieved through the positioning of pot plants, walkways and alfresco dining areas. If members do not believe me, they should read the policy. Those opposite thought that vandalism-proof garbage bins was the best crime-fighting tool available. This Government believes that more police and more resources on our frontline are the best way—high visibility.

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order: My point of order is standing order 130. We are not here to debate the matter. The Deputy Premier should answer the question he was asked.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Premier is being relevant to the question.

Mr Greg Warren: Madam Speaker, the Deputy Premier is debating the matter.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Campbelltown will resume his seat.

Mr TROY GRANT: She told you to sit down.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Campbelltown will resume his seat.

Ms Noreen Hay: To the point of order—

Mr TROY GRANT: So pot plants—

The SPEAKER: Order! Is the member for Wollongong speaking to the point of order? There was no point of order. I call the member for Kiama to order for the first time. Government members will come to order.

Ms Noreen Hay: Those opposite are certainly excited today.

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

Ms Noreen Hay: To the point of order. For almost the entire time that the member for Campbelltown was on his feet taking his point of order the Minister remained at the table.

Mr TROY GRANT: I told him to sit down.

Ms Noreen Hay: It is not your job to tell him to sit down; that is the Speaker's job. He was at the table to take a point of order.

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

Mr TROY GRANT: How embarrassed are those opposite? They think that garbage bins and pot plants will drive down crime—that was their policy. What is more worrying is that as the alternative government for this State they decided with much fanfare—

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. The member for Drummoyne will come to order.

Mr TROY GRANT: —on 22 May 2015 to launch these wonderful policy committees. This has been posted on NSW Labor's website.

Pursuant to standing order additional information provided.

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

Mr TROY GRANT: During that consideration Labor found time to establish a sustainable communities committee and a social justice committee, but it did not establish a single committee for crime or police. Labor has no interest in law and order.

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

Mr TROY GRANT: Labor is more interested in holding people's hands rather than holding people to account for the crimes they commit in our communities. This Government has its hand firmly on the wheel of justice to make sure our communities are safe; those opposite, as the alternative government, treat our communities as a joke. In recent days we have heard about armed, active shooting. We understand that threat is a clear and present danger in our communities. We have said that we will train all frontline police officers in New South Wales—

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order: I think the Minister was on track when he was talking about how important—

The SPEAKER: Order! What is the standing order that has been breached?

Ms Yasmin Catley: It is Standing Order 58. The Deputy Premier was correct in talking about how important justice is, but then he became irrelevant in talking about the past.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is being relevant to the question. The past is always relevant

to the present and to the future.

Mr TROY GRANT: Those opposite do not want to hear this answer because they are embarrassed. In Labor's own budget document, through the Parliamentary Budget Office, it plans to train only one in five officers in the Sydney central business district about active armed offenders—not in Western Sydney or anywhere else in the State is Labor interested in protecting our communities. [*Time expired.*]

ATTORNEY GENERAL AND REAL ENERGY SHAREHOLDING

Mr PAUL LYNCH: I direct my question to the Attorney General. Given the Minister's shareholding in gas company Real Energy, did the Minister receive permission from the Premier to be present in Cabinet gas policy discussions as required by section 12 part 3 (b) of the schedule to the New South Wales Ministerial Code of Conduct?

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: I have answered the Opposition's question during a number of question times now. I have made full and frank disclosures. Those answers are on the record; they are there for all to see.

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

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: As I have said to the Leader of the Opposition and to those opposite, they should follow that practice. What brought Labor into Opposition is the exact opposite of what those on this side of politics do.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: The conduct of Opposition members is not the subject of question time.

The SPEAKER: Order! But it is the subject of the answer. The member for Maroubra will resume his seat.

Mr Michael Daley: The Minister is refusing to answer any questions in relation to this matter.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister has never refused to answer any questions. The member for Maroubra will resume his seat.

Mr Michael Daley: She is looking increasingly weak and ridiculous.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra will resume his seat. The Attorney General has the call.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: It is good to have the member for Maroubra back. If he had been here last week he would have heard my answers. I have repeated them today.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Newcastle is on his last warning.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: I thought it might be helpful to reflect on the words of the member for Strathfield at the time of the election. I wonder how the member for Strathfield is feeling about all the mud that has been slung across this Chamber. On 30 March in an article in the *Inner West Courier* the member for Strathfield said:

ICAC happened and I am now standing here and the reason I'm here is that I have a burning desire for politics to be better.

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order: My point of order is taken under standing order 129. I do not understand the relevance.

The SPEAKER: Order! I understand it. The Attorney General remains relevant. There is no point of order.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: The member for Strathfield must be very disappointed to be back in this Chamber and witnessing mud being slung across the Chamber over three question times.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: Given what the Attorney has said—

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

Ms Jodi McKay: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. Given what the Attorney has said, I am best placed to say to the Attorney: Answer the question.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Strathfield will resume her seat.

Ms Jodi McKay: If the Attorney General has nothing to hide then she should answer the question.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Strathfield will resume her seat.

Ms Jodi McKay: The Attorney General brought me into this.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Strathfield will resume her seat. I call the member for Strathfield to order for the third time. There is no point of order. The member for Strathfield failed to resume her seat when asked to do so three times. That is my last warning to the member for Strathfield.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: If the member for Strathfield did not hear my answer, I will repeat it so that it is clear. I have made full and frank disclosures. They are all on the record. Members should have a look at them. This is the work of a desperate Labor Party and a failing leadership that cannot land a blow on our Government. Labor members have no policy and no ideas. They are going nowhere. This is the time to listen and to focus on communities.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 73. The Attorney General is casting aspersions. She says that there are improper motives behind these questions. The Attorney General says that it is improper to question the elected representatives of this Parliament on their shareholdings and how they may influence their decision making.

The SPEAKER: Order! I have suggested many times that I should have ruled questions out of order because of the imputations contained therein. However, I have not ruled them out of order; I have allowed them to stand, despite the clear imputation. The member for Maitland will resume her seat. There is no point of order. The Attorney General has the call.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: I have answered the question.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS: My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. What progress has the Government made in delivering world-class transport and infrastructure? Are there any alternative approaches?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: The honeymoon is going really well this afternoon.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 128. Questions should not contain expressions of opinion or requests for them to be made.

The SPEAKER: Order! I do not think a question about progress is seeking an opinion. There is no point of order. The clock will be restarted.

Mr Andrew Fraser: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 52 and Standing Order 131 (4). I ask that every time Opposition members get to their feet to take points of order the clock be stopped automatically. They are wasting the Government's time.

The SPEAKER: Order! That is done at my discretion. If it suits me, I will do so. The Minister for Transport has the call. The clock will be reset to five minutes.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I draw the attention of members to a newspaper article headed "Maitland MP Jenny Aitchison expelled from Parliament for second time". I note her point of order. In the article the member for Maitland says:

They just want us to roll over and play dead.

I suggest to the Opposition that it would be safer to play dead this afternoon than to keep this up. Let us cut to the chase: Transport projects are happening. New South Wales is the place to be. We are on the global stage. The Government is implementing great building projects across the State. World-class infrastructure is being delivered on time, on budget.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Wollongong to order for the second time. All members who were previously on one or two calls to order are now deemed to be on three calls to order.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Only yesterday it was great to stand with the Premier and confirm the scope of the Sydney Metro. I recognise the member for Holsworthy, who has been advocating strongly for a strategic review of the Sydney Metro extension between Bankstown and Liverpool. There is no doubt Sydney Metro will be a game changer. It is a traffic-busting project for this State. The Government confirmed six new stations as part of the project: Crows Nest, Victoria Cross Station at North Sydney, Barangaroo, Martin Place, Pitt Street and Central. The Sydney Metro project, which the Government is delivering, will be a marvellous project for the State and build tremendous capacity into the Sydney passenger rail network. It will set up the future of this great State.

It was also pleasing to join with a number of members, particularly the member for Camden and the member for Holsworthy, at Leppington on Friday. The Government is working with the Commonwealth to undertake a strategic review of passenger rail services in that part of Sydney, and looking at how it can intersect with Badgerys Creek. It will require us to do our homework. The Government wants to do it once and it wants to get it right. A number of ideas have been thrown around in relation to the project.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: The Government will explore the best way to undertake this project and the best time frame in which to build it. The top priority is to maximise the opportunities for the great cities in our west to connect with the airport. I refer to places such as Liverpool, Parramatta, Penrith, Blacktown, Camden and Campbelltown. The Government wants to make sure that the project is done right. While I was talking about the Sydney Metro it was drawn to my attention that the Leader of the Opposition has suddenly become interested in metro trains. I was somewhat amused the other day when I saw the Leader of the Opposition on television saying that the Labor Party is calling for a feasibility study on a metro rail service to Rozelle. Further questioning occurred at a press conference.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister does not need the help of Government members. I remind the member for Kiama that he is on three calls to order.

Ms Noreen Hay: Point of order—

Mr Troy Grant: How is Chelsea going?

Ms Noreen Hay: Leave Chelsea out of this. The Minister seeks to impugn the reputation of the Leader of the Opposition. He needs to do that by substantive motion. He should be careful about making outrageous allegations.

The SPEAKER: Order! It is question time. Reputations are impugned in every question and answer every day.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: In further questioning during a press conference it was revealed that Kristina Keneally had cancelled this project 60 months beforehand. What did the Leader of the Opposition say? He said, "Yeah, we can't fix the past." There is something very smelly about this. It smells like a Wookiee's armpit. We have tolerated Labor to a point now—

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: We have tolerated Labor and its nonsense plans because we are taking this State in a very clear direction under our transport policy.

Pursuant to standing order additional information provided.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: The difference between the Government and those opposite is very clear when it comes to transport and planning across this great State. We have worked hard throughout 2015 to deliver on the election commitments we made in those areas.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: We now have more than 14,000 new weekly services across the transport system.

Mr Luke Foley: Not to Olympic Park.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: That is a very interesting interjection. I am happy to respond to that interjection in relation to the additional services to Sydney Olympic Park.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: There are 118 extra train services, 104 extra night bus services and 139 extra weekly ferry services. That is the type of transport injection we have given Sydney Olympic Park. One has only to look at the jobs growth that has happened across Western Sydney; we are getting on with the massive infrastructure build, generating thousands of jobs associated with those infrastructure projects across Western Sydney. Unlike those opposite, we are not into cancelling things. We will continue to rebuild New South Wales.

ATTORNEY GENERAL AND REAL ENERGY SHAREHOLDING

Mr LUKE FOLEY: My question is directed to the Attorney General. Given she owns 400,000

shares in gas company Real Energy, on what date did the Attorney General advise the Premier of Real Energy's stated intention that the company file with the Australian Stock Exchange to enter the domestic east coast gas market?

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: I have made full and frank disclosures to the Parliament and to the Premier. I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. That is all I have to say.

SCHOOL PRINCIPALS' SALARIES

Mr JOHN SIDOTI: My question is addressed to the Minister for Education.

The SPEAKER: Order! I do not like comments about members' attire or their appearance. I will call to order any member who makes such comments. I call the member for Oatley to order for the second time.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI: My question is directed to the Minister for Education. How is the New South Wales Government improving the quality of educational leadership in our public schools?

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: I thank the member for his question. I would sum up his suit in one word: affordable.

Mr John Sidoti: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member's point of order is upheld. I call the Minister for Education to order for the first time. That is an outrageous comment.

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: We had a fantastic visit to Abbotsford Public School today and met some of the executive, particularly the principal, to talk about today's announcement by the New South Wales Government—another step in the transformation of education, particularly public education, that the New South Wales Liberal Party and The Nationals have been engaged in over the past five years: transformative reform, the sort of reform this State has not seen for more than a century. I am very proud to be part of a great team delivering it. We know from the research that the quality of teaching has the most significant impact on student learning, and we have made big investments in it. We have invested more than \$400 million in reforms such as Quality of Teaching and Great Teaching, Inspired Learning. We know that the second biggest impact is the quality of the leadership.

The Labor Party has in its ranks a couple of former school principals who did great jobs as leaders in their schools. That is why today we have announced a \$20 million investment in school leadership. A large part of that money will go towards changing the way that we classify schools in terms of the principal's salary. For example, Claymore Public School, which currently has a great principal, is located in a challenging part of Sydney. Its principal's salary will be \$22,000 more than it is this year. It is about making sure that we provide all the incentives in the world to get the best teachers, particularly in some of the more complex schools. Currently salary is based only on student numbers. Therefore, a school in Claymore would attract the same salary as a school of the same size in the eastern suburbs or other more well-off suburbs. We are now factoring into the principal's salary the complexity of the school.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. The member for Cessnock will come to order.

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: More than 60 per cent of teachers across New South Wales will receive a salary increase in recognition of their employment at more complex schools. But it is more than that. This is about making sure that we get the right people in those leadership positions. We will make sure that every new principal completes an 18-module credential before they can even apply to be a school principal. We are setting the standard very high. Every new principal will be coached by an experienced

principal. We will identify potential leaders among those who are currently teaching in the classroom to ensure that we have a pipeline of great teachers coming through.

As I said, we are aligning the way we classify schools with respect to principals' salaries based on the complexity of their school as well as student numbers, very much in line with the Gonski methodology around needs-based funding. Of course, everybody in the Liberal and National parties are great supporters of the Gonski reforms. The other day I was going through my social media—I do not use Snapchat. I was looking through Twitter when up popped a photo of all the members of the New South Wales Labor Party who support Gonski. A few weeks ago everyone in the Labor Party who supports Gonski came together on level nine for a photo. It is a great photo—I will not hold it up for members to see because we are not allowed to use props in the House. I thought it was fantastic, but then I took another look and saw that there were only 11 members. Where was the Leader of the Opposition? Is he not a supporter of Gonski? The rallying call went out for all Labor members who support Gonski to go up to level nine, but they could only round up 11 of them.

Mr Guy Zangari: Point of order: I draw your attention to former Speaker Murray's ruling in 1998—

The SPEAKER: Order! I do not care.

Mr Guy Zangari: —regarding the use of props.

The SPEAKER: Order! I do not care about Speaker Murray. Do not quote former Speaker Murray to me. However, I remind the Minister about the use of props.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! I upheld the point of order. What is the member's problem?

Mr Michael Daley: For the guidance of the House, Madam Speaker, are you ruling that members need not quote rulings of previous Speakers?

The SPEAKER: Order! They can if they want; I just do not care about it. The member for Maroubra will resume his seat.

Mr Michael Daley: Before the member for Fairfield had articulated his point of order you said, "I do not care".

The SPEAKER: Order! I do not care about it. I do not have to be dictated to by a former Speaker's ruling.

Mr Michael Daley: I did not say you had to be, but you might want to listen to what the ruling is.

The SPEAKER: Order! I did listen and I upheld the member's point of order.

Mr Michael Daley: You said, "I do not care" before he articulated his point of order.

The SPEAKER: Order! That is right. The member for Maroubra will resume his seat. He is being obstructive, argumentative and difficult.

Pursuant to standing order additional information provided.

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: The Liberal and National parties are supporters of Gonski. We are lobbying the Federal Coalition Government and we are lobbying the Federal Labor Party—we are doing more lobbying of Labor than Labor is doing—and members opposite had their one big chance to have a

photo on level nine of everybody who supports Gonski.

Mr David Harris: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, relevance.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister's answer is about education, members of Parliament and Gonski. There is no point of order.

Mr David Harris: I ask the Minister to show us his photo of Liberal and National party members supporting Gonski.

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: There is one government that delivered Gonski, and it is this one. There is one government that delivered salary increases for principals in the toughest schools in the State, and it is this Government.

Mr Jihad Dib: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! We know that the member for Lakemba supports Gonski. He should not take offence.

Mr Jihad Dib: I accept responsibility; Minister, we will invite you to be in the photograph next time.

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

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: The member for Fairfield was there and the Opposition leader was not there, I know there is the whole mobile phone fiasco. He would not want to be handing out his mobile phone because he might get some media attention; a journalist might ring him and ask what the Labor Party proposes to do if it is ever in government. The Government has a proud history; it has done a fantastic amount in the five years since it was first elected—a fantastic job. Queanbeyan East Public School is a great school that is doing great things with its Gonski money. We have a lot to be very proud of, but there is much more work to do.

ATTORNEY GENERAL AND REAL ENERGY SHAREHOLDING

Ms JODI McKAY: My question is directed to the Attorney General. Did the Attorney General inform the Premier that Real Energy received a \$5.9 million investment this year by way of a research and development tax incentive that will help the company supply the east coast domestic gas market?

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: The question gives me a welcome opportunity to complete the quote from the member for Strathfield that I did not finish before. The member for Strathfield said, "I'm here because—"

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Attorney General has just started her answer. It is too early to take a point of order. However, I will hear the point of order.

Ms Jodi McKay: My point of order is under Standing Order 129. If I want to know what I said I can read the *Inner West Courier*.

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

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: I will get to the point. The member for Strathfield said, "I'm here

because I have a burning desire for politics to be better", yet here she is throwing mud and making personal accusations. I refer to my previous answers.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: Madam Speaker—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Attorney General has completed her answer.

YOUTH EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: My question is addressed to the Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business. What is the New South Wales Government doing to help young people get ahead in New South Wales, and are there any alternative approaches?

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I thank the fantastic member for Oxley, who is not only a strong member of The Nationals and advocate for regional New South Wales but also a person who understands the needs of her community. I assure Oxley communities that they are well served by the current member, who will make sure that young people and businesses get their fair share of opportunities.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Cessnock is on his final warning. He will cease interjecting.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: The New South Wales Government is delivering for the people of New South Wales. It is making sure that young people have opportunities through investment in the skills portfolio for vocational education and training.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Gosford will cease arguing with the Minister. I direct the member for The Entrance to remove himself from the Chamber for a period of one hour.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for The Entrance left the Chamber at 3.22 p.m.]

Mr JOHN BARILARO: We know that if young people complete their training they will get the job they want—a job not only for today but for tomorrow. Like the \$10 million investment in the pre-apprenticeship scheme, it is a "try before you buy" type of program to support and mentor young people as they progress through their traineeship and apprenticeship. It is about improving completion rates. We know that we have a problem with completion rates across the nation, and we are committed to addressing it. Under the Premier's priorities we have set an ambitious target of getting those completions up beyond 65 per cent. We are achieving that through a range of investments.

Members have heard me speak about the Fee-Free Scholarships that we are offering to the most vulnerable in our community. I can update the House that since July this year 9,000 extra students have enrolled under the Fee-Free Scholarships scheme. Those students will be enrolled in courses next year, and early childhood education and care, hospitality and business administration are leading the enrolments that young people are taking up. I advise the member that on the mid North Coast 520 young people have taken up those Fee-Free Scholarships—a fantastic investment in the young people of this State. It will give them an opportunity to be part of the skilled workforce of tomorrow.

I can also update the House about an election commitment with respect to regional vocational education and training pathway programs. Today we have announced \$8.8 million to help young people get back on track—back into education or training and into a job. Working with community organisations, we have gone out to tender and we will deliver industry career and transition advice to students, and guidance, mentoring and case management to help young people to train and find a job. We will do this through a number of pilot programs in five regions around the State that are of course characterised by

the significant numbers of young people aged between 15 and 19 years who are not in study or in work. They are the areas of Richmond-Tweed, the mid North Coast, the capital region, the Central West and the New England-North West. We aim to announce the successful providers by Christmas, with the new program ready to start in the New Year.

A strong, diverse economy needs investment by business and the private sector. As a Government, we are proud of making sure that we leverage taxpayers' dollars in the best way to seek private sector investment to grow the economy and jobs. When one grows jobs, one grows opportunities for young people in the State. The programs we put in place to achieve that are delivered off the back of the private sector. Mums and dads show the courage and take the risk by employing young people in this State. The private sector is the engine room of jobs growth. We know that the small business policy of those opposite was to put a \$5.1 billion tax on small businesses in this State in order to fund projects and meet their election commitments. It was an \$8,000 burden on businesses—the mums and dads of this State who are its engine room. We know their track record when it comes to jobs creation. During the election campaign the Leader of the Opposition made a promise—again for Greens preferences—to get rid of 3,000 North Coast forestry jobs for a new koala park at the cost of local communities, jobs and the economy.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Members opposite are not only a threat to TAFE—to the young people of New South Wales—but also a threat to the economy, opportunities and growth of this State. As we have seen in the past week—and it is no different today—members opposite have left their moral compass at the door.

Pursuant to standing order additional information provided.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: We know those opposite stand for absolutely nothing. They change policy; they change their position on a number of different areas to suit preferences and to suit the election cycle.

Ms Noreen Hay: Point of order—

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Sit down.

The SPEAKER: Order! That is my job.

Ms Noreen Hay: My point of order is under Standing Order 128. The Minister is being argumentative and inciting interjections.

The SPEAKER: Order! It is the Minister's manner of speaking rather than the content of his contribution. The member for Wollongong will resume her seat.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: The member for Wollongong is being very selfish today by being here and depriving some village of its idiot.

Ms Noreen Hay: Point of order: I ask that the Minister withdraw that statement. He thinks question time is a joke and he can get away with comments such as that.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister should withdraw that statement. The member for Wollongong will resume her seat.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I am happy to withdraw that comment. Touching on what the member for Wollongong said about treating question time as a joke, for the past week in this place Labor members

have been picking on the Attorney General and slandering her. They have left their morals and their integrity at the door. They come into the House with no policy. They wasted eight months and then decided to come out of the gutter. Look at the graduate from the Kremlin institute.

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! Is the member for Liverpool taking offence at that comment?

Mr Paul Lynch: If he can say that I can call him a thug and a fascist.

The SPEAKER: Order! The time for questions has expired.

Question time concluded at 3.30 p.m.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Order of Business

Motion by Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS agreed to:

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

- (1) Postpone the commencement of private members' statements until the conclusion of Government business.
- (2) Permit the House to sit past 7.45 p.m.

PARLIAMENTARY ETHICS ADVISER

Correspondence

The Speaker tabled, pursuant to clause 6 of the resolution of the House relating to the Parliamentary Ethics Adviser, a copy of correspondence from the Parliamentary Ethics Adviser enclosing advice provided to the Hon. Andrew Stoner, former Minister, dated 16 November 2015.

Report

The Speaker tabled the report of the Parliamentary Ethics Adviser for the year ended 30 June 2015.

Ordered to be printed.

AUDITOR-GENERAL

Report

The Clerk announced the receipt, pursuant to section 63C of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, of the Auditor-General's Financial Audit Report, Volume 5, 2015, received on 17 November 2015.

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Report

Mr Michael Johnsen, as Chair, tabled the report entitled "Legislation Review Digest No. 11/56",

dated 17 November 2015, together with minutes of the committee meeting regarding Legislation Review Digest No. 10/56, dated 10 November 2015.

Report ordered to be printed on motion by Mr Michael Johnsen.

PETITIONS

The Speaker announced that the following petition signed by more than 10,000 persons was lodged for presentation:

Local Government Amalgamations

Petition opposing forced amalgamation of the Woollahra Council with any other local government area, received from **Ms Gabrielle Upton**.

Discussion on petition set down as an order of the day for a future day.

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**.

School Student Transport Scheme

Petition requesting the inclusion of light rail in the School Student Transport Scheme to provide free travel for students in New South Wales, received from **Ms Jo Haylen**.

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 Ministers had lodged responses to petitions signed by more than 500 persons:

The Hon. Andrew Constance—Hunter Region Transport—lodged 13 October 2015 (Ms Jenny Aitchison)

The Hon. Gabrielle Upton—Daylight Savings—lodged 13 October 2015 (Mr Adam Marshall)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Business Lapsed

General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) Nos 35 to 81 lapsed pursuant to Standing Order 105 (3).

CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO BE ACCORDED PRIORITY

State Infrastructure and Services

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Parliamentary Secretary) [3.34 p.m.]: My motion deserves priority. It states:

That this house:

- (1) Notes that after almost five years in opposition, Labor has comprehensively failed to outline a positive plan for New South Wales.
- (2) Condemns the Opposition's lack of policies, including in the areas of justice, health, education, transport, infrastructure, skills and small business.
- (3) Supports the clear plan by the Government to deliver the services and infrastructure the people of New South Wales need and deserve.

In a debate such as this it is appropriate to reflect on the Opposition motion. I point out, particularly to members who represent regional areas, that it is a Sydney-centric motion from an Opposition that does not know anything about regional New South Wales. Rather than taking the opportunity to talk about issues that are important to our communities, the Leader of the Opposition will move a very Sydney-centric motion. What happened at the last election? It was a contest not between Left or Right, but between up or down.

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

Mr GARETH WARD: We saw not a contest between two sides that were up to the challenge, but a weak Opposition that was clearly transactional and not transformational. No matter how many interjections the member for Maitland makes, her side of politics took this State to number eight; this side took New South Wales to number one. No matter how many inane motions those opposite move in this House, they know they left this State languishing, with low unemployment, low housing starts and no opportunities for young people. Opposition members opposed sensible plans—

The SPEAKER: Order! There are too many interjections. Members will come to order. Members who continue to interject will be removed from the Chamber for the remainder of the day.

Mr Greg Warren: Fifteen surpluses.

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

Mr GARETH WARD: I note the interjection from the member opposite. He talks about 15 or 16 surpluses but what about the fact that those opposite missed every single spending target for the entire time they were in government? Even Paul Keating believed electricity leasing was a sensible move.

Morris Iemma, Michael Costa and many others understood about shifting capital from one side of the balance sheet to the other and unlocking its full potential. Labor is no longer the party of Keating or Hawke. Those opposite can no longer claim their legacy; they are a rabble. Indeed, they opposed the ports transaction in Parliament but supported it at the election. They had all these ideas about how they could spend the money—but of course they did not indicate which projects they were going to cut.

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

Ms Noreen Hay: That's not true, Gareth.

Mr GARETH WARD: The member for Wollongong interjects, but she was one of the most vocal in relation to this.

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

[Interruption]

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Wollongong can make it two hours.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Wollongong left the Chamber at 3.37 p.m.]

Mr GARETH WARD: I remember my mum and dad saying if you work hard anyone can be a member of Parliament. But I look at the member for Wollongong and I recognise that working hard is not a prerequisite for being a member of this House. The member for Shellharbour will assure us that the member for Wollongong is really hard work. I commend this motion to the House because it is about reform and about a Government that is getting on with the job of rebuilding New South Wales.

The SPEAKER: Order! Government members will come to order. Those who continue to interject will be removed from the Chamber.

Australian Technology Park Sale

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn—Leader of the Opposition) [3.38 p.m.]: I seek that the motion standing in my name be accorded priority. It states:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that the Government has announced the sale of the Australian Technology Park in Redfern to a Mirvac-led consortium.
- (2) Notes the subsequent announcement from the Commonwealth Bank of Australia that it will move 8,350 jobs from Olympic Park, Lidcombe, and Parramatta to Redfern.
- (3) Condemns the Government for the loss of these jobs from Western Sydney.

My motion is unapologetically a Western Sydney centric motion. This is a region of the State that will go from two million residents today to three million in 16 years time. We have been told for years—and I thought that members on both sides agreed—that the thrust of public policy for Sydney should be to spread resources to Western Sydney so that the population growth of that region will be sustainable and not unsustainable. What do we need to do? We need to create 500,000 jobs in the greater west of Sydney—from the Hills to the Macarthur region, from Olympic Park to the Blue Mountains—over the next 25 years. That amounts to 20,000 jobs a year every year for 25 years. If we do not do that between now and 2040 this city will become unsustainable and the quality of living of everyone will decline.

For the development arm of the Government of New South Wales to lure the Commonwealth Bank of Australia out of Western Sydney and into the central business district is as dumb a public policy manoeuvre as one could come up with. It is a dumb decision that flies in the face of what is needed for the fastest-growing region of New South Wales. We would have needed to increase jobs in Western Sydney by 20,000 this year. That figure is now 28,350 because the Government engaged in a manoeuvre to rip jobs out of the area. The Government's own development arm put the deal together with Mirvac and the Commonwealth Bank. The Minister's press release boasted about how it will deliver on the Government's vision for the park. He was not talking about Olympic Park but the Australian Technology Park. The Government has no focus on Western Sydney. I say to the member for Kiama that someone in this House has to be Western Sydney centric—and it is the Labor Party.

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

The House divided.

Ayes, 49

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

Noes, 32

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

Question resolved in the affirmative.

STATE INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

Motion Accorded Priority

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Parliamentary Secretary) [3.47 p.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that after almost five years in opposition, Labor has comprehensively failed to outline a positive plan for New South Wales.
- (2) Condemns the Opposition's lack of policies including in the areas of justice, health, education, transport, infrastructure, skills and small business.
- (3) Supports the clear plan by the Government to deliver the services and infrastructure the people of New South Wales need and deserve.

This debate provides the Opposition with yet another opportunity to outline its plan as the alternative party of government. When looking at every economic indicator it is clear that New South Wales is leading the nation. That can be seen by reports of CommSec and ANZ as well as agencies such as Moody's and Standard and Poor's confirming our triple-A credit rating. We are not leading the nation by accident. We have taken some serious decisions about asset leasing, which members opposite opposed. Asset leasing makes sense to me.

[Interruption]

I note the interjection by my friend the member for Rockdale. He is a convivial and friendly chap but he is also an accountant—admittedly for the union movement, but he still understands the concept of shifting capital from one side of a balance sheet to the other. What can be done when an asset on a balance sheet is declining in value? The capital it contains can be unlocked and invested in new assets.

Mr Stephen Kamper: That's an argument for you to retire. Why don't you hit the road, pal? You're declining in value.

Mr GARETH WARD: I always appreciate the interjections of my friends the member for Rockdale and the member for Kogarah, who is a great contributor. However, I acknowledge that when his party was in government it sold the electricity retailers and generators without going to the election with a policy on the matter. We were honest with the people of New South Wales about how we could shift declining assets off our balance sheet and invest the money in new assets. That is one of the reasons I was delighted to read comments by the managing director and chief executive officer of the Institute of Company Directors in the recent Director Sentiment Index.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! I place the member for Maitland on three calls to order.

Mr GARETH WARD: Light travels faster than sound. That is why some people appear bright until one hears them speak. Members opposite should be quiet and listen. Overall, the sentiment in the second half of 2015 was up by 9.6 points on the last survey.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: I ask the member for Kiama to withdraw that comment. It is offensive and it should be withdrawn.

Mr GARETH WARD: I will withdraw it in the interest of moving on because I do not believe in offending people; I believe in results. That is what this Government is delivering and that is why the Australian Institute of Company Directors [AICD] survey reveals the reversal of the downward trend evident since late 2013, as I mentioned earlier. Directors rate GST as the top priority for any future comprehensive review of the taxation system, followed by personal income tax and multilateral tax arrangements. Some 82 per cent of directors support a change to the GST system, with an increased proportion preferring both an increase in the rate of tax and a broader base.

Directors' optimism regarding the general business outlook and the business outlook for their sector reached the highest levels since the first half of 2014. Directors have become more optimistic regarding the current level of red tape, with almost 35 per cent perceiving a decrease in the past 12 months and almost 25 per cent expecting a further decrease in the next 12 months. Directors are slightly optimistic about future profits for their primary business. Almost 35 per cent expect their profits for the first half of 2016 to be higher than the current six months and their budget forecasts.

Noting the Opposition's lack of a plan, I want to use this debate to focus on our plans. It is important that governments talk about what they will do. In that vein, in September the Premier outlined the priorities of this Government—setting out 30 State priorities, including 12 Premier's priorities that together define the New South Wales Government's vision for a stronger, healthier and safer New South Wales. What gets measured gets managed and delivered, and our State priorities give the Government and its agencies the opportunity to know our direction and our plan for building this State. It is important for those who deal with strategic plans not to have too many moving parts. There is no doubt that the 2021 plan, whilst bold, certainly had a number of instruments that needed monitoring.

Governments can never be complacent, and the Premier and the Government are determined to keep this State moving forward and delivering for its citizens. Job creation, building infrastructure and delivering high-quality health and education services are high on the Premier's personal agenda. Tackling child abuse and domestic violence at their source, as well as reducing the rates of homelessness and childhood obesity, are also firmly on this Government's agenda. Each of the 30 State priorities will be measured against the best available indicators of economic growth, infrastructure delivery, service provision and other measures of community well-being and safety across this State.

Like many boards I have been involved with, the Premier and his agencies will produce a dashboard to track the progress of our plan—and that includes across all services and across all sections of the State. The Premier has established a dedicated Premier's implementation unit to help ensure that the targets are met. This is what responsible governments do—they ensure their plans are implemented and they ensure they take their hard-working public servants with them. This Government has a plan for the future of this State. We have demonstrated that we can implement it. I commend to the House this motion and this Government and its actions.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) [3.52 p.m.]: I thank the Deputy Premier for drafting this motion. When one has regard to this motion, there is no doubt that it was not drafted by anyone in the Premier's office or even by the member for Kiama; it was definitely drafted by the Deputy Premier. Paragraph (2) of the motion lists the alleged successes of the Government. It begins with the area of justice. Now this could come only from the Deputy Premier. We are fully aware of the rift, which has been reported widely and in great detail—in fact it was probably leaked by the Deputy Premier to the *Daily Telegraph* last week—between the Deputy Premier and the Attorney General. They are trying to gazump each other on events.

Mr Gareth Ward: Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance under Standing Order No. 76. As fond of the member for Maroubra as I am, I do not believe any commentary on the relationship between members, be it accurate or otherwise, has anything to do with the motion before the House.

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

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: This motion is a wide-ranging motion. I thank the Deputy-Speaker for his ruling. He is a great Deputy-Speaker. Whilst we are talking about this motion, let us go through the areas of policy that have been offered up for debate today in this motion from the Government. In the area of justice, we see the Attorney General embattled in this Parliament because of shareholdings that we say she refused to declare. We see the Attorney General embattled because she has gone through seven drivers in two years. I do not know how one could do that but she has managed to do it with ease.

In the area of justice we have seen ad nauseam prisoners simply walk out the door for lunch and not return. The Minister for Corrections has been unable to do anything about that. We have seen a lack of planning and expenditure—indeed we have seen an active cutting of the budget in the area of justice, which has manifest itself with criminals and drug dealers in court being granted bail not because they comply with the Bail Act but because there is nowhere to house them. That is due to the budget cuts of this Government and its lack of foresight. We have seen an unprecedented event in the area of justice—a District Court judge of some seniority is openly criticising government expenditure from the bench. I do not recall seeing that previously in my 10 years as a member of Parliament.

Why would the Government offer up the area of health as an example of success? It is second in line in the second paragraph of this motion. The first thing the Premier did when he was Treasurer, in his first budget in 2011, was to cut \$8 billion of expenditure across the board over the four-year capital program. The greatest burden was borne by the health budget—there were \$3.1 billion in health cuts. If members visit any major hospital now, instead of seeing patients and their families in the car park they will see ambulances because bed block is preventing them from getting patients into hospitals.

In the area of education, which is the third policy area mentioned in this motion, in the same way as \$3.1 billion was cut from the Health budget, \$1.7 billion was cut over four years from the Education budget. The Learning Management and Business Reform [LMBR] program is a dog's breakfast. The Premier, the Treasurer and the Minister for Education have refused to answer questions in this place—either without notice or in writing—or questions from the media. They refuse to answer any questions. The program continues to roll along, another of the unprecedented debacles that we have seen in the Education portfolio.

In the Transport portfolio this Government has scrapped the State plan and, in the same vein as removing targets and key performance indicators for Ministers, reduced it to 12 dot points of motherhood statements. So when trains are running late, they simply skip stations. When trains cannot meet on-time running targets, the Government simply scraps on-time running targets. I notice that the Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business just walked into the Chamber, which is timely. The Government enumerates skills as an area of success. There are 85,000 fewer enrolments in TAFE this year than there were last year. Day after day we are reading awful stories in the media about what is happening to students who are at the mercy of private educational institutions. [*Time expired.*]

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) [3.57 p.m.]: It is irrefutable that, after almost five years in opposition, Labor has comprehensively failed to outline a positive plan for our great State. A positive plan would involve proposing positive policy, something that those opposite have not done despite the fact that they have made out that our policy is fanciful. In fact not only does Labor not have positive policy but also its website indicates that it has no recent policy at all. That is right—none. How long ago was the New South Wales Labor website updated with policy? It was not this week, it was not this month and it was not even last month. That website was last updated on 22 August. It is appropriate at this point to borrow a phrase from the member for Wollongong, even though she is unable to be with us in the Chamber right now, and to say to those opposite that they are lazy, lazy, lazy. The New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government has a clear plan to deliver the services and infrastructure that the people of New South Wales need and deserve.

Under this Government the New South Wales economy continues to outperform the rest of the nation—following a decade of the slowest economic growth under Labor—and as a result Sydney is changing dramatically. For example, the recent RLB Crane Index report confirms that cranes continue to dominate the Sydney skyline. The New South Wales Liberals and Nationals are serious about delivering for the people of this State. Work is already underway on the new international convention centre, Barangaroo, Sydney Metro City and Southwest, CBD and South East Light Rail to name just a few. Labor not only lacks policy but also cannot maintain any consistency on infrastructure proposals, for example, the CBD light rail. Labor committed to completing the project in its infrastructure plan and then opposed it.

Another example is the second Sydney Harbour rail crossing. Labor committed half of the funding needed and then pushed the project back to 2022, which is Labor code for "It will never happen." Simply put, Labor has no plan for New South Wales and it certainly has no plan for the shire. Indeed, for the people of the shire there is no greater example of Labor's absence of a plan for road infrastructure than the F6 extension. This issue has outlived the tenure of any politician of any government but it was this Government that committed \$11 million to the feasibility study. [*Time for debate expired.*]

Pursuant to sessional order business interrupted and motion lapsed.

Pursuant to sessional order Government business proceeded with.

CONVEYANCING AMENDMENT (SUNSET CLAUSES) BILL 2015

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 10 November 2015.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [4.01 p.m.]: On behalf of the New South Wales Labor Opposition and the shadow Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation in the Legislative Council, the Hon. Peter Primrose, I speak in debate on the Conveyancing Amendment (Sunset Clauses) Bill 2015, which has as its object to prevent developers from manufacturing delays in order to gain an unjust benefit by unreasonably rescinding off the plan contracts for residential lots under sunset clauses. This practice has been causing great distress, especially for first home buyers who have been taken for a ride. First home buyers have had their dreams of owning their first home quashed by developers who have delayed a development long enough to take advantage of the sunset clause. This has become especially prevalent when the value of the lot to be developed considerably increased in value following the agreement being entered into. This legislation aims to put an end to that practice. It aims to ensure that the regulations have better safeguards in place so that both the purchaser and the developer know where they stand at all times.

An "off the plan contract" is essentially a contract entered into for a parcel of land for a residential lot that does not yet exist. This can also apply to strata units where the roads and essential services have yet to be constructed and the contracts for sale can be exchanged well before the building of the units is completed or any plans drawn up. The concept behind an off the plan contract is to buy into the idea of what is to be built, with a lot of faith and trust placed in the developers carrying out the work. The purchaser is required to pay 10 per cent of the purchase price as a deposit and the developer is then able to use this money as capital for the development. The sunset clause is set within this contract. It allows both the purchaser and the developer to rescind and terminate their contractual obligations should the works fail to be completed by the sunset date. This would generally occur should either party believe the delay in works were unreasonable and if it is no longer in their best interests to continue the contract. This will help to ensure that a purchaser's money is not indefinitely tied up in a development with no means of escape. Developers will have the option to terminate the arrangement should they be unable to continue due to factors beyond their control.

An increase in demand for housing throughout the Greater Sydney region has caused a

significant increase in off the plan contracts. However, with the significant rise in off the plan contracts and the continual rise in housing costs there have been a number of complaints about developers unscrupulously using the sunset clause to obtain financial gains by terminating arrangements and selling off properties. Once an agreement has been terminated purchasers will eventually have their 10 per cent deposit returned to them; however, in this time frame the money is in the hands of the developer. It is impossible for the purchaser to use the money to purchase another property or to reinvest it elsewhere. Further, any capital appreciation accrued on the lot throughout this time frame will be nullified as the only person reaping gains from this transaction will be the developer who is looking to cash in.

Any legal action by the purchaser to prove that the delays were unreasonable is quite lengthy, costly and requires facts to which the purchaser may not have ready access. The whole process may also be quite daunting; many purchasers will not take any action because of the hoops they are required to jump through to prove their case. This legislation will help put an end to this practice and protect homebuyers. The proposed changes will only allow a developer to rescind an agreement when the sunset date has been reached. Further, it will now be a requirement for the Supreme Court to review the circumstances to make sure that the developer's rescission is just and equitable in all circumstances.

Before any rescission decision is made the developer must give notice to the purchaser setting out the reasoning and also provide an explanation as to why the development is delayed. The notice must be given to the purchaser at least 28 days prior to the proposed rescission. This will give the purchaser time to consider his or her position and to assess whether the developer has acted reasonably, fairly and without ill intent. Under this legislation a developer may only rescind an off the plan contract under the sunset clause if one of the following conditions are met: each purchaser under the contract agrees with the notice of rescission and places his or her willingness to accept in writing; an order has been obtained by the developer via the Supreme Court; and the regulations otherwise permit the vendor to rescind the contract under the sunset clause.

The aim of this legislation is not to make things harder, nor is it an attempt to heavily intrude into already existing or future off the plan contracts; it is to ensure that prospective home owners in this State are protected from unscrupulous behaviour to which they may be subject. This bill is about protecting the people of New South Wales and giving them confidence to invest in the housing market without fear of being taken for a ride. I note that this legislation has been introduced following a degree of community and stakeholder consultation. Indeed, it has come to light as a result of that consultation. It is great to see the Minister finally taking some initiative and consulting with those who know best—let us get it right the first time. The Act will be retrospective to the day the measures were announced by the Minister—that is, 2 November 2015.

This legislation includes a number of necessary measures to stave off unscrupulous dealings in the use of sunset clauses within residential developments. It will help to restore confidence in the market for first home buyers and ensure that the system operates in a fair, just and equitable manner. Our State needs expanded and new housing developments to keep up with the ever-growing housing demand. The New South Wales Opposition does not oppose the bill and welcomes the Minister's pledge to further enhance the consumer protections in off the plan contracts.

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Parliamentary Secretary) [4.08 p.m.]: I am pleased to speak in support of the Conveyancing Amendment (Sunset Clauses) Bill 2015. The manipulation of sunset clauses has become a scourge undermining the real estate market in this State. The media is full of accounts of opportunistic developers taking advantage of a rising property market to renege on contracts with the hope of extracting higher returns. Unfortunately, some of my constituents were subjected to the actions of unscrupulous developers. I understand that the developer in question, Assure Builders Proprietary Limited, had promised to deliver townhouses by February 2014. The developer dragged its heels in completing the development, which meant that vulnerable people who had put up their capital, were at great risk.

Lorraine Cooper, an elderly constituent of mine who recently was treated for cancer, was issued with a notice of sale. The vendor was unable to convince Ms Cooper to pay over and above the purchase price for a contract entered into on 14 November 2012. Ms Cooper was unable to come up with any more money. The developer then sought to sell the contract from under her. There are numerous examples of other residents in the development in Kita Road, Berowra, being similarly affected. I appreciate the efforts of John Barnes in bringing this matter to my attention, and to the attention of the Minister and the Government. This and similar situations are the reason this legislation was introduced. I am pleased that the Opposition will support this sensible amending legislation.

Some people may argue that these purchasers do not need special protection and that people entered into conditional contracts that they knew might never be completed. Buying a lot in a development that has not been finalised involves risks, but purchasers should not be expected to accept the risk of a vendor deliberately using delaying tactics as a means of voiding the contract. In the case of the Kita Road development in Berowra, the contracts were entered into in 2012 with an expectation by the purchasers that the development would be completed by 2014. The information I have received from my constituents is that the vendor did everything possible to attempt to slow down the development. It is not acceptable that people who entered into a contract in good faith should have to accept the risk that the developer will put the brakes on the project to get a higher return once the sunset clause has expired.

This bill will apply to the sale of proposed residential lots only. It will not affect contracts for the sale of commercial units or the sale of multiple lots in a residential scheme. Investors and commercial buyers will generally be in a better position to negotiate contract terms and better able to bear the risk of a contract not completing. Purchasers who buy single residential lots off the plan are often first home buyers looking for a way to get into the property market. There were several such examples in the development in Kita Road. It is that group of buyers that can least afford the loss of a failed venture. In a rising market, the loss of a contracted property may delay for many years the abandoned purchaser's ability to buy back into the market. It may prevent it completely.

To put a stop to this, the Government has developed legislation quickly, but in consultation with a wide spectrum of industry stakeholders. I acknowledge the significant efforts of the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation, and his team. They have done an exceptional job. I thank the department for its considerable efforts in bringing this legislation before the House today. The Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation held a roundtable with development industry groups, including the Urban Taskforce and the Urban Development Institute of Australia, along with representatives from the conveyancing and real estate professions. The development industry has come out strongly against the small number of developers who have taken advantage of a sunset clause in questionable circumstances. Industry groups stress that the majority of off the plan contracts are completed without incident and meet the expectations of purchasers.

This bill is targeted at fringe developers. It will not interfere with the majority of off the plan contracts but will focus on the termination and rescission of contracts. As a result, off the plan contracts will continue unaffected, allowing developers to carry on with their projects and provide purchasers with the product they expect. All future terminations of off the plan contracts must comply with the requirements of the Conveyancing Amendment (Sunset Clauses) Bill 2015. The bill requires that, before a developer can rescind a contract under any sunset clause, 28 days notice must be given to the purchaser. The notice must specify why the vendor is proposing to rescind and the reasons that led to the delay of the project. The termination can proceed only if purchasers consent to the rescission or if the vendor obtains an order from the Supreme Court permitting the rescission.

The bill allows for regulations to be made identifying a set of reasons that may justify a rescission without the need for consent or without the need for court action. I understand that there will be further consultation with industry to identify any possible reasons that might justify a rescission. If the purchaser refuses to give consent, the vendor must approach the Supreme Court for endorsement of the rescission before it can take effect. The Supreme Court can make an order permitting the rescission only if to do so

would be just and equitable in all circumstances.

The bill does not specify what is just and equitable, but it does set out the matters that the court must take into account in exercising its discretion on this point. The court is to consider things like the terms of the contract and the likely date that the project will be completed. The vendor must explain why the project was not finalised before the sunset date and show that it did not act unreasonably or in bad faith. Importantly, the court is to take into account whether the lot being sold has increased in value and the effect that the rescission will have on the purchaser. This will prevent a rescission being made where delays were effected by the developer in the hope that the property could be resold at a higher price, as was the case in Kita Road, Berowra.

Many buyers have been left in the lurch. Hopefully, this amending legislation will remedy that situation. The proposals in this bill are the result of the Government listening to the concerns of consumers—such as the residents in Berowra who have been affected by unscrupulous developers—and taking swift action. The bill will provide an important new protection for buyers purchasing residential land or strata units off the plan. The Berowra case is the exception, not the norm. People entered into a contract in good faith, with the expectation that their dream home would be built. But they experienced excuse after excuse and delay after delay so that the developer could rescind the contract and resell the properties at a higher price. Vulnerable people who entered into a contract in good faith were exposed to unscrupulous practices. This amending legislation means that residents such as John Barnes, Lorraine Cooper and all those in my community who purchased in the Kita Road development, will no longer be subject to this type of behaviour.

The legislation contains important checks and balances to ensure fairness, a level playing field for developers and consumers alike. That is exactly how it should be. I am proud to have been an advocate for the residents of my community who have been affected by this issue. I am proud to have stood up for those who have been affected by unscrupulous developers. I am proud to have protected their interests. I thank the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation, and the department for taking these concerns seriously and acting so swiftly. Their actions meant that legislation was able to be introduced quickly, before Christmas, and before other people could be affected by the unscrupulous activities that sometimes occur in the development industry. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) [4.18 p.m.]: I contribute to debate on the Conveyancing Amendment (Sunset Clauses) Bill 2015. I endorse the remarks made by the member for Fairfield. Nothing I say should be seen to be either expressly or by implication inconsistent with the views that he expressed. I welcome this legislation. I am somewhat pleasantly surprised at the consumer protection legislation that has emanated from the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation since the election this year. Historically, it has been the Labor Party that has produced consumer protection legislation. Labor has a proud record in that regard.

However, some of the legislation that has emanated from the Minister is probably in the best traditions of a Labor Minister—and I hope that is not the kiss of death for him. This legislation is, again, an intervention to protect consumers. It is unusual that this sort of intervention comes from a conservative government because usually a conservative government advocates for the benefit of the private sector and those who profit from consumers rather than for consumer protection. As critical as I am of government decisions and of some of its legislation from time to time, credit must be given where it is due, and moving quickly in respect of this bill is certainly an example of protecting consumers.

The ability of developers to enter into contracts off the plan is fundamental to ensuring the redevelopment of a particular area, particularly a residential area. In the electorate of Heffron, the area of Green Square is probably the greatest urban renewal in Australia, and the level of density—some would say overdensity—is significant. None of that could have occurred, though, without off the plan contracts. They are essential to investment; it is the way in which developers obtain funds. However, I use the example of an average two-bedroom unit with one parking space in Zetland selling for about \$1 million.

Those who are purchasing off the plans make deposits in the order of \$100,000 to enter into contracts for the acquisition of, ultimately, a unit in a particular development.

Those contracts, just like in Zetland and just like everywhere else in the State, are entered into before the completion of the building or before even the lodgement of any strata plan. As a matter of course, those contracts contain a sunset clause stating that if the premises are not completed by a certain time the parties are allowed to rescind the contract. Sometimes those developments cannot be completed for reasons beyond the developer's control; sometimes a variety of circumstances occur that do not enable them to be completed. However, during the past three or four years, when the property market has been overheated, contracts have been entered into and developments have been delayed for the sole purpose of getting past the sunset clauses and enabling developers to rescind the contract so that subsequently they can resell the residential lot at a considerable profit.

The apartments I mentioned in Green Square that are being sold for \$1 million were being sold for about \$800,000 some 18 months ago. Simply by delaying completion of the building, delaying the lodgement of the strata plan and delaying the completion of the contract, the developers were able to rescind those contracts and obtain the benefits from a resale. I have received complaints not only from people in those circumstances but also from my sister who, about 10 or 15 years ago, was caught by the same sunset clause provisions in respect of an apartment she purchased at Botany. In my view she was extorted to pay an extra \$150,000. In off the plan contracts, a deposit of perhaps \$100,000 is sitting idle for one or two years, gaining no interest to the benefit of the purchaser, but when the contract is terminated the property market—particularly in this overheated period—has increased so dramatically that the developer may do quite well out of delaying the completion of the contract. However, the prospective purchaser probably cannot get the extra funds to acquire another property of the same standard.

The greatest investment people make in their lives is the money they spend in acquiring their homes. All of us who are lucky enough to have our own homes remember how traumatic the first investment in our home was and how much we borrowed. Many people who borrow money to buy a property may have to borrow money for the deposit as well. Therefore, when sunset clauses are exceeded in contracts for sale it leaves the purchasers in a very difficult situation. As I said, on some occasions it cannot be helped. This bill is quite unique in protecting purchasers. Contained in item [2] of schedule 1 is proposed section 66ZL, which requires the purchaser to provide at least 28 days notice in writing of a proposed rescission. Section 66ZL states:

- (5) A sunset clause cannot automatically rescind an off the plan contract ...
- (6) The Supreme Court may on the application of a vendor under an off the plan contract make an order permitting the vendor to rescind ...

The bill provides a vehicle for those who are unscrupulous to be supervised by the Supreme Court. There has always been an opportunity for parties to access the Supreme Court in the event of a dispute. But for most of the purchasers who have made deposits on these properties it is beyond their financial resources to do so. Proposed section 66ZL (7) contains a number of provisions for the court to take into account as follows:

- (a) the terms of the off the plan contract,
- (b) whether the vendor has acted unreasonably or in bad faith,
- (c) the reason for the delay in creating the subject lot,
- (d) the likely date on which the subject lot will be created,

- (e) whether the subject lot has increased in value,
- (f) the effect of the rescission on each purchaser,
- (g) any other matter that the Court considers to be relevant,
- (h) any other matter prescribed by the regulations.

That is a pretty wise move in this bill; as the market changes it will allow the Minister to prepare regulations to cover other levels of unscrupulous behaviour and they will not be locked in by the terms of the bill. The other significant protection that purchasers have is that the vendor is liable to pay the costs of a purchaser in relation to the proceedings in the Supreme Court. This legislation, if enacted, should provide an immediate substantial protection to those purchasers who are purchasing off the plan. The property market is no longer as overheated as it has been over the past four years, but in the future this legislation will provide a measure of protection for all those who, over the past two years, have entered into these contracts. As I said, I have received constant complaints in the largest urban renewal area in Australia and I am pleased that the Minister has acted with such haste with this bill. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) [4.28 p.m.]: I support the Conveyancing Amendment (Sunset Clauses) Bill 2015. I congratulate the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation. With a good Minister, this Government is leading the way on consumer protection. For some time, off the plan contracts have helped homebuyers purchase units and land. The extended lead time prior to settlement of the purchase gave purchasers time to plan and save. This has enabled young families—many in my electorate—to carry on with their lives, secure in the knowledge that within two or three years of signing the contract they would obtain the property they had bargained for. However, the actions of a few rogue developers, some of whom have gained substantial media attention—as we heard, some from Hornsby and some from other parts of Sydney—have damaged the trust and confidence of many people in this form of property acquisition.

The purpose of the bill is to restore certainty, trust and confidence to the conveyancing process. When a purchaser is buying an interest in a unit, a parcel of land or a house off the plan, one of the most important provisions of the contract will be the sunset clause, which sets out a date by which the proposed development must be completed. It will usually grant rights to either the vendor or the purchaser to end all contractual obligations to the other party if the development is not completed within the scheduled time. The vast majority of property developers attempt to fulfil their contractual obligations in an honest and professional manner. However, the rising property market has acted as an incentive for a few unscrupulous developers to try to make windfall profits at the expense of those purchasers who had committed themselves to the contract in good faith.

The developer can do this by deliberately delaying completion of the project until the termination date under the sunset clause has almost arrived and then terminating the contract and reselling the land for substantial amounts more. There are also stories of purchasers all over Sydney being held to ransom by the vendor—and the member for Heffron gave examples in his own electorate—as the sunset date approaches. Some vendors have threatened to terminate the contract at the end of the sunset date unless the purchaser makes additional payments above the purchase price initially agreed on. This is unfair and unjust, and can penalise young working families.

The bill amends the Conveyancing Act by inserting a new division 10 that will deal specifically with off the plan contracts. This new division will prevent a developer from acting in such a way as to utilise the sunset clauses to earn unjustified capital profits. The main provisions will take effect from 2 November 2015, being the date on which the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation announced that this legislation would be introduced. It will apply to all terminations of an off the plan contract, regardless of when the contract was entered into. From 2 November no termination under a sunset

clause will be effective unless the purchaser consents to the termination.

It is important to note that if the purchaser does not expressly consent and the vendor wants to proceed to rescind, the vendor must approach the Supreme Court of New South Wales for an order permitting the rescission. The Supreme Court will not be able to approve a termination unless it is just and equitable to do so. Some of the factors that must be considered by the court have been set out in the bill and include whether the vendor has acted unreasonably or in bad faith. The vendor will have to provide reasons for the delay in completing the development and will have to provide evidence that the delay was reasonable.

It is important to note that as a further consumer protection, the usual legal principle that it is the party disputing the rescission that must approach the court for redress and to protect their rights is reversed. It will now be the responsibility of the developer to pay the costs of an application to terminate a contract under a sunset clause unless it can be demonstrated that the purchaser's refusal to consent was unreasonable. I support the Minister in this amendment and I join the Minister in stating that this bill will help return trust and confidence to the off the plan property market, not just in my electorate but all over New South Wales. It will give added consumer protections to purchasers so that both purchasers and vendors for that matter are protected in this inflated property market in New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) [4.33 p.m.]: The Conveyancing Amendment (Sunset Clauses) Bill 2015 seeks to prevent developers from unreasonably rescinding off the plan contracts for residential lots under sunset clauses. The intention of sunset clauses is to protect vendors and buyers in what is currently a white hot and volatile property market. The prospect of buying a home or apartment in Sydney, particularly in the inner west, is a daunting one for young buyers and families looking to enter the market. Most people, young people particularly, feel locked out of the market. When I speak to many young residents across my electorate of Summer Hill or indeed my friends across Sydney it is clear that many of them feel that they may never own their own home.

Home ownership, which was once the cornerstone of the Australian dream, is now nothing more than that, a dream that few will realise. For many of the young buyers who can pull together a deposit, buying apartments off the plan is not merely a choice; it represents the only choice. For these buyers, the sunset clause is a critical protection. Sunset clauses ensure apartments are completed to an acceptable standard within an acceptable time frame and, critically, that developers deliver what the buyer has paid for. For property developers, sunset clauses lock in capital and assure swift payment at the completion of the project.

Unfortunately, recent stories suggest sunset clauses are being manipulated by unscrupulous developers for profit and gain at the expense of many already stretched young and vulnerable buyers. I, like many in this place and those contributing to the debate, have been alarmed by reports suggesting developers are purposefully running over time to invoke sunset clauses and rescind contracts, only to put the apartments back on the market with dramatically increased margins. I am also alarmed at stories of buyers discovering at final inspections that the one-bedroom apartment they purchased off the plan is missing the bedroom. It is clear that cracking down on greedy and unscrupulous developers is critical to restoring fairness and equity to Sydney's housing market and I hope this bill goes some of the way to doing just that.

I take this opportunity to make clear that this reform cannot come at the expense of other reforms to level the playing field and I am concerned that in most other respects the Government is creating a developer's paradise. The community is rightly appalled at the Government's recent changes to strata management laws that effectively allow people to compulsorily acquire the homes of their neighbours. These laws will impact disastrously the elderly, families and most vulnerable in our community who will be forced to sell and be left without the means to buy again in their communities. These strata law changes undermine the basic tenets of property ownership and strengthen the hand of developers, who will be

able to more easily purchase apartment blocks, turf out residents who do not wish to sell and flip their homes for a profit.

Residents in my electorate are rightly appalled by these changes and the uncertainty that they bring. Similarly, residents are concerned and appalled by the Government's draft plans for the Sydenham to Bankstown urban renewal corridor, which allows up to nine-storeys-plus—a one-size-fits-all to development—up to 400 metres away from existing train stations. Residents in my electorate are concerned the plans amount to a blank cheque for developers, rezoning swathes of neighbourhoods with no attempt to levy developers for community infrastructure, green space or, most importantly, affordable housing. If the Government has any hesitation that its plans have sparked land speculation, I invite the Government to visit my electorate and speak to the many residents who have had developers knocking on their doors; in fact, tossing business cards over their back fences.

I invite the Government to speak with the elderly woman who visited my office in tears to explain that she had lived in her home with her siblings for more than 50 years—the home her parents and grandparents had lived in—and was terrified after developers banged on her door to tell her they had bought the rest of the street and she had to sell. I invite the Government to speak with the Save Dully Action Group, a group of concerned residents that has serious questions about the proposed redevelopments that is demanding the heritage homes and beautiful neighbourhood be preserved for future generations. We need density that allows for growth, but which is smart, sustainable and sympathetic to the unique character of our suburbs. That is a significant challenge, but it is one that can be met only if we balance growth with liveability, and balance the needs of developers with the needs of the community.

This bill will put an end to the abuse of sunset clauses by unscrupulous developers and it will help buyers and homeowners; but the Government can and must go further to change the culture that sacrifices our communities for greed and profit. The Government must better protect the most vulnerable in our community by allowing for greater housing affordability and protecting the rights of tenants and buyers. Its plans for greater density must acknowledge why our suburbs are great and worth living in. We need density that protects heritage and green space, provides services and a comprehensive public transport system, and puts people before profit. Critically, developers must be held accountable. That is why the Labor Opposition and I support the bill as a critical step in the right direction. However, I strongly contend that the Government has much more to do.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Parliamentary Secretary) [4.40 p.m.]: I make a brief contribution to debate on the Conveyancing Amendment (Sunset Clauses) Bill 2015. I congratulate the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation, his department and staff on bringing this critical legislation to the Parliament in such a short space of time. There is probably no more important legislation than this as it provides precautions for people who will make one of the biggest investments in their lives. The great Australian dream for all people is to buy their own home. However, land and property prices are increasing massively, and unfortunately some unscrupulous developers are exploiting a legislative loophole.

I will put on record some examples of significant house price increases so that future generations may look back and understand what we are talking about. In 2013 the average cost of a dwelling in the Sydney metropolitan area was \$650,000. In two years it has increased to approximately \$800,000—an extraordinary 25 per cent increase. In the past the sale of property off the plan was largely the domain of apartment blocks so that developers could seek finance for the project from financial institutions. Those institutions required developers to obtain as much as 70 per cent of sales off the plan prior to their backing in the development and bringing it to fruition.

In the past few years—and this probably coincided with the global financial crisis—even developers in greenfield areas have been required by financial institutions to obtain up to 70 per cent of sales off the plan. They receive in good faith 5 per cent deposits from prospective land purchasers, such

as young families, in order for the bank to back the development. However, the significant spike in land prices over a short space of time has allowed unscrupulous developers to exploit a loophole by not delivering the development on time—be it an apartment or, as in the rapidly growing north-west region that I represent, house and land packages. If a certain time lapses, the sunset clause is invoked and the developer is able to hand back the deposit and then reap a big reward by onselling the particular house and land package, block of land or apartment at a significantly increased price.

The Minister correctly introduced this amendment bill to put in place some precautions for prospective purchasers. Perhaps the initial legislation was introduced as a precaution for people who genuinely paid a deposit so that if the development was not completed within the specified time frame—it ran into some problem, fell flat and could not proceed—they could have their deposit returned. But developers have exploited a loophole that has allowed them to hold off on completing the development, hand back the deposit and leave people high and dry. That has left purchasers with the problem of having to buy another house at a vastly inflated price.

As many members have articulated already, these days one of the only opportunities young people have to get into the housing market is by purchasing off the plan. They pay their deposit and continue to build their wealth while waiting for the development to be completed. When that time comes they can move into their home with more money in hand. That is a good and a fair way for people to enter the property market. It is also a great opportunity to continue to stimulate the economy through the sale of residential land. I take this opportunity to commend the Minister, his department and all his staff for putting in place these precautions for potential home owners.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) [4.45 p.m.]: I express The Greens' support for the Conveyancing Amendment (Sunset Clauses) Bill 2015 and the protection that it offers to people who buy property off the plan. As Fair Trading outlined, concern is emerging that certain developers may be lawfully terminating contracts specifically for financial gain using sunset clause provisions. There may be instances when a developer deliberately delays a project in order to activate the sunset clause. This is a serious problem and yet another example of how greedy developers are attempting to profit from our neighbourhoods and our communities. It is a particular concern for people who live in the inner city.

A number of massive developments are occurring in my electorate of Newtown. Newtown is surrounded by UrbanGrowth projects—the Parramatta Road Urban Renewal Project at one side of the electorate, the Central to Eveleigh UrbanGrowth project on the other side and WestConnex at the southern end of King Street—so we know all too well the risks of development in the smallest electorate in the State, comprising 11 square kilometres. We are surrounded by developers and developer greed, and the community knows the risks associated with large developments and allowing developers to put their profits before the interests of the community.

We also know about the huge rises in the cost of housing in inner-city areas. The big risk is that we will lose forever the diversity of our inner-city communities. Unless we move to address and combat developers putting profit before everything else when it comes to housing and developments in the inner city, soon only the uber wealthy—people on salaries akin to those of members of Parliament or greater—will be able to afford to live in Sydney. Instead, the artisans and the creative types in our communities and the students who want to live close to their campuses at the University of Sydney or the University of Technology Sydney will be pushed out of inner-city areas. The Greens will do whatever we can to prevent that.

This bill is timely as it addresses one element of that issue. My office has been contacted by a number of individuals who have raised serious concerns about this very matter. For example, a couple of weeks ago I was contacted by Xin, a 28-year-old medical doctor and a prospective constituent of the Newtown electorate. I say "prospective" because Xin was due to move into a unit in Newtown that is close to her workplace by the end of this year. Unfortunately, Xin is one of the many Sydneysiders who bought into a new development off the plan, investing her hard-earned savings in the deposit, knowing she would

have to wait a few years before she could move in. But Xin did not expect that that wait would be dragged out to the point where her unit could be taken from her.

Xin is now facing the prospect of the vendor rescinding her contract by means of the sunset clause. She paid a deposit for her unit in May 2013 and at the start of this year the original sunset date of 30 June 2015 was extended to 31 December 2015. In August she received a letter notifying her that she could rescind the contract. She replied declining to rescind the contract, and requested a further extension of the sunset date, if need be. She has not received any reply from the developer. Under the existing legislation the vendor can move to rescind the contract against Xin's wishes. Xin has visited the construction site in Newtown from time to time since she was told earlier this year that the sunset date had been extended. She said that work appears to have stopped in about March, when the second floor of the building was under construction. She is genuinely concerned and suspects that the vendor intended to use the sunset clause to rescind the contract all along.

Increasing property prices in the heart of Newtown over the past two years would lead any developer acting in the interests of the bottom line and not of the community to take away someone's chance to move to our wonderful suburb in order that the developer could gain more money. The person I have spoken about has been denied the opportunity to move close to her job as a medical professional because the value of the property has increased significantly over the past two years. I express my support for the swift action of the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation in introducing this bill. I ask the Minister to clarify whether any support, assistance or guidance can be provided to those who were facing this problem prior to this legislation being enacted and its provisions taking effect.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) [4.50 p.m.], in reply: The Government is committed to providing the utmost protection for purchasers and certainty for industry in the sale of off the plan land and apartments. The Conveyancing Amendment (Sunset Clauses) Bill 2015 prevents developers from terminating off the plan contracts to reap a windfall profit at the expense of homebuyers. I thank the member for Fairfield, the member for Hornsby, the member for Oatley, the member for Summer Hill, the member for Castle Hill and the member for Newtown for their contributions to the debate.

It would be remiss of me not to comment on the reflection by the member for Summer Hill that the Government needs to do more. In the 200 days or so that I have been Minister we have introduced underquoting legislation to protect purchasers. We have also introduced this legislation in record time. In addition, we have put together a working party to look at ways to protect tenants from the scourge of overcrowding that is perpetrated by slum lords and will report to Parliament about it in the not too distant future. We have also protected purchasers through our recent strata bill that requires developers to fund a 2 per cent defect bond for new properties. The member for Summer Hill referred to the collective sale provisions. Protections are in place, including the ability of the Land and Environment Court to rule against a collective sale in the event that it is unjust and unreasonable in all the circumstances, as the ultimate protection. In the time that I have been Minister we have done a mountain of work to protect purchasers, and I guarantee that we will continue to do so.

Under this bill developers will be required to obtain the consent of the purchaser to rescind a residential off the plan contract. If consent cannot be obtained the developer must approach the Supreme Court for an order. That will be provided only if the court is satisfied that the rescission is just and equitable in all the circumstances. The legislation lists the matters that the court is to consider in reviewing the probity of the termination. They include whether the value of the lot has increased, the terms of the contract and whether the vendor has acted unreasonably or in bad faith. The bill will take effect from 2 November 2015, being the date the reform was announced, to prevent any developers from rushing to terminate existing contracts. I thank the purchasers and stakeholder groups that gave their time and experience to address this issue urgently. The Government will continue to engage with them in an ongoing effort to deliver fairness and certainty in the off the plan market.

The member for Newtown asked me about pre-existing contracts that have been acted upon. Regrettably, we cannot do much when that has occurred. Those purchasers will have their recourse through the courts and it would be difficult for us to circumvent the court process. However, in a very short period—literally two months—we have put in place measures to prevent future sunset clauses from being enacted. As the member identified, if we do not do this now over the next three months a new sunset clause will be enacted every day to the detriment of purchasers. That would be horrendous and it is why we have acted. I thank all members for their contributions to debate. Once again, I have an opportunity to put developers on notice. This debate shows that it is not just the Government sending a clear message; through the voices in this Chamber and in the other place this Parliament is also sending a clear message that this conduct will not be tolerated. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Motion by Mr Victor Dominello agreed to:

That this bill be now read a third time.

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

STATE REVENUE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2015

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

BETTING TAX LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2015

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 11 November 2015.

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn—Leader of the Opposition) [4.55 p.m.]: I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Betting Tax Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. The Opposition supports the bill, but I bring both a bouquet and a brick bat for the Minister for Racing, and Deputy Premier, to this debate. The bill delivers on the first policy I announced as Labor leader in early January this year, which was parity with Victoria on tax rates applicable to racing in this State. However, the timetable adopted in the bill is not nearly as swift as the Opposition advocated. Perhaps even more significantly, it is not as swift as Michael Lambert advocated when he reviewed these matters for the Government last year.

To be clear, the bill amends the Betting Tax Act 2001 to provide for a graduated step down in the tax rates applicable to totalizator and fixed-odds wagering over a five-year period, commencing on 1 July 2015. Associated amendments to the Totalizator Act 1997 will ensure that TAB Limited passes the additional funds created by the tax reductions on to the racing industry in full. Those amendments are welcomed and important. Currently, the New South Wales Government take from each bet exceeds that of both Victoria and Queensland. That is the nub of the issue. Victoria and Queensland have cut their taxes on betting, which has led to a situation of competitive disadvantage for our racing industry. This bill will deliver a tax rate equal to that which applies in Victoria. However, under this legislation it will take until 1 July 2020 to achieve parity. Labor will move a series of amendments to deliver tax parity with Victoria on 1 January 2016.

We believe the New South Wales racing industry desperately needs that boost far sooner rather than later, and we are guided by the advice of Mr Lambert, the former Secretary of the New South Wales Treasury, to the Government in his report last year. It recommended full parity immediately—that is, this financial year. Mr Lambert made the point that the revenue lost to the State, in his expert opinion, would be offset by the growth in the racing industry through the stimulus that would be provided by delivering lower tax rates and, in particular, tax parity with Victoria. Tax receipts for New South Wales in this area have been reducing in recent years because the higher level of tax imposed on racing in this State has stunted the growth of the industry here compared with the States immediately to our south and to our north. I am particularly concerned about the small size of race fields at a great many meetings in New South Wales today.

People asked me in January why my first policy as Labor leader was to advocate a tax cut for the racing industry. It was put to me by some cynics that this is a rich person's sport. I contest that; it is not. The racing codes create approximately 50,000 jobs in this State, and the people the Labor Party exists to represent—working-class people—make up the overwhelming majority of those working in the racing industry. I think of the apprentices, track work jockeys, people mucking out stables, people on the spelling farms, and strappers. It is to the great credit of Racing NSW that we are the only jurisdiction in Australia that guarantees a percentage of prize money to strappers.

They are probably the lowest-paid workers in the racing industry; they are working-class people. Strappers in this State are guaranteed 1½ per cent of prize money. It is to the credit of Racing NSW that it has led the way in Australia in providing that guaranteed minimum share of prize money to low-paid workers in the industry. I know that racing is a great career for many working-class kids who fell in love with horses at a young age. In recent weeks Australia has been captivated by Michelle Payne's winning ride in the Melbourne Cup. I have been saying all year that one of the most pleasing developments in racing is the rise of women to prominent positions in the industry. Of course, the Gai Waterhouse story is well known, and the Michelle Payne story is now well known also.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: It's a beautiful story.

Mr LUKE FOLEY: Yes, it is a beautiful story. But the leading apprentice in New South Wales—the apprentice who won apprentice jockey of the year last year—is Winona Costin, a young woman whom the member for Swansea and I met when we were at the Wyong Cup. A great many women are enjoying terrific careers in racing.

[Interruption]

I cannot compete with the member for Cessnock. I will not tell the House what he said about female jockeys when he was at the Wyong Cup with the member for Swansea and I. He is of course a great supporter of female jockeys. When I announced this policy at Rosehill in my first week as Leader of the Opposition I was joined by the leading trainer in Sydney, the great Chris Waller, and of course Boban. Boban is well known to turf enthusiasts as an elite racehorse and a former winner of the Emirates Stakes. So it was a happy event when Sydney's leading trader Chris Waller, who of course won the Cox Plate a few weeks ago with Winx, and great six-year-old brown gelding Boban stood with me to announce Labor's policy for tax parity. Finally, we have shamed the conservative parties into doing the right thing—it took Boban.

I was a bit worried that Boban had a dip in form after he stood up with me; I thought I had put the mockers on him. But no-one can keep a great horse down. He then won the Doomben 10,000 and the Memsie Stakes—as I am sure the Parliamentary Secretary, the member for Castle Hill, who is at the table, knows full well. No-one can keep Chris Waller down. No-one can keep Boban down. No-one can keep the Labor Party down. Today finally the Parliament has done the right thing and adopted Labor policy for tax parity for the racing industry. One of the pleasures of this job is to get around to as many

racetracks as possible. During the election campaign I visited Rosehill, Gosford and that traditional Labor stronghold the Moree Race Club. They were delighted about my policy. They asked, "When are the National Party members going to actually do something to support horseracing?" Of course, since the election I have been to the Grafton Cup with Tony Abbott and his parents. I was with the workers. I was at the Wyong Cup with the member for Swansea—

Mr Ray Williams: She certainly enjoys a punt, doesn't she?

Mr LUKE FOLEY: She does. I was at the Newcastle cup with the member for Newcastle and the member for Cessnock. Of course there is an important point here: Racing is a most important industry for the regional economies of this State. So many country towns rely on their racecourses as a significant contributor to local economic activity. When a significant race meeting is on in the bush what happens? The coffee shops fill up, the restaurants fill up, the pubs fill up, and the hotels and motels fill up. People who sell shoes, hats and suits all benefit. So when racing is going well at our provincial and country tracks the economies of regional towns do a lot better. That is the important point here: The racing industry in New South Wales has been left behind in recent years because Victoria and Queensland have moved aggressively to cut their betting taxes.

This week the Parliament will play catch-up and deliver the tax relief that—and let us be honest here—the struggling New South Wales racing industry needs. Racing NSW has many plans about how to grow the industry. The Championships are a signature event. It is the desire of Racing NSW to make The Championships in Sydney's autumn, over two Saturdays in April, the showcase for the State's racing industry that will hopefully attract elite racehorses from overseas and will bring to New South Wales tourists from both interstate and overseas. That will be the signature event for the New South Wales racing industry. Importantly, the additional money that the industry will retain as a result of this tax relief cannot just be spent at the elite level; the jam has to be spread throughout the State.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! It has been brought to my attention that the member for Canterbury was expelled from the House for a period of three hours. She is not due to return until 5.50 p.m. I ask the member to leave the Chamber.

Mr LUKE FOLEY: She took a punt.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): And backed a loser that time.

Mr LUKE FOLEY: Provincial and country racing clubs desperately need some assistance. Many clubs desperately want to build better infrastructure—for example, some face irrigation challenges to ensure that the horses that train and race on those courses are well looked after; and others require better stabling facilities. All the studies show how expensive it is to own, train and race a horse. A greater amount of prize money will provide assistance to the horse owners, the riders and those who otherwise assist them. I support increasing prize money but it cannot all go to the top of the pyramid. Whenever I speak to people in the racing industry they tell me that the provincial and country clubs are crying out for this assistance. Indeed, Labor's call for parity to be delivered in 2016 rather than in 2020, as the Government intends in this bill, is driven in large part by those cries from people on the provincial and country racing circuit as to how tough they are doing it.

Recently the Minister for Racing made comments in the media critical of Labor for proposing that parity be delivered immediately rather than in 2020. The Minister called into question Labor's record. Labor is proud of its record in supporting the racing industry in this country. Indeed, the great step towards the transformation of Australian racing was the enlightened and historic decision of Bob Hawke's Labor Government in 1985 to introduce breeding stock depreciation provisions. That single action halted the leakage of the best Australian bloodlines to New Zealand and enabled Australian breeders to deploy the capital to acquire breeding stock from the best international pedigrees in Europe and America. That was the great salvation for the Australian thoroughbred breeding industry.

Between 1995 and 2011 the New South Wales Labor Government took a number of steps to assist the racing industry in this State; perhaps there was no greater step than the matter that ended up in a significant High Court case regarding race fields. The Labor Government changed the law to force wagering operators to pay a fee on bets on New South Wales races. At the same time, we compelled them to provide details of betting activities to race stewards, which has turned out to be an important integrity tool for racing. The wagering operators fought the former Labor Government and Racing NSW all the way to the High Court of Australia in an attempt to knock over that legislation, but we won the case. Making wagering operators pay a fee on bets on races has boosted the annual revenue of the racing industry in New South Wales by 30 per cent. Indeed, our success in defending that legislation of the Labor Government in the High Court of Australia paved the way for all other Australian jurisdictions to charge race field fees. It has had a huge and positive impact on revenue for the racing industry right around Australia.

Labor is proud of its record in supporting the racing industry in New South Wales. I am proud of the first policy I announced as Leader of the NSW Labor Opposition in January. I am also pleased that before rising for the year this Parliament will deliver in law parity with the State of Victoria. This legislation is a lifeline that the New South Wales racing industry desperately needs. It should not be forgotten that the other racing codes—harness and greyhound racing—will also benefit from a cut to betting tax in New South Wales because of the operation of the inter-code agreement. But Labor continues to urge the Government to be more ambitious in its timetable for the delivery of racing tax parity. We believe it is unreasonable to ask the industry to wait until 2020 for this desperately needed relief. That is why I will be moving a series of amendments that, if passed, will deliver parity on 1 January 2016 rather than 1 July 2020.

Mr Mark Coure: Who wrote the cheque?

Mr LUKE FOLEY: I note the interjection of the member for Oatley. Numerous people in the Government have argued for exactly what I am asking and Treasury has fought against it tooth and nail. I guess we can say that parity coming at all, given Treasury's strong objections to it, is a significant step forward. What we are doing now is a good thing but parity should come sooner rather than later. Indeed, I will be moving what the former Secretary to the Treasury, Mr Lambert, recommended in his expert report and advice to this Government—namely, for parity to be delivered this financial year.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.18 p.m.]: I support the Betting Tax Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. Having been a lifetime participant in racing in New South Wales, in virtually every capacity, I will always support an injection of funding into the industry. As has been pointed out by the Leader of the Opposition, this industry supports some 50,000 people across New South Wales. Therefore, any injection of funding will be well received. Whenever a government adjusts revenue or reduces taxation from a particular stream of revenue, the budget takes a knock. This is a responsible Government that has undertaken to achieve parity in taxation with Victoria and Queensland.

It is good to bring us into line with our neighbouring States. It will promote competition and ensure equal revenue distribution in all States across the eastern seaboard. The Government will introduce parity in an efficient and responsible manner. Unless a government is in a sound budgetary position it cannot reduce its revenue. If taxation revenue is reduced, another area of the budget will suffer. Because of the great efforts of this Government, we are in a sustainable position, with surplus budgets projected for the future. The Government can therefore stimulate the racing industry through a reduction in taxation and the introduction of parity. I stress again that the Government will do so in an efficient and responsible manner.

By progressively reducing the rates of wagering tax payable by totalisator licensees, the bill allows additional funds to be made available to support the New South Wales racing industry. The racing industry makes an important contribution to the New South Wales economy and employs approximately

50,000 people. It needs to be able to compete effectively with other jurisdictions to continue that contribution. Without tax parity, there is an increased risk that jobs and investment will move interstate. Horse owners have sought greater returns from this industry in neighbouring States, where there is lower taxation than in New South Wales.

The positive contribution of the racing industry to New South Wales was confirmed in 2014, when the Government commissioned business consulting firm IER to conduct a scoping study of the thoroughbred, harness racing and greyhound racing industries in New South Wales. The IER report was based on data from the 2012-13 racing season. It found that the direct and indirect value-added impact of racing in New South Wales was more than \$3.3 billion a year. That report was extraordinarily good. I write for many local magazines, including the Hills, Hawkesbury and Hunter equine magazines. My articles are based on the racing industry, and I have drawn on the research in that report. It emphasises once again the broad direct and indirect benefits of the racing industry to New South Wales.

The racing industry makes an important contribution to regional communities. I am a former racing trainer. I have mentioned many times the social capital aspect of racing and its contribution to rural communities. Families get together at the races. When Uncle Bob has a horse racing at Coonamble, the whole street and the extended family come along to see it race. Communities come together at the races, sometimes for the first time in months. It is a great outcome for rural communities. A lot of those opportunities have been lost over the past decade or so with the loss of non-TAB race meetings. I will return to that issue. The Leader of the Opposition made a very sound point. This is not about injecting more money into Black type races or Group races. It is important to support initiatives such as The Championships. They are then able to attract the best horses from around the globe, which stimulates a huge amount of betting revenue that is distributed across the industry.

However, we must not fail to recognise the grassroots of the industry, the people in the regions: Coonamble, Orange, Wagga Wagga, Nowra, Queanbeyan, Grafton, Coffs Harbour and the Tweed. I raced consistently in those areas during my time in the racing industry. Unemployment is higher in regional areas. It will come as no surprise to the chief executive of Racing NSW, Peter V'landys, that I stress again the need to grow this industry from the ground up. Kingston Town, Tommy Smith and my good mate Malcolm Johnston were certainly not born under the winning post at Royal Randwick. Quite the opposite—they all came from the country. If the country racing industry is not viable, it will curtail the ability of future generations to participate in racing in New South Wales.

Of the \$3.3 billion that is generated by the racing industry, more than \$1.5 billion goes to local economies in regional New South Wales. That includes \$79.9 million in the Central West, \$623 million in the Hunter and more than \$100 million in the Illawarra and the South Coast. The New South Wales racing industry is a significant economic player in this State and is therefore a major driver of employment. The IER report found that the racing industry sustains, directly and indirectly, more than 27,000 full-time equivalent jobs. More than 90,000 people directly participate in the racing industry, as an employee, as an owner or, very importantly, as a volunteer. These participation rates are significant in regional New South Wales communities. For example, more than 4,000 participate in the Central West, more than 9,000 in the Hunter, more than 4,000 in the Riverina and more than 5,000 in the northern rivers and northern inland regions combined.

The social benefits of the racing industry are also vital to communities across New South Wales. The IER report found that in 2012-13 there were more than 1.8 million attendances at 2,576 race meetings across the State. Regional New South Wales benefited, with 92 per cent of race meetings held in regional parts of the State. The racing industry plays a significant role in the critical areas of community building, education and training, leisure activities and employment. The industry is an important part of rural and regional New South Wales, where racing events and facilities foster social cohesion and provide benefits for a broad range of individuals and community organisations.

I note that a void has been created in regional areas due to the diminishing number of non-TAB

race meetings. Non-TAB meetings are local meetings that stimulate the local economy. They do not have off-course punting. They are not TAB meetings. Those types of meetings have a reduced amount of prize money. Because of the diminished pool of horses, 10 years ago non-TAB meetings were cut back. Instead, the push was for TAB meetings. TAB meetings in the regions are held during the week. For example, in Orange the race might be on a Tuesday. The Bathurst race might be on a Friday. When a race is held on a Tuesday, regardless of whether it is a non-TAB or TAB meeting, the community cannot go. Hardworking communities cannot go to the races on a Tuesday in Orange or on a Friday in Bathurst. Therefore, the social capital is lost straightaway. The involvement of an enormous number of participants was lost through the reduction of non-TAB meetings. I understand why non-TAB meetings were reduced—because of the reduced pool of horses. However, here we are today, reducing taxation and looking to invest more money in the industry. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

I have had this conversation with the Minister for Racing, the Deputy Premier, who said that we cannot specify exactly where this taxation reduction or taxation parity will go. However, I stress once again to racing administrators—it would come as no shock to chief executive officer Peter V'landys that once again I am espousing the benefits of supporting country racing—when there is a reduced amount of tax great profits will be going to racing. As has already been pointed out by the Leader of the Opposition, who supported this legislation, instead of injecting more money into elite type races, whether it is Black races or Group races, some incentives should be provided for the country racing industry—incentives such as a reduction in trainers' fees; a reduction in the cost of track fees that trainers incur in the training of their horses; or incentives for track work riders. I am not sure whether track work riders who are currently on casual rates receive superannuation.

It has always been a great concern of mine that track work riders work for 10 to 15 years in this industry and because they ride on a casual basis for 10 to 15 different employers they do not accrue a great deal of superannuation. A range of incentives could be applied across the board, but none is more important than investing back into non-TAB meetings, where local prize money is earned by local trainers for local economies, thereby bringing back social capital into rural and regional areas and, importantly, inspiring young people—the Michelle Paynes and Hugh Bowmans of the future. I saw Hugh Bowman ride his first winner at Bathurst years ago. He is the grandson of Roger Wotton, a former member for Castlereagh, as has been mentioned many times in this House. Hugh Bowman, a champion rider, came from Dunedoo.

We must inspire young Hugh Bowmans and Michelle Paynes—what a fairytale her story was. It was a 100 per cent crackerjack ride. We will never see a better ride in any race let alone in a Melbourne Cup. She knew the horse implicitly, rode it an absolute treat, timed its run to perfection and got the money—God bless her. My office staffer who is about to retire at Christmas was doing Krameresque cartwheels around our office which was a sight to see. Then again, one does not get a 100 to 1 winner every day. That is the stimulation that we need in this industry, particularly at a grassroots level.

Around 780 community organisations are financially assisted by the racing industry, with 550 community organisations sharing racing and club facilities. Racing in New South Wales is supported by more than 5,200 volunteers who assume vital roles in the industry whilst making an important contribution to the community. The existing strategic plans for the racing controlling bodies will shadow programs of investment that will benefit regional New South Wales and racing generally. The additional funds provided for by this bill will facilitate the implementation of such development initiatives. I certainly hope that is the case. I have said before and I will conclude by saying that we will never make a greater investment than in this industry at a grassroots level.

The Leader of the Opposition cited a time frame between 1995 and 2011. I remind the House that in the 10-year period between 1997 and 2007, 52 per cent of provincial and country trainers were lost to this industry. That equated to 1,100 trainers in total. If anyone wants to go back and check the record books they can do that. This is an issue about which I have spoken many times in this House. If each of those 1,100 trainers had only one or two horses in work, which they did, there would have been another

couple of thousand horses right across New South Wales. That would have been an incredible stimulus for this industry. We can only do so much. It is now in the hands of the racing leaders. I certainly hope that they take these words on board. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) [5.33 p.m.]: The Betting Tax Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 changes the taxation of racing in New South Wales so that taxation rates are, eventually—hopefully soon—brought into line with those applying in Victoria. Labor supports the bill, but we propose an amendment that seeks a faster timetable to parity with Victoria. We made this an issue at the last election and it is great to see the Government following our lead on this issue. In March this year the media reported that a turf war was looming over a hint that racing tax cuts could be off. The Minister for Racing was quoted as saying:

The line that this is racing industry's money that's stolen from them is crap. It's punters who put the money in that currently gets returned to the taxpayer.

It is good to see that the Government has come on board and is following the great lead of the Leader of the Opposition's first policy announcement in the lead-up to the election. I joined the Leader of the Opposition most recently at the Newcastle Cup. It was a great event and a terrific example—

Mr Geoff Provest: Did you back the winner?

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP: Unfortunately I did not, but the Leader of the Opposition did. It is a great example of the amount of employment that comes through the racing industry, not only in Newcastle but also in the Hunter. New South Wales racing pays the highest State tax in the country. Victoria imposes a tax of 7.6 per cent of gross returns, while New South Wales requires a whopping 19.11 per cent. That equates to a tax of \$3.22 for every \$100 on tote bets and \$1.56 in every \$100 on fixed-odds wagers with the TAB. The bill is positive in that it reduces the taxation of racing in New South Wales by reducing the taxes payable by a totalisator licensee. The tax reduction amount will be passed by the TAB directly to Racing New South Wales and Harness Racing New South Wales. Our commitment was to bring New South Wales racing tax regime into alignment with Victoria by 1 January 2016.

It is appropriate that we meet this commitment by moving an amendment for a faster timetable. Under the Government's proposal, the benefit to the industry in 2015-16 would be \$19.3 million; under Labor's alternative it would be a whopping \$35 million. We support the commitment but we propose amendments that will lead to parity. The racing industry generates \$3.3 billion a year and supports about 50,000 jobs. Fifty-five per cent of economic activity from the industry is generated in New South Wales and a massive 18.6 per cent of that is in the Hunter—the largest area of racing-related activity. The Hunter region takes in 11 local government areas and, according to the 2011 census, has a population of 620,533. The largest local government areas are Lake Macquarie, Newcastle and the great electorate of Cessnock. There are 12 racing clubs operating in the region, six of which are thoroughbred clubs, three harness racing clubs and three greyhound racing clubs.

The racing industry in the Hunter is responsible for generating more than \$623.3 million in value-added contribution to gross State product, which equates to 18.5 per cent of the total impact generated by the New South Wales racing industry. The economic impact generated by the racing industry in Newcastle and the Hunter is responsible for sustaining 5,325 full-time equivalent jobs in the region. With more than 9,400 individuals participating in the racing industry as employees, volunteers or participants, it is estimated that nearly one in every 49 adults has a direct employment or participant involvement with the racing industry in the region. The value-added contribution generated by each code in the Hunter region is \$564.6 million in thoroughbred racing and \$29.7 million in harness racing.

The industry is significant to Newcastle and to the Hunter in particular where we have massive youth unemployment—at around the 20 per cent mark. There are many young people in the industry, and at a time when TAFE is being slashed and job opportunities are not great, we want to provide as much of

a boost to the industry in the Hunter as we can. We support the Government's bill, but believe the timetable should be brought forward to allow the racing industry to increase prize money at every level, from the Saturday metropolitan meetings right down to the provincial and country meetings. It will also allow Racing NSW to independently fund and develop its own major events, such as the Sydney autumn carnival of championships. Rural and regional communities will benefit greatly and 55 per cent of that economic activity will go to regional New South Wales. That flows into investment, improving the position of racing, creating and supporting racing jobs, and ensuring the viability of clubs and improved facilities in Newcastle and the Hunter, which is so important to our future.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [5.40 p.m.]: I support the Betting Tax Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 and I commend the Hon. Troy Grant, Minister for Racing, on introducing this bill. On 16 June 2015 the Government announced that wagering taxation rates in New South Wales would be drastically reduced to reach parity with Victoria. It is estimated that an additional \$90 million will flow to the industry once the tax reductions are fully implemented, which will secure the industry's ongoing sustainability and support industry development initiatives. In his second reading speech Minister Grant stated:

The bill's object is to progressively reduce the rates of wagering tax payable by totalizator licensees in respect of totalizator and approved betting activities, other than a computer-simulated racing event betting activity.

Last Saturday night I had the privilege of attending the Taree Volunteer Rescue Squad's Fortieth Anniversary. I sat next to Mr Brian Leggett, Chief Executive Officer of Taree Wingham Race Club and Bushland Drive Racecourse at Taree. He stated that he could not be happier with what the Government was proposing in the bill. He said how impressed he has been with the Government over the past five years, stating that both the racing industry and he know they have no better supporters and colleagues than Government members, particularly The Nationals, and acknowledged what we are doing for regional New South Wales and the regional racing industry. I attended Bushland Drive Racecourse on Melbourne Cup Day, where I spoke with President Greg Coleman, who addressed the crowd and spoke passionately about how impressed the racing industry and he were with the New South Wales Government and this legislation.

The Assistant-Speaker may have known Mr Don Hopkins, who passed away recently—a lion in the racing industry, particularly the country racing industry. He had spoken to the Government about this legislation, which has been introduced after much deliberation and thought. The Leader of the Opposition said, "Oh, they should just bring it in, and bring it in now." However, one should look at the Opposition's record when in government. During its 16 shameful years in government Labor took New South Wales from being the premier State to being number eight in the country. On every economic indicator Labor wrecked the State and left it in tatters. The Coalition Government has turned New South Wales around and made it number one again. The Government has gone about this in a careful, methodical and considered way that is good for New South Wales.

Mr Christopher Gulaptis: It's transparent.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD: It is transparent and it is also good for the racing industry. One knows it is good for the racing industry when the racing industry is impressed and says, "This is what we want." The bill provides important tax reforms that will enable the industry to more effectively compete with other jurisdictions, which will benefit jobs and encourage investment. The Bushland Drive Racecourse is one of six premier training tracks in regional New South Wales. It employs a significant number of people and has a number of horses. It is one of the best tracks in regional New South Wales and that is acknowledged by the industry.

The Government estimates that the benefits of these tax reforms will see at least an extra \$90 million per annum flow to the racing industry. The funds generated by these tax reductions will provide a

vital boost to the racing industry's competitiveness and allow racing codes to better implement their strategic plans. The racing controlling bodies have developed strategic plans that foreshadow investments in events, infrastructure and people that will benefit regional New South Wales and racing generally. These tax reforms will facilitate the implementation of those development initiatives. This bill will free up money to invest in industry development, including sustaining premier racing events such as The Championships, which is the premier racing event in New South Wales. The additional funding will help it to grow in terms of its scale and economic contribution.

The Government has supported the development of this showcase event over the past two years through the provision of funding to Racing NSW. The tax parity reforms in this bill will provide the racing industry with the financial security it requires to ensure events such as The Championships are sustainable and can continue to contribute to the New South Wales economy. The Government's support for the racing industry is grounded in an appreciation of its contribution to New South Wales on many levels. In 2014 the Government commissioned a study by business consultancy specialists IER Pty Limited into the size and scope of the racing industry in New South Wales. This study provided a snapshot of the significant social and economic benefits of racing in New South Wales.

It is helping government and the industry to plan for the future and ensure that the benefits of these tax reforms can strengthen racing's contribution to events, infrastructure and employment across the State. The introduction of these tax reforms will put the New South Wales racing industry in a better position to act on strategic priorities, including developing premier racing events, strengthening regional race clubs and providing opportunities for apprenticeships, particularly in regional areas with high youth unemployment. The Government is proud to support the racing industry through reforms that help New South Wales to take its place as the premier racing State. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) [5.46 p.m.]: I strongly oppose the Betting Tax Legislation Amendment Bill 2015, which will progressively reduce the betting tax collected on horse and greyhound racing over five years to prop up an industry that benefits from animal cruelty and problem gambling. The popularity of racing in Australia has been waning over recent years due to exposés revealing the true nature of the industry. Racing treats animals as disposable commodities. Animals are subject to intense training and racing that cause physical stress and they risk significant painful injuries, including torn ligaments and tendons, dislocated joints, and bone fractures and breaks. Last year the Melbourne Cup favourite had a heart attack in its stall and died only a fortnight after it won the Caulfield Cup. Another horse fractured a bone after being spooked by someone in the crowd when it was returning to its stable. That horse was destroyed.

A few weeks ago a horse was euthanised after a fall at Randwick racecourse. At the recent Melbourne Cup a horse fractured its fetlock. In greyhound racing, up to 200 injuries are reported and, as a result, approximately five dogs are killed each week during races. Racing injuries are rarely treated because treatment is expensive and not worth investing in, given the animals will not be able to race again. Every year in greyhound racing approximately 18,000 healthy dogs are killed, most not long after birth, because they will not run fast enough to make a profit; the rest are destroyed when they retire after three or four years. The greyhounds used to breed more pups are destroyed when they stop breeding at around five or six years. Greyhounds normally live 12 to 14 years. This bill continues to support those appalling practices.

We know that live baiting occurs widely in the industry. Live baiting involves training greyhounds by making them chase and maul to death live animals like piglets, rabbits, kittens and possums strapped to a device that is spun around a track. Bait animals are subject to terrifying and excruciating deaths so that greyhounds will run faster and bring in a higher return. There have been countless exposés on doping in the racing industries to enhance animals' performance. When not training or racing, animals are kept in confined spaces with little or no social interaction or mental stimulation, often suffering from boredom. This is certainly not a happy life.

I welcome the Special Commission of Inquiry into the Greyhound Racing Industry in New South Wales, but my confidence in the process has been undermined by this bill. While the tax savings for greyhound racing will be quarantined until the outcome of the inquiry, there seems to be an expectation that this industry will continue despite its reliance on cruelty. Racing is also associated with human suffering from gambling loss. According to the Productivity Commission, 15 per cent of the \$19 billion spent by Australians on gambling each year is spent on wagering which amounts to about \$2.8 billion. The vast majority of this expenditure is on thoroughbred racing. People lose their life savings, their homes and money they do not have on the races.

Wagering has been surrounded by rigging scandals, and there are increasing reports of betting companies pursuing customers and enticing them to bet more and more. Racing provides no long-term community or economic benefit—even the Legislative Council committee inquiry into the greyhound industry, which recommended a tax break, admitted there was little community benefit in greyhound racing. The bill would result in a loss of \$260 million over five years followed by losses worth at least \$90 million per year of government revenue. Surely this could be better spent on health, education, housing, environmental protection, the arts, open space or any other wider public benefit or anything that does not benefit from human suffering and animal cruelty.

Racing is not glamorous and provides little to the community. It is an archaic industry that profits from cruelty, suffering and greed. It does not deserve tax breaks to make it viable: In fact it should be phased out. As the same time as we are debating this bill, New South Wales is failing to adequately support industries of the future, with neighbouring States and countries doing much more for the digital innovation sector. Instead, the Government is providing corporate welfare to prop up a cruel industry of the past, largely because of the influence of vested interests associated with it and a media campaign from the *Daily Telegraph*. What a ridiculous precedent this sets at a time when we should be future-proofing our economy. I strongly oppose the bill.

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) [5.52 p.m.]: I speak to the Betting Tax Legislation Amendment Bill 2015, primarily to outline some of my concerns about moves to further the encouragement of gambling in this State. My views on this matter have been publicly stated and are quite consistent. While I am not a fan of gaming, I am a realist—I accept that many people like to gamble, and that this pastime, whether you approve or disapprove, underscores what has become a substantial industry in this State. This industry, in turn, provides jobs, and to some it brings prosperity. But it is also an industry with a dark side. Without going into the sickening revelations about practises by some in the greyhound and horseracing industries that have been well articulated by the member for Sydney, the well-known dark side is illustrated by the effects of problem gambling. As the Productivity Commission articulated in its 2010 report on gambling:

The potential for significant harm from some types of gambling is what distinguishes it from most other enjoyable recreational activities—and underlines the community's ambivalence towards it.

That is quite different to the excitement and enthusiasm spoken of by other members in this House today. That report estimated there are approximately 115,000 problem gamblers in Australia—and many more whose lives are also adversely affected but not to the same extreme extent. The report said one large-scale survey had found that three-quarters of Australian adults thought that gambling did more harm than good for the community. Australians are the world's biggest gamblers per capita, and we are also one of the best at losing money through gambling—we rank number six in the world at doing our dough.

The Economist reported last year that Australians generated a staggering \$18.4 billion a year in gambling losses. Wagering accounts for about 15 per cent of that figure, or about \$2.6 billion. The average gambling loss per adult in 2014 was more than \$1,200. This is the inconvenient truth of this legislation. The dilemma I have in considering a bill that offers tax breaks to an already highly profitable gambling industry is that any measure we as legislators introduce that encourages or promotes gambling will inevitably lead to more hardship for some people.

I appreciate that the Government intends that the money realised by the tax breaks in this legislation be put back into the industry in the form of infrastructure and events, but it is all with the intention of growing an industry that already has significant harmful side effects on our community. The Roar website reported that New South Wales Government modelling suggested these tax breaks would bring an uplift in wagering in New South Wales of about 9 per cent a year. That is a lot more dollars in a sector of the overall economy, and in some pockets, sure, but also it represents a lot more money coming out of punters' pockets.

I question the logic of introducing these measures to level the playing field with Victoria. Queensland has a lower tax rate again—will that be our next target? Or will we shoot for the South Australian model, which returns no money directly to State coffers? Where does this process of parity end? Would our efforts not be better directed towards pressing for a consistent scheme of national regulation and harmonisation, an option preferred by many parties? For all this talk of evening up the market, we are not talking about assisting an industry that is on its knees. Far from it, Tabcorp announced a \$122 million half-yearly profit in February—a figure that has shot up 64 per cent in a year.

People who have no or little interest in racing—and there are many of them—are rightly wondering how many infrastructure projects could be funded or hospitals and schools staffed with the money we are giving to an industry that is, by any measure, doing quite well. There certainly does not seem to be a crisis in gaming, unless of course you are a family or individual impacted by the effect of bad gambling decisions, particularly in an industry that sells itself as being fun, exciting and glamorous. Indeed, there is no shortage of companies that want to get into the action.

Ever since community outrage saw betting agency Tom Waterhouse reduce its bombardment of our television screens just a few years ago, we have seen a ramping up of activity by existing gambling companies and a proliferation of new players, such as Centrebet, Sportsbet, Ubet, Ladbrokes, Crownbet and William Hill to mention just a few industry players. Their advertising is so pervasive that they must be normalising the idea of gambling in the minds of potential new customers: our children and our youth. I trust that it is no more than ironic coincidence that this growth in gambling opportunities is perhaps eclipsed in the advertising stakes by offers of payday lending companies.

The Leader of the Opposition has come out strongly on this matter and indeed is pushing for even greater support by advocating an accelerated implementation of the scheduled tax breaks. But, of course, it was a similar position that was his first major policy announcement in the lead-up to the March election. That policy announcement was met with incredulity by the average person; I spoke to many in Lake Macquarie and I do not believe that there was more than minimal support for his policy and not one thought that it should have been announced as a cornerstone policy.

I do not for a moment suggest that we seek to penalise the racing industry through the taxation system. However, I do not believe the case has been made for this industry specific largesse. The dice are however cast and this legislation, mostly uncontested and supported by the both the Government and Opposition, will pass through both Houses this week. I would therefore ask that the Government keep in mind those who will not be beneficiaries of the glamorous and appealing aspects of the industry— those who will be impacted by gambling of any kind, not just racing, through irresponsible and poor decisions that we know all too often impacts on families—and be just as generous in supporting social support services throughout New South Wales when asked.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [5.58 p.m.]: The object of the Betting Tax Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 is to change the taxation of racing in New South Wales so that taxation rates are eventually brought into line with those applying in Victoria. This will provide a level playing field for Racing NSW and allow it to compete with other States. The New South Wales racing industry provides enormous benefits to New South Wales businesses, community and in turn, its economy. Racing generates more than \$3.3 billion per year, about 50,000 jobs and approximately 55 per cent of the economic activity is generated in

regional New South Wales. New South Wales racing also pays the highest State tax in the country. Victoria imposes a tax of only 7.6 per cent of gross returns, while New South Wales requires a staggering 19.11 per cent. This means that for every \$100, a tax of \$3.22 is enforced on the bets, with \$1.56 on fix-odds wagers with the TAB.

The proposed amendments will reduce the taxation of racing in New South Wales, specifically for thoroughbred, harness and greyhounds, over the period 1 July 2015 to 1 July 2020. This will be achieved through reducing the taxes payable to the totalizator licensee. The TAB will subsequently pass the tax reduction amount directly to Racing NSW and Harness Racing NSW. Given that Greyhounds New South Wales is presently the subject of a special commission of inquiry, its money will be paid into a trust fund managed by the Secretary of the Department of Justice. That will remain the case until such time as the special commission of inquiry is completed and the response to that inquiry is finalised. That is an appropriate response given the animal welfare concerns that surround the greyhound racing industry in New South Wales.

While members on my side of the House are happy to support this kind of reform, we would like it known that it was a Labor election commitment. As the Leader of the Opposition articulated, we took this matter to the polls in March this year and committed to bringing the New South Wales racing tax regime into alignment with Victoria by 1 January 2016, not 2020 as proposed in this bill. It can be done and it should be done. Under the Government's proposed staggered scheme the benefit to the industry would be \$19.3 million for the period 2015 to 2016. Labor's proposal would bring in approximately \$70 million for the 2015 to 2016 financial year.

That is a difference of more than \$50 million, which is a substantial amount of money for the industry to miss out on in the first financial year alone. Why should the buck stop here? As the Leader of the Opposition mentioned, we have the opportunity to make this right now, not five years down the track. The Opposition does not oppose the bill; however, it will seek to revise the reform timetable to ensure that New South Wales achieves parity with the Victorian racing tax regime by 1 January 2016. There is no reason that we cannot achieve parity by that date. We urge members opposite to make the right choice and support the industry that supports the New South Wales economy.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) [6.01 p.m.]: I support the Betting Tax Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. The Opposition is pleased to support the gradual reduction in betting tax from the New South Wales racing industry, which is very important to New South Wales and especially to Western Sydney. Many people are employed in the industry in places such as Rouse Hill in Western Sydney and further out in Windsor where horse trainers and others work. In addition, thousands of people enjoy the sport and support it daily through their TABs, clubs and other places. A reduction in the tax rate will greatly benefit the people of Western Sydney.

I acknowledge the Leader of the Opposition, who spoke in great detail about Labor's policy to reduce betting tax. It was great to host the Leader of the Opposition in the Prospect electorate on Melbourne Cup day. We spent the morning not talking about the Melbourne Cup but about the way in which this Government has failed the people of Western Sydney. Those failings include the train timetable changes, the lack of infrastructure in Toongabbie and Pendle Hill, and the Government's lack of investment in our schools that has led, for example, to power surges and blackouts at Girraween High School. However, Melbourne Cup day was a great day. It was good to see local people in our TABs and clubs watching the race.

The Opposition believes that this simple tax reform will bring more jobs, particularly to regional areas, and will help many people. Consistency between different State taxes is a good thing; however, the reduction in tax should be paid directly to Racing NSW and to a trust fund managed by the Secretary of the Department of Justice on behalf of Greyhound Racing NSW until issues in the greyhound racing industry are resolved. Everyone has been shocked by what has happened in the greyhound racing industry and the horrific things that have been done to those poor animals. However, it is a major industry

in New South Wales. It is also a working class industry. Many punters who bet on the dogs are from working class areas. When I was a union official in Newcastle a number of unions supported the industry and many officials trained dogs because it was a key part of the recreation of Newcastle steelworkers. I know that was also the case in Wollongong and manufacturing areas in Western Sydney.

Labor recognises that the New South Wales racing industry generates approximately \$3.3 billion per year and more than 50,000 jobs are associated with it. That is why it is so important that this reform be put in place. Western Sydney is second only to the Hunter in the amount of economic activity that is linked directly to racing. There may be 50,000 jobs in the industry throughout New South Wales, but tenfold that amount of people enjoy all forms of racing. New South Wales has the highest rate of racing tax. It is around 2.5 times higher than Victoria and that is a real concern. It has caused our industry to lag behind. Breeders, trainers and others face a real challenge to compete interstate when our tax rate is so different. The Labor Party made an election promise to reduce racing tax and that promise must be honoured. Labor's plan is better than the Government's plan because, quite simply, it would reduce the tax at a much faster rate and provide a greater benefit to the industry. Labor's plan would inject \$35 million into the economy by 30 June 2016 as opposed to the \$19 million that would be generated under the Government's plan. The Opposition will put forward amendments to that effect. I support the bill.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [6.06 p.m.]: On behalf of The Greens I strongly oppose the Betting Tax Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. I will outline the key reasons for concern shortly, but first I will explore a few myths. This proposal has zero economic benefits. I can make that case and say that Labor and the Government should know better because economic modelling on this issue has demonstrated that these provisions will not result in a net increase in State domestic product. Under the bill the tax on thoroughbred, harness and greyhound racing will reduce over a five-year period to a rate equivalent with Victoria. This is a race to the bottom, ignited by Labor, to destroy the tax revenue of this State. It will take money that should be spent on TAFE, hospitals, schools and community facilities, and hand it over to a private industry. The Minister has argued that gambling and racing bring significant benefits to businesses and communities, and that racing contributes a large amount to the economy.

He claims that racing has a significant benefit to New South Wales. The member for Lake Macquarie and the member for Sydney spoke about problem gambling. We also heard about a lack of credible animal welfare provisions, especially in the greyhound industry. In relation to the economics of the issue, PricewaterhouseCoopers undertook financial modelling of scenario E as outlined in second report of the upper House inquiry into greyhound racing in October 2014, which was that the New South Wales Government reduce its taxation rate on race wagering to equal that of Victoria. Did PricewaterhouseCoopers find in line with the rhetoric we hear about it creating a nirvana in which there will be an amazing increase in jobs and economic activity? It found that after eight years of operation the change would reduce total annual economic activity in New South Wales, which is gross State product, by more than \$20 million. It will reduce gross State product and pull our State backwards. The report notes that after the tax cut:

... economic growth is affected in every year subsequently as the tax reduction is offset by lower government expenditure in other parts of the economy.

That is the point. The report further notes:

Racing industry is a consumptive sector of the NSW economy, as such, it doesn't generate any significant productivity benefits to the rest of the economy to lift State output permanently and to offset the impact of the reduction in government expenditure elsewhere in the economy.

That means the Government will pull back on revenue. So to claim that there will be any additional increase in overall economic activity in New South Wales in the long term is demonstrably false. I am sure that was the advice from Treasury, which said that reducing tax in this instance would not deliver any increase in total annual economic activity after the eight-year phase-in period.

Mr Christopher Gulaptis: What about jobs in regional New South Wales?

Mr JAMIE PARKER: Let us talk about jobs. Treasury did say it would create jobs in the thoroughbred, harness and greyhound racing industries. But it would slash about the same number of jobs from the rest of the economy. The report stated:

Employment effects of reducing the tax rate are positive for the racing industry at the expense of employment in other industries.

Because that is \$90 million a year we are not spending on TAFE and \$90 million a year we are not spending on building roads.

Mr Christopher Gulaptis: That's not true.

Mr JAMIE PARKER: I ask the member for Clarence, who is sitting opposite and expressing his concern about this issue, to look at the PricewaterhouseCoopers [PwC] report. We know that we are reducing the total amount of income that the State will receive. Does the Government plan to raise that money somewhere else? What taxes will it introduce to raise \$90 million each year? Perhaps the member for Clarence can tell us what taxes the Government will increase or introduce to raise this money. Alternatively, what other expenditure will the Government cut? It is clear what will have to be cut: The Government will have to offset that \$90 million somewhere after the initial eight-year phase-in period. The PwC report of course assumes there is a balanced budget. So if the Government is not getting the \$90 million from here it will have to get it from somewhere else.

The report says that because the money will be spent in a consumptive sector of the economy there will be no overall increase in economic activity—but, in fact, there will be a reduction in economic activity. It is not bad only for that reason. Of course, Labor wants to see the race to the bottom even faster than the Coalition—which is why we will oppose its foreshadowed amendments. Basically public money will pass from the public sector and into private hands. At present taxpayers pay their taxes to the State, which decides how to spend this revenue. The Government and the Parliament make that decision. But under this provision the private sector will decide. As Minister Grant said:

By legislating the proposed tax reductions the industry will have greater control over the expenditure of the additional funds. That will assist the industry to make long-term financial commitments on strategic initiatives. Currently, each racing controlling body is subject to legal requirements to prepare a strategic plan ...

In other words, the money will be controlled by racing bodies with no public controls over how it is spent. It is in fact a transfer of money from the public to the private sector. It is a loss of economic activity with no net gain in jobs and the loss of government revenue—it is bad all round. I have not even started to look at the issue of animal welfare. All three codes have significant issues with animal welfare. The live baiting scandal in the greyhound industry shocked the community. Greyhound Racing NSW admits in its 2015 annual report that it plans to rehome just 250 dogs in the 2015-16 financial year—this is despite Greyhounds Australasia admitting that 13,000 to 17,000 healthy dogs are killed annually across the country. I know intimately what goes on in the greyhound industry because the Wentworth Park greyhound racing track is in my electorate. It is still a racetrack and it is in my electorate. I have met people from the greyhound racing industry and made my position clear: The industry is in a mess and has been living on lies for too many years. Frankly, the community has lost confidence in it.

We know that only 30 per cent of the 18,000 thoroughbred foals born in Australia each year will end up racing. From the period 1 October 2013 to 31 July 2014 approximately 125 horses were killed on tracks across Australia. New South Wales recorded the highest number of deaths, with 41. The most common cause of death was catastrophic limb injury. Many horses in the racing industry suffer from

serious health problems due to their diet and training regimes, including gastric ulcers, musculoskeletal injuries, and bleeding in the lungs and windpipe. The whipping of thoroughbred racehorses, including incidences that breach animal welfare rules, remains widespread despite a University of Sydney study demonstrating that horses run faster when not being whipped.

I understand that many people have a feeling of closeness to racing industry facilities in their community, and a sense of affinity with them and the friendships and relationships built around them. If that is the argument then let the Government put that argument. Let the Government say, "Labor tried to wedge us by reducing tax. We quite like horseracing. It is a powerful lobby. We have a lot of friends in the industry and we'd like to help them out." That is a legitimate political argument to run. But it is disingenuous to come into the House and make an economic argument that is demonstrably false. There is no argument for some broader social benefit, because we know that problem gambling and animal welfare issues are significant.

We argue that if the \$300 million tax deduction that this Government introduced for poker machines, plus the \$90 million after the eight-year phase-in period, is available then it should be spent—and I am happy to suggest this—on rural and regional New South Wales, TAFE, community facilities, infrastructure such as bridges and roads, and transport. It should be spent on those areas—areas that we know will deliver bigger bang for our buck and where the return on investment will provide significant multiples. We know that the tax position adopted by the Government—potentially following bullying by the *Daily Telegraph*—will not deliver economic benefit to this State. The Greens are about ensuring that we have a good, transparent allocation of funds. We believe taking funds out of public hands and putting them in private hands when there is a loss of economic activity, no net gain of jobs for the economy and a loss of government revenue is suboptimal. The Government must reconsider its position.

Mr KEVIN HUMPHRIES (Barwon) [6.15 p.m.]: I support the Betting Tax Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. I will highlight some of the disingenuous comments made today by members opposite—not so much those from the Labor Party but certainly those from The Greens and the member for Sydney. I also disagree with much of what the member for Lake Macquarie said, although I agree with some of his comments. Some \$100 million was wasted on issues around light rail in the electorate of Balmain, with not one centimetre of rail built.

Mr Jamie Parker: It was \$500 million.

Mr KEVIN HUMPHRIES: I will come to the \$500 million in a minute. Guess who wanted to hook in and destroy some of the local habitat to fast-track that rail project? It was none other than the member for Balmain, who became known as the "Balmain bandicoot". So he is happy to pontificate about what goes on in the regions, but when it comes to his local area the shoe is on the other foot. I will run through some of the economic benefits—which Temporary Speaker Marshall, who comes from a rural area, will know well—that the legislation will deliver. It will be a significant boost for racing across regional and remote areas of New South Wales—including in my home town of Moree, which the Temporary Speaker now represents.

These areas run TAB races, provincial races and picnic races. Many of those race gatherings have nothing to do with gambling but are instead about a coming together of people. I was at a race meeting on Friday in the community of Walcha and there was no betting—there was no totaliser. The idea that racing is propped up by problem gamblers is a fallacy. However, I acknowledge one issue raised by the member for Lake Macquarie: Problem gambling is an issue everywhere. But shutting down racing would inadvertently cause people to move to another form of gambling. These days it is pretty easy to use technology to gamble in another way. The fact that horseracing is licensed and controlled makes it a far healthier industry.

Anyone visiting the Hunter and places like Coolmore, for instance, will discover world-leading

horse-breeding studs. Billions of dollars have been invested in horse ownership in this country. This not only filters down to the metropolitan race programs but also is spread across the State. The fact that country racing will see a boost in prize money will only encourage more owners, trainers, jockeys, strappers, stewards and officials. Money has gone into places like the Tamworth Equine Centre, which now runs a TAFE course on horse care, breeding and anything else involved in horse ownership, through to carting and camp drafting. The benefits from the racing industry in this State are enormous, and we must put it on a level playing field.

The recent Caulfield Cup and Melbourne Cup Spring Carnival provided some good examples of punters—average joes—who pool together to buy a horse. It is a good news story. It is risk versus reward. It epitomises the Australian spirit of having a go. The fact that the member for Sydney, the member for Balmain and others want to kill off the industry in this country is a disgrace; I would say it is un-Australian. We are the only Government that has tackled animal welfare. When The Greens were in a relationship with Labor—happily Labor has gone its own way with this legislation—they did nothing about animal welfare. This Government has put the hot poker through the greyhound industry—which definitely needed to happen—and it will be a much stronger industry.

I will name some of the communities in my electorate—44 per cent of the State—that have regular race meetings. Moree has five race meetings a year. In the west, there are races at Collarenebri, Walgett, Brewarrina and Bourke. Louth has picnic races—it just had its fifty-first race. To the north, we have races at Enngonia and Cobar, the Broken Hill St Patricks Race Day and the Silver City Cup, which has just been run. Cobar holds races only once a year but about 5,000 people attend that race meeting. At Tullibigeal, where the member for Barwon got 87 per cent of the vote—I do not think Labor or The Greens got one vote between them—the race meeting took place on election day, 27 March.

It is a testament to country racing that people walked away from that track to help out at polling booths. Next we have Condobolin, Tottenham, Nyngan, Warren and, as the member for Castle Hill mentioned, Coonamble, where just about everybody has a horse in their backyard. Racing is not only for the rich and the wealthy but also for battlers and everyone who wants to have a go. Then there is Coonabarabran, Baradine and Narrabri. All those communities love the social benefits of racing and want it to grow. It is about gathering and coming together.

This bill is a significant boost for everybody in racing. It is not only about Randwick, Rosehill and Canterbury racecourses but also the broader racing industry. Championships now include country racing. There is a pathway for owners, trainers and punters to get on board and be part of something very exciting. In conclusion, the Waler is a horse that went to World War 1. The Waler, which is a hardworking horse, epitomises this country. After the war they became part of the stockhorse industry and many of them still race—they are not registered—in local picnic races around this country. The bill sends an important message to the broader community that the Government takes racing, animal welfare and gambling seriously, but we are not killjoys. Everybody has rights and responsibilities. We do not want to live in a nanny state, as some members advocated earlier. That is both ridiculous and un-Australian.

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) [6.22 p.m.]: I make a brief contribution to debate on the Betting Tax Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 and state at the outset that I support the bill. I was pleased to join the Hon. Luke Foley, Leader of the Opposition, at Gosford Race Club to launch this policy. At that launch we met an apprentice jockey and a local trainer, who described the importance of betting tax harmonisation to the survival of provincial and regional racing. I will not repeat the objects of this bill as others have spoken in detail about them. I agree with the comments of the member for Balmain that many local communities have great affinity with their local race club, including Wyong Race Club.

The first racecourse in Wyong was constructed in 1875—the same year the Melbourne Cup was first run on a Tuesday. It was located in a paddock south of Woodbury's Inn at West Wyong but its surface was considered to be too rough on the horses. A new course was then built near the lake at Tuggerah. The first annual meeting of the Wyong Jockey Club was held over two days on 26 and 27

January 1898. This was the forerunner to the present cup carnival, which is also held over two days in either late August or early September.

The new stand at the Wyong Race Club, which is now one of the premier function centres in my electorate, was constructed in 1991, at a cost of \$6 million. Importantly, the money that facilities such as these generate from catering for functions et cetera is important to the local economy. In 2015 the Wyong Race Club continues to flourish, with about 200 resident horses in training at the track and a busy schedule of 22 race days and trials. This year a new equine swimming pool has been built at the club and a proper pump and irrigation system has been installed.

In 2013-14 we had a record number of 2,155 starters at Wyong, compared with 1,651 in the previous year. It was the second highest of the five provincial centres—Newcastle had 3,407 starters. This 30 per cent increase in starters reflects the investment the club has made in stabling and training facilities, and highlights the strategic importance of the centre as one of Racing NSW's principal training venues outside the metropolitan area. According to its annual report, Wyong distributed \$4.13 million in prize money last season and generated \$31.43 million in TAB and fixed odds turnover across 169 races conducted—the average field size at Wyong was 9.46 per race.

However, the club is currently running at a loss and unless this tax harmonisation takes place quickly, provincial clubs such as Wyong may close. This will result in the loss of local jobs and a great sense of community among people who gather on a regular basis for race days and other functions, including fundraising activities. This local provincial race club is not only about the big guys but also about the little guys who use the facilities to support many local groups. I commend chief executive officer David Jewell and his new board for their work. I support the bill with Labor's amendments, particularly for clubs such as Wyong that desperately need support.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) [6.26 p.m.]: I make a brief contribution to debate on the Betting Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. My Greens colleague Mr Jamie Parker has outlined why The Greens oppose the bill. I place on record my utter disgust at this Government and the Labor Opposition joining hands to provide millions of dollars in tax concessions to the racing industry. Who will benefit from this legislation? Will it be those vulnerable people who are struggling to make ends meet? Will it be those vulnerable people who are struggling with housing affordability in Sydney? Will it be the parents and the children who are struggling with costs because of the lack of investment in public education? Will it be the sick and elderly who want more services and support in the community? We are here to represent the interests of our communities. This legislation will take money from those communities and give it to the racing and gambling industries.

In the lead-up to the State election I was disgusted to see the Labor Party announce its support for these tax concessions. It is appalling that the racing industry will receive millions of dollars in tax concessions when so many other important things need to be funded in this State. The member for Barwon suggested that The Greens are somehow un-Australian and supportive of a nanny state because we oppose the bill. I spent my childhood going to the races in Adelaide. I used to spend my weekends at the Oakbank races; it was one of my favourite times of the year. We would go as a family group, cook breakfast on the barbeque and then watch the races. But since then I have been enlightened—I saw horses get shot behind a screen at Oakbank—and I can no longer support jumps races because of the damage caused to the horses.

I am one of the many who support the protection of animals and animal rights in our community. While, as a child, I enjoyed going to the races and saw it as a fun festival, it was much more about the carnival rides than about watching the horseracing. The reality is that the damage to the horses and the abuse of animal rights in those circumstances is unacceptable and is a huge risk. I come from a family of proud punters who enjoy putting a bet on the races. But in this situation we need to ask: Should this money be spent on providing concessions to the racing industry?

This is not about being un-Australian. This is not about supporting a nanny state. This is about

asking whether, when we have millions of dollars to spend, we should be providing tax concessions to the racing industry. Should we instead, as the elected representatives of our communities, spend that money on the vulnerable by investing in education, health care and essential services? If we asked people in the community what we should spend the money on, they would say we should spend it on those things, not on tax concessions for the racing industry.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) [6.30 p.m.]: On behalf of my community, I contribute to debate on the Betting Tax Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. One of the pubs in Cessnock has the highest country Totalizator Agency Board [TAB] turnover and one of the clubs in Cessnock has the highest country club TAB turnover. The people of Cessnock obviously enjoy having a punt on the horses, the dogs and harness racing. Labor supports the bill. Labor is so enamoured of the bill that it would like the Government to bring forward the tax reductions so that investment in the racing industry across New South Wales will happen sooner.

I will read into the *Hansard* some facts that appear to have escaped most of the other contributors to the debate today. In 2014 a report called "Size and scope of the NSW racing industry" was prepared by consultants IER for the New South Wales Government. It highlights some important features, and I will focus on a few of them. One of them is this: There are more than 200 thoroughbred, harness and greyhound racing clubs in New South Wales. More than 90 per cent of them are outside Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong. The community broadly says that governments, no matter their persuasion, represent only Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong. The reality is that more than 180 race clubs, be they thoroughbred, harness or greyhound, exist outside those three centres. So any investment in racing is an investment in regional New South Wales, and as a regional representative in the New South Wales Parliament I thoroughly support that.

The report says that the industry sustains some 27,500 full-time equivalent jobs in the State. That number has varied in the different contributions that people have made to this debate, but I am reading directly from the IER report commissioned by the New South Wales Government. The report talks specifically about the economic impacts on the State. The total value-added impact is \$2.6 billion through thoroughbred racing, \$427 million through harness racing and \$335 million through greyhound racing. That is 77.3 per cent, 12.7 per cent and 10 per cent respectively. As I understand it, the funds resulting from the passage of this legislation will be allocated according to those percentages.

The total household income that is generated by the three types of racing is \$1.3 billion through thoroughbred racing, \$219 million through harness racing and \$176 million through greyhound racing. That is income coming to households as a result of the racing industry. That is significant. I return to my first point—that more than 90 per cent of the racing industry is outside Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong. Of that total household income, we can assume that more than 90 per cent will go to households outside Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong. That is important. The report also provides employment statistics. The industry employs 27,500 people. One wonders what the percentage breakdown is across the different types of racing and between regional and metropolitan sites. They are very important figures.

In the Hunter region, \$564 million is generated through thoroughbred racing, \$29.7 million is generated through harness racing and \$29 million is generated through greyhound racing, for a total of \$623 million. These are really large numbers. Members who have spoken in this debate before me, particularly members of The Greens, have said that the money could be spent on TAFEs and hospitals. That is true. But money can also be invested in other forms of regional employment to provide opportunities and enrich the regional social fabric. This is an investment in a different form of employment. It is not the number one priority on the list if you are a member of The Greens, but it is the number one priority for other people. In the electorate of Cessnock people have voted with their feet year after year, because having a punt is part of the social fabric.

Having had the opportunity to go through much of the available material on the tax parity

argument over the past 12 months, I am a little perplexed. I like the Deputy Premier, the member for Dubbo. He is a really good bloke. We get on fantastically well. He is a man of integrity. If we were to sit down and have a beer together and a joke and a laugh, he would probably agree that he has been forced to do a little flip-flopping in this process. Prior to the election he was against tax parity. Shortly after the election he talked about the fact that tax parity would be delivered, but he said it would go into a future fund. I will quote from an article about that. It said:

... Grant said on Tuesday that rather than allowing the money to flow directly into the racing regulatory bodies ... the government favoured a model whereby it would keep control of the extra funding to ensure it had a say on how it was used.

They are admirable words, but that is not where we have ended up. One wonders what happened to the Deputy Premier on the journey. There is one aspect that the member for Castle Hill, the Leader of the Opposition, the Deputy Premier and I all agree on. The article quoted the Deputy Premier as saying:

We see this as more about sustainability and infrastructure within racing, rather than prizemoney ... We want to ... grow ... tourism and jobs ... There are plenty of factors that go into racing outside prizemoney.

I commend the Deputy Premier for that. That is where this extra revenue should be targeted. His comments were reinforced by the Leader of the Opposition and member for Auburn, Luke Foley, and by the member for Castle Hill. I reinforce them, right here and now. I am a little concerned, though. In June the Chief Executive of Racing NSW, Mr Peter V'landys, said:

If we can get that extra \$70 million, we'll certainly be increasing all of our prize money.

That is a real concern. The Leader of the Opposition spoke earlier about spreading the jam to ensure that it reaches the regional centres, the grassroots, the people mucking out stables and the apprentices. The Deputy Premier talked about increasing the number of female apprentices. We need to work on the configuration of our tracks. We need to address animal welfare issues by ensuring that animals are not injured in the first place. We need to ensure that people who go to the races are comfortable and safe and have access to the necessary conveniences. That is not spending the funding on prize money, Mr V'landys. That is investment in infrastructure, which was the original position of the Deputy Premier before he gave the second reading speech and talked about sending the money to the different racing sectors so that they could invest it as they saw fit.

Another thing I welcomed in the Minister's comments when he introduced this bill was that the apportionment rates would be reviewed every five years after the enactment of this tax parity legislation. I welcome that because I believe some elements that IER prepared for the Government are flawed and could do with some review. However, in the first instance, I agree with the Leader of the Opposition, I agree with the Labor Party policy platform that we took to the last election and I welcome the Government coming to the same conclusion. I hope the Government will adopt Labor's amendments, which will ensure that tax parity commences in 2016—a little quicker than that proposed by the Government. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.40 p.m.], on behalf of Mr Troy Grant, in reply: I take great pleasure in closing debate on the Betting Tax Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. First, I thank members for their contributions to debate: the Leader of the Opposition and members representing the electorates of Sydney, Lake Macquarie, Balmain, Wyong, Newtown, Cessnock, Newcastle, Tweed and Prospect. Since becoming a member of Parliament I have never seen so many members speak in debate on any racing bill. When I first spoke in debate on a racing bill in 2007 I think there were a total of three speakers: the Minister, the shadow Minister and me. It is wonderful to see how many members appreciate all codes in the racing industry.

I am pleased to confirm for the Leader of the Opposition that the new wagering tax arrangements will free up money to invest in industry development, including sustaining premier racing events such as The Championships into the future. The Championships is the premier racing event in New South Wales and the additional funding will enable it to grow and potentially rival the economic contribution of the Melbourne Cup. The Government is proud to have supported the development of this showcase event over the past two years, particularly now that it includes a supporting program of country racing events. A strong racing sector providing competitive prize money provides associated flow-on benefits to regional and rural sectors. For example, the inclusion of the finals from the Country and Provincial Series in the program for The Championships in 2015 provided an added incentive for regional participants to become involved.

The Leader of the Opposition also referred to the benefits that will flow to rural and regional racing. The additional revenue freed up by the tax reductions will assist the racing controlling bodies to support rural and regional racing. For example, the 2014 Strategic Plan for Racing NSW foreshadows investment that will benefit country racing. This includes increased prize money for provincial and country racing infrastructure development across New South Wales, which was mentioned by the member for Cessnock, and apprenticeships in areas of New South Wales with high youth unemployment. The 2015 Strategic Plan for Harness Racing New South Wales also foreshadows investment in regional areas, including new industry development and regulatory resources.

The member for Sydney raised a concern that the holding of the greyhounds portion of the tax break in a trust fund presumes that the industry will survive after the special commission reports. This could not be further from reality. The greyhound industry's future is yet to be determined. By quarantining greyhound racing's proportion of the tax cut, the Government is ensuring that funds will be available to implement the recommendations of the special commission of inquiry, whatever they may be. The member for Lake Macquarie and the member for Balmain raised concerns about the proposed tax reduction leading to an increase in problem gambling.

The Government promotes responsible gambling through a range of legislative requirements and initiatives supported by the Responsible Gambling Fund. In 2014-15 the fund provided \$17.2 million to support education and awareness programs that build community resilience, counselling services that assist problem gamblers and their families, research to better understand the causes, and the development of harm reduction strategies. Twenty-four-hour telephone counselling is also available, as well as access to support via the internet and email, ensuring that problem gamblers can get the type of help most suited to them when and where they need it.

Last year the fund also invested \$1.5 million in a major advertising campaign, "You are stronger than you think", which targeted young men at risk of becoming problem gamblers. The Government is also aware of the importance of reaching people before they need help and has made a strong commitment to ensure resources are focused on early intervention. New initiatives developed by the Responsible Gambling Fund will now have a focus on early intervention to assist in preventing gambling problems from developing. Examples of early intervention programs funded through the Responsible Gambling Fund include the Warruwi Aboriginal awareness program, a statewide youth strategy, and a four-year project, which will see education and support programs provided throughout the justice and corrections system.

The member for Balmain referred to the PricewaterhouseCoopers report that stated there would be no economic benefit. PricewaterhouseCoopers modelled several scenarios. The Government considered those, along with different views from a former head of Treasury, a joint working group, the IER report and work done by Deloitte. On balance, it is clear to the Government that wagering tax parity will be good for the racing industry codes, regional towns and many communities. In 2014 the Government commissioned business consulting firm IER to conduct a scoping study of the thoroughbred harness racing and greyhound racing industries in New South Wales. The IER report was released in 2014 and was based on data from the 2012-13 racing season. The IER report found that the New South

Wales racing industry creates a direct and indirect value-added impact of more than \$3.3 billion a year. More than \$1.5 billion of this occurs in regional New South Wales, including \$79.9 million in the Central West, \$623 million in the Hunter and \$107 million in the Illawarra and the South Coast.

Racing is a significant driver of employment in New South Wales. The IER report found that the racing industry directly and indirectly sustains 27,500 full-time equivalent jobs. More than 90,214 people directly participate in the racing industry, as an employee, a participant—such as an owner—or a volunteer. More than 65,000 of those people fulfil roles relating to the breeding and training of racing animals and nearly 25,000 people fulfil roles relating to the racing product and industry administration. A significant number of these industry participants are in regional New South Wales, including over 4,000 in the Central West, over 9,000 in the Hunter and over 4,000 in the Riverina.

The IER report found that around 43,900 people have an ownership interest in racing animals, with almost 60 per cent of these people living in regional New South Wales. The report also found that in 2012-13 there were more than 1.81 million attendances at meetings across New South Wales, including more than 800,000 in Sydney and Western Sydney, more than 62,000 in the Central West, more than 157,000 in the Hunter, and more than 153,000 in the Illawarra and the South Coast. The IER report found that the economic impacts of racing complement its social impacts. This is particularly so for rural and regional New South Wales where racing events and facilities foster social cohesion and provide benefits for a broad range of individuals and community organisations. Around 780 community organisations are financially assisted by the racing industry, with many community organisations sharing racing club facilities. These include cancer charities, children's charities, sporting clubs, schools, Rotary and Lions clubs, returned servicemen's leagues and Rural Fire Services.

The member for Balmain raised the issue of funds being returned to the industry unencumbered. By legislating the proposed tax reductions, industry will have greater control over the expenditure of the additional funds, which will assist in making longer-term financial commitments on strategic initiatives. Each racing controlling body is currently subject to legal requirements to prepare a strategic plan relating to promotion, strategic development and the welfare of the respective racing sector. Controlling bodies are also required by law to report on the implementation of their strategic plan in their annual report, which is tabled in Parliament. The investment of revenue in the strategic initiatives focuses on part of these reporting requirements and will provide government with the mechanism to monitor how funds are being used.

The member for Cessnock asked why there was a move away from the industry development fund model. Consideration has been given to an industry development fund model with funding decisions made by government. However, consultation with the racing controlling bodies highlighted concerns that legislated tax reform was necessary to provide industry with the financial certainty it requires. The industry also made it clear that it requires control over funding decisions to enable forward planning and the commitment of funds to the development initiatives proposed in industry strategic plans.

To address these concerns the bill includes amendments to enshrine the new tax rates in legislation. The Opposition proposed amendments to achieve full parity as early as 1 January 2016. The Government cannot support this rushed approach. The Government is committed to achieving tax parity with Victoria to ensure New South Wales has a world-class racing industry. However, this reform must be implemented in a sustainable manner in line with the Government's commitment to responsible fiscal management and must have regard to the many other responsibilities of government.

We are committed to tax reforms that assist the sustainability of the racing industry. The reforms proposed by this bill represent a balanced approach by providing a staged tax reduction while at the same time ensuring we can maintain the important community services provided by responsible government for the residents of New South Wales. The tax reductions in this bill are to be delivered on a progressive basis, with the first reduction occurring retrospectively from 1 July 2015. The final reduction will occur on 1 July 2020 when parity with Victoria will be achieved. The bill has been developed to provide increased funding to industry sooner in a financially responsible manner, which the people of New

South Wales would expect.

The Government has struck the right balance between the needs of industry and sensible budget management. The first proceeds of tax parity will be provided to the racing controlling bodies in the coming months to assist in their strategic planning and to ensure New South Wales racing can continue to stage world-class events. In order to ensure that tax parity is achieved in a responsible and balanced manner, the Government cannot support the proposed amendments. The Government is pleased to deliver on its promise to achieve wagering tax parity with Victoria.

The legislated tax reductions will free up \$260 million over the stepdown period and at least another \$90 million each year once parity is achieved to provide a boost to the New South Wales racing industry. This will deliver immediate benefits for the New South Wales racing industry, allowing it to strengthen premier racing events, such as The Championships, and increase regional racing infrastructure and apprenticeships. Proceeds of the lower tax rates for the greyhound racing industry will be quarantined pending the outcome of the Special Commission of Inquiry into the Greyhound Racing Industry in New South Wales. The Government is committed to creating a strong and viable racing industry throughout New South Wales and the measures in the bill will help to secure its long-term sustainability. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Division called for and Standing Order 181 applied.

Noes, 5

Mr Greenwich
Ms Leong
Mr Parker
Mr Piper
Ms T. F. Smith

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in detail requested by Mr Luke Foley.

Consideration in Detail

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! By leave, I will propose the bill in groups of clauses and schedules.

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn—Leader of the Opposition) [6.57 p.m.], by leave: I move Opposition amendments Nos 1 to 8 on sheet C2015-163 in globo:

No. 1 Commencement

Page 2, clause 2, line 5. Omit "is taken to have commenced on 1 July 2015". Insert instead "commences on 1 January 2016".

No. 2 Tax rate reduction for totalizator betting

Page 3, Schedule 1 [1], line 3. Omit all words on that line. Insert instead:

Omit "19.11" from section 8 (2) (a). Insert instead "7.6".

No. 3 Tax rate reduction for totalizator betting

Page 3, Schedule 1 [2], lines 4–15. Omit all words on those lines.

No. 4 Tax rate reduction for totalizator roundings

Page 3, Schedule 1 [3], line 17. Omit all words on that line. Insert instead:

Omit "19.11" from section 9 (2). Insert instead "7.6".

No. 5 Tax rate reduction for totalizator roundings

Page 3, Schedule 1 [4], lines 18–29. Omit all words on those lines.

No. 6 Tax rate reduction for approved betting activities

Pages 3 and 4, Schedule 1 [6], line 35 on page 3 to line 7 on page 4. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead:

- (a) in respect of an approved betting activity (other than a computer simulated racing event betting activity)—4.38%, or
- (b) in respect of a computer simulated racing event betting activity—10.91%.

No. 7 Payment of tax reduction amount

Page 5, Schedule 2 [2], line 31. Omit "1 July 2015". Insert instead "1 January 2016".

No. 8 Payment of tax reduction amount

Page 7, Schedule 2 [3], lines 15–20. Omit all words on those lines.

I refer members to my comments in the second reading debate.

Question—That Opposition amendments Nos 1 to 8 [C2015-163] be agreed to—put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 33

Ms Aitchison
Mr Atalla
Mr Barr
Ms Burney
Ms Car
Ms Catley
Mr Crakanthorp
Mr Daley

Mr Harris
Ms Harrison
Ms Hay
Ms Haylen
Mr Hoenig
Ms Hornery
Mr Kamper
Mr Lynch

Mr Minns
Mr Park
Mr Robertson
Ms K. Smith
Ms Washington
Ms Watson
Mr Zangari

Mr Dib
Ms Doyle
Ms Finn
Mr Foley

Dr McDermott
Ms McKay
Mr Mehan
Ms Mihailuk

Tellers,
Mr Lulich
Mr Warren

Noes, 51

Mr Anderson
Mr Aplin
Mr Ayres
Mr Barilaro
Ms Berejiklian
Mr Brookes
Mr Conolly
Mr Constance
Mr Coure
Mr Crouch
Mr Dominello
Mr Elliott
Mr Evans
Mr Fraser
Mr Gee
Ms Gibbons
Ms Goward
Mr Greenwich

Mr Gulaptis
Ms Hodgkinson
Mr Humphries
Mr Johnsen
Mr Kean
Dr Lee
Ms Leong
Mr Marshall
Mr Notley-Smith
Mr O'Dea
Mr Parker
Mrs Pavey
Mr Perrottet
Ms Petinos
Mr Piccoli
Mr Piper
Mr Provest
Mr Roberts

Mr Rowell
Mr Sidoti
Mrs Skinner
Ms T. F. Smith
Mr Speakman
Mr Stokes
Mr Taylor
Mr Toole
Mr Tudehope
Ms Upton
Mr Ward
Mr Williams
Mrs Williams

Tellers,
Mr Bromhead
Mr Patterson

Pair

Mr Chanthivong

Mr Baird

Question resolved in the negative.

Opposition amendments Nos 1 to 8 [C2015-163] negatived.

Question—That clauses 1 and 2 and schedules 1 to 3 be agreed to—put and resolved in the affirmative.

Clauses 1 and 2 and schedules 1 to 3 agreed to.

Consideration in detail concluded.

Third Reading

Motion by Mr Ray Williams, on behalf of Mr Troy Grant, agreed to:

That this bill be now read a third time.

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

CONVEYANCING AMENDMENT (SUNSET CLAUSES) BILL 2015

FIREARMS AND WEAPONS PROHIBITION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2015

SECURITY INDUSTRY AMENDMENT (REGULATION OF TRAINING ORGANISATIONS) BILL 2015

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

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

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

Consideration in detail set down as an order for the day for a later hour.

GAMING MACHINES AMENDMENT (CENTRALISED MONITORING SYSTEM) BILL 2015

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 12 November 2015.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) [7.07 p.m.]: I support the Gaming Machines Amendment (Centralised Monitoring System) Bill 2015, which provides sensible reforms to ensure the regulatory framework applying to a future centralised monitoring system [CMS] operator is reflective of modern regulatory practices and consistent with other New South Wales gaming-related legislation.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! Standing Order 54 requires all members to be seated during debate.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: Many years ago I was a club manager when the first CMS scheme was introduced with great haste by the Labor Government. It caused a great deal of angst within the club industry and it took a long time to iron out all the problems, which is why I support this bill. The bill will also provide the new licensee with regulatory and commercial certainty as well as flexibility to innovate with new products and services over the life of the licence. Under the old system a club would get new multi-gaming terminals that were not compatible and that also caused a great deal of angst. The Minister advised me that there has been consultation with key stakeholders—the Australian Hotels Association and Clubs NSW—and that they are striving to do the best for their members.

The CMS connects 93,000-odd gaming machines to a central host computer for the primary purpose of calculating gaming machine tax and reporting on gaming machine integrity events, such as compliance with the mandatory daily shutdown of gaming machines—an important harm minimisation measure. The current CMS licence expires on 30 November 2016. The Government is conducting a competitive tender process for a future CMS licence operator. Since the CMS was introduced, technology has somewhat progressed. A modern CMS presents opportunities for harm minimisation. As I said, the first system that the Opposition rushed through when in government caused the industry a great deal of angst. It took the industry a number of years to iron out the bugs and get used to that type of technology.

During the 2015 election campaign the Government committed to working with industry and the community to introduce voluntary pre-commitment throughout New South Wales. Pre-commitment is a harm minimisation tool allowing patrons to limit money and time spent on gaming machines. The Government is considering how this may be best achieved, including the potential use of CMS as a vehicle for introducing voluntary pre-commitment. I believe the industry is a responsible one. In particular I know that under the leadership of chief executive officer Anthony Ball, with whom I have worked for

many years, the clubs in my electorate and across New South Wales are deeply committed to harm minimisation.

The proposals in the bill do not change the important harm minimisation requirements that apply to gaming venues. Pre-commitment capabilities will only add to the range of important measures already in place that are aimed at helping patrons to control their gambling. The important harm minimisation measures in the Gaming Machines Act include: a mandatory daily gaming machine shutdown of up to six hours; restrictions on the location of gaming machines and automatic teller machines [ATMs]; cheque-cashing and cash prize restrictions; prohibiting inducements to gamble such as offering free credits; and mandating the availability of counselling and self-exclusion programs for hotel and club patrons.

When I was a club manager I helped patrons to implement their self-exclusion programs and assisted them to find counselling. I have to mention the Buttery behind Bangalow on the North Coast, which is a great provider. The Northern Rivers Gambling Counselling Service also provides great support for people affected by gambling. The harm minimisation measures in the Act also include: requiring the display of gambling warning notices and contact details for problem gambling counselling services; requiring licensees and staff to undergo responsible conduct of gambling training; and requiring a local impact assessment to be approved where a hotel or registered club proposes to increase its gaming machines.

Before the Gaming Machines Act came in I was in charge of well in excess of 430 gaming machines. Over 27 years I have witnessed the industry grow from the early days of cash flow right through to now. I applaud the industry for the responsible manner in which it conducts its business. It is important to note that while a great deal of effort is being made to increase harm minimisation strategies, which I support, clubs in New South Wales are great parts of our local communities. All members would know that their local clubs play significant roles in their communities and make donations and provide support during natural disasters. No matter if it is a bushfire, a flood or a tsunami the clubs are the first ones to assist by providing cash and products and by opening their doors to people in need.

I know the famous Helensburgh club in the Blue Mountains throws open its doors during bushfires. Bundeena RSL, which is in the electorate of Mr Temporary Speaker, also assists during natural disasters. I know those clubs quite well and, Mr Temporary Speaker, I am led to believe that you are a regular at them. It is good to see you out there supporting them in their fine community work. Where gambling may be a problem the Government continues to fund counselling and support services including the Gambling Help service, which is a free 24-hour a day seven-days a week statewide telephone crisis counselling, information and referral service for problem gamblers, their families, friends and others.

A range of free self-help materials including videos, workbooks, reminder services and peer support forums is available through the Gambling Help website. Nathan Hindmarsh recently conducted a number of problem gambling seminars in my area. That famous ex-Parramatta player freely admitted that he had a significant gambling problem during his playing days. He is touring the State proudly sponsored by Lifeline and ClubsNSW and has a significant impact on not only the young but also the elderly in my area. I applaud him for coming forward, talking about his life experiences and passing on his knowledge to assist the community. Advertising and awareness programs are critical to building resilience and ensuring that the community is aware of the harms that gambling can cause as well as the resources that are available to help.

For example, the \$1.5 million You're Stronger Than You Think advertising campaign of 2014-15, along with community-based activities and social media promotions, has had significant results. Calls to the Gambling Help phone line are up 7 per cent on the previous year, face-to-face client consultations are up by 27 per cent, sessions are up by 34 per cent and the amount of online counselling has increased by 17 per cent. The Government continues to fund those essential programs. In 2015-16, 56 counselling services will receive funding of more than \$11 million to deliver important counselling and support

services. Those measures reflect the Government's ongoing commitment to minimising and preventing the incidence of problem gambling.

The bill does not change the important harm minimisation requirements. In fact, the amendments and the new CMS system will improve the Government's capacity to strengthen its harm minimisation initiatives. This bill is an important step forward. As I said, I applaud the club movement and the Australian Hotels Association for their ongoing desire for excellence in harm minimisation. We are very conscious of the negative consequences of excessive gambling and alcohol consumption. Members on both sides of the House must be committed to ensuring that the industry is supported and regulated in an efficient and transparent manner so that we can do the best thing for the people of New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) [7.17 p.m.]: I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Gaming Machines Amendment (Centralised Monitoring System) Bill 2015. I note from the outset that the Opposition will support the bill. However, we will also propose amendments in the Legislative Council for the purpose of improving transparency and accountability. Assurance of transparency is important for two primary reasons. First, it is essential that the public can scrutinise a tender or licence that is likely to be worth approximately \$1 billion, be responsible for some 95,000 gaming machines across New South Wales and be responsible for the return of approximately \$1.3 billion in taxes to the State. If for no other reason, scrutiny of this licence could, would and should be an anti-corruption mechanism.

Secondly, the bill will make it possible for the Minister to approve additional new centralised monitoring system [CMS] services but does not propose any mechanism or requirement for the Minister to report such instances to the public. The Minister's approval of any other CMS services could have a significant impact on income to the State, affect the handling of people's personal information and/or provide various other alterations to the existing licence and licensee. In essence, we believe that not inserting certainty of transparency and accountability in the bill was a minor oversight by the Minister and we suspect that the Government will adopt our amendments in the upper House. We welcome that.

The centralised monitoring system is a regulatory tool to which all electronic gaming machines operating in New South Wales must be connected for taxation and integrity purposes. The CMS provides information that is essential to calculating gaming machine tax, collecting meter reading information from gaming machines, and identifying integrity events on all gaming machines. Operators of the 3,000 gaming venues in New South Wales hosting the 95,000 gaming machines licensed in the State pay a monthly fee to the licensee for each gaming machine connected to the CMS for the purpose of monitoring. The object of this bill is to amend the Gaming Machines Act 2001, the principal Act, to provide a more comprehensive system for the licensing of the operation and management of the CMS under that Act. It was the Labor Government that introduced the Gaming Machines Act in 2001 for the purpose of issuing the original CMS licence.

The term of that licence was 15 years and it will expire on 30 November 2016. It is appropriate that the Government should seek to make the necessary adjustments to the Gaming Machine Act at this time so that changes can be made and embedded prior to a tendering process for the renewal or re-allocation of the licence during 2016. Of course, the Opposition supports stronger provisions. The bill includes a number of enhanced measures for determining whether an applicant is suitable to be granted a CMS licence. It also provides for a stronger set of disciplinary powers, including the ability for the Minister to suspend or cancel a CMS licence in extraordinary circumstances. These are substantial powers, but the importance of the CMS to the integrity and security of the gaming tax system means that they are warranted and appropriate.

I have already spoken about transparency, but I will now address its importance in the context of modern government procurement and public sector contracting. The New South Wales Government's e-tender website provides that all contracts with an estimated value of \$150,000 or more are subject to routine public disclosure. Typically, a contract summary will be provided within 60 days of a contract

coming into existence. I reiterate: There is every chance that this contract and licence will be worth close to \$1 billion. For major projects, such as public-private partnerships [PPPs], New South Wales has adopted specific disclosure requirements.

Set out on the Treasury website, these guidelines provide that all New South Wales PPPs must publish the complete contract—minus confidential information—and the information listed in schedules 1 and 2 of "Ministerial Memorandum No.2007-01 Public Disclosure of Information Arising from New South Wales Government Tenders and Contracts" within 60 days of contract execution. Any amendments to a contract must also be disclosed. In addition, because they are major contracts, PPPs also must provide a contract summary, properly audited by the Auditor General, to the New South Wales Parliament. That document is then published on the Treasury website.

I suspect that in the late 1990s when the original bill was first being drafted and considered prior to its carriage through both Houses in 2001 it would have been beyond the thinking of the then members of this place to comprehend technological advances that have been made. Of course, the power of today's technology is immense. Therefore, legislative amendments such as these are reasonable and appropriate, but only if there is ongoing public scrutiny and interrogation of the consequences of any amendments. I ask members to imagine, for example, the value and power of the data that can be captured and scrutinised via the CMS being addressed in this bill.

Having worked in a hotel prior to coming into this place, I can attest with certainty to the willingness of gaming machine players to play with incentivised reward identity cards. This means that the machine and the CMS know exactly who is playing what machine, at what time of day, on what day of the week, what betting patterns are being followed, and many other details. That information could be used to direct irresistible marketing at people who can least resist the charm of marketeers and gaming machines. Of course, it could also inform the local club, hotel or other premises about who is in need of assistance to deal with problem gambling.

I do not know what information will be captured and how it will be used. However, it is imperative that this bill provide for strong and well-defined transparency and accountability. The requirement of the Minister to decide on the suitability of a proposed ancillary CMS service is entirely reasonable. However, the fact that the bill is silent on any requirement for an approved ancillary service to be made known to the public is entirely unreasonable and unacceptable. I note that the stakeholder groups with whom the Opposition has consulted broadly support the bill, and we welcome that support. I will conclude by pointing out that the Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing overview of investment opportunity states that "for low turnover entities who have confirmed eligibility for the CMS monitoring fee rebate, the monitoring fee is paid for by the Government".

I ask that in his reply the Minister offer up two key pieces of information that we need to undertake appropriate scrutiny. First, I ask the Minister to rule in or rule out any changes made in respect of low turnover venues. I am referring primarily to regional venues that might have a small bowling club or some other club which have low turnover and which need assistance with CMS monitoring and the fee. Secondly, I ask that the Minister disclose for how many of these low turnover venues and gaming machines the Government is paying a fee. That is not a criticism; it is asked simply in the interests of openness and transparency. I reiterate two key messages on behalf of the Opposition. First, we support the bill, and, secondly, we will move an amendment in the other place to insert provisions allowing for transparency and accountability so that any future CMS licensee, the Minister or the Government will be open to appropriate scrutiny and interrogation by the broader public. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [7.27 p.m.]: I speak on behalf of The Greens on the Gaming Machines Amendment (Centralised Monitoring System) Bill 2015. We have been given an explanation of the bill and we have no concerns about its operation. However, I have some questions and I will raise some issues. First, it is important to recognise that New South Wales has the highest rate of gambling expenditure of any State in Australia. In fact, with the exception of Nevada, it has the highest rate in

Australia and the United States. In addition, there is no other State in this country or internationally that has more poker machines per capita. That is remarkable.

The Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing found that 65 per cent of adults in New South Wales have engaged in some form of gambling in the past 12 months. Poker machines are played by only 27 per cent of the population, which is a reduction from 31 per cent in 2006, which of course is a good thing. Although the number of people playing poker machines has declined, Treasury predicts that taxation revenue from poker machines will increase by 2018. Therefore, fewer people are playing poker machines, but more people are losing money. Poker machines are a scourge. The 2010 Productivity Commission investigation into gambling in Australia found that problem gamblers contribute 40 per cent of all the money put through poker machines and at-risk gamblers account for another 20 per cent. It also found that poker machine players accounted for 75 per cent to 80 per cent of all problem gamblers in the country. They are disgraceful statistics.

The memorandum of understanding signed by ClubsNSW and the Liberal-Nationals Government before the last State election demonstrated the colossal power of the gambling lobby. Just last week the Government gave another free kick to the gambling industry with stamp duty relief on transfers, which was in addition to the other relief it gave the industry with the original transfer and the removal of provisions designed to reduce the number of poker machines in this State. Now we are seeing another gift for the gambling lobby. Also it is important to remember that problem gambling costs society between \$4.7 billion and \$8.4 billion a year. Heavy gamblers make up about 87 per cent of total dollars gambled and 80 per cent of heavy gamblers use poker machines.

I now turn directly to the bill, and I will ask a few questions. I was shocked when I looked at this bill and saw the behind-the-scenes deal to deliver the pokies industry a significant financial windfall. The Deputy Premier pledged to change the indexation of the monthly fee paid by most pubs and clubs operating poker machines to the private operators of the Centralised Monitoring System [CMS]. Under the current law, with some exemptions, this fee must be paid to the CMS operator, which monitors the integrity of the poker machines and ensures the correct amount of tax is paid. Since its inception in 2001 the monthly fee, which is about \$42 plus GST per poker machine per month, has risen by 3 per cent—it has risen by 3 per cent every year. The bill proposes to slash that. Instead of judging 3 per cent it is proposing to use the consumer price index [CPI] figure.

We know that the Reserve Bank is focused on a 2.5 per cent CPI outcome. We know this Government will scream blue murder if it goes above 2.5 per cent because it would impact significantly on the wages arrangements with the public sector. As we know there is a cap of 2.5 per cent. My concern is that the abolition of the 3 per cent tax and the move to a CPI rate will deliver a significant windfall to the industry. An article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* published late this afternoon identified that this is a \$40 million gift to pubs and clubs. The Government is gifting tens of millions of dollars again to the poker machine industry. When will this end?

We must wean clubs off their gambling addiction. Clubs at present have only one way to go—that is, to get bigger, to amalgamate, and to get more interesting machines with more lights, and more bells and whistles to get more people to gamble. We know that in New South Wales there is a state of secrecy about poker machine profits. In Victoria the Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation publishes half yearly net electronic gaming machine expenditure for each venue along with electronic gaming machine [EGM] numbers. In New South Wales the data is not available. It is published only by local government area. The Government claims the privacy of clubs and pubs would be violated by its publication. The Victorian data allows communities to assess the economic cost of each individual hotel in their local area. We know that the hotels congregate in low socio-economic areas and in predominantly non-English speaking areas where gambling machine losses are at their greatest.

When the clubs amalgamate, they amalgamate into these areas because they know that the greatest amount of profit—that is, the greatest amount of gambling losses—comes from those low-income

communities in rural and regional New South Wales and in low-income communities in Sydney. That is a matter of concern. We know that Western Sydney, for example, and south-western Sydney are more likely to have at-risk or problem gamblers than coastal Sydney. When we talk about gamblers seeking help, only approximately 15 per cent of gamblers seek help. We know we must reduce the addiction clubs have to poker machines, and we must do that by encouraging clubs, through a whole range of incentives and a whole range of measures, to transition out of poker machines. They rely on gambling losses to sustain their clubs. They give a couple of per cent back to the community, and apparently we should be delighted to get the 1.5 per cent or the 2.5 per cent they give back.

Mr Geoff Provest: It is not a couple of per cent. They give a lot more than that.

Mr JAMIE PARKER: I encourage the member for Tweed to look at the gambling losses in his local clubs, the millions of dollars in gambling losses at each club and the small amount returned. It is true that local clubs provide wages from those gambling losses. We would like to see that change. We would like to see a situation, as occurs in other States around the country, where they do not rely on gambling losses to sustain their clubs or to sustain their community organisations. We support local clubs, but we think they need to get off their addiction to gambling. We think that the addiction these clubs have to gambling means that they need to get bigger and bigger and become more aggressive in their marketing. It is important that we do our best to change that. We are disappointed that this legislation seems to give a gift of up to \$40 million to New South Wales clubs. The newspaper article quotes the office of the Deputy Premier as saying:

... there is no windfall to industry—this is about continuing a strong monitoring and probity regime of the use of poker machines in NSW.

CPI changes over time so you cannot pick an arbitrary number on which to predict fees over the life of the licence ...

Well, yes we can. If we look at any of the economic advisory agencies, we will see that they say that over time the CPI would be more than a 3 per cent flat rate over the next 15 years. It is almost guaranteed that CPI will be more than 3 per cent per annum every year for the next 15 years, which is what the current regime provides—it has been 3 per cent every year over the past 15 years. Again, the Government is giving a gift to the gambling industry. We saw it last week in the legislation before the House and we saw it again recently with another gift to the gambling industry. This is a terrible situation to find ourselves in.

We know that we must improve the relationship clubs have with their members so they do not rely on gambling to sustain the organisation, but instead rely on good, strong community clubs. It is important that we help our clubs get over their addiction to gambling. We can do that by working closely with our clubs through a range of different incentives and arrangements so that over time they reduce their total number of poker machines. That is the most important thing. We want strong clubs, but we do not want clubs living and breathing on the basis of poker machines. The member for Tweed will know that the vast majority of revenue comes from gambling losses.

ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The member for Tweed will come to order. If I have to speak to him again about interjecting he will be removed from the Chamber.

Mr JAMIE PARKER: The vast majority of revenue comes from gambling losses. It is true. No-one can deny that the vast majority of the revenue of these clubs comes from gambling losses. We want to stop that. We want clubs standing strong without relying on gambling losses. Other States are able to do this effectively but this Government, because of the strength of the lobby group of the gambling industry, keeps on keeping on—gifting and reducing taxation for the gambling industry. We want a long-term solution to problem gambling whereby we have strong, non-gambling revenue-based clubs. We must make sure that we can deliver for them in the future.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [7.36 p.m.]: The object of the Gaming and Liquor Administration Amendment Bill 2015 is to amend the legislative basis of the Centralised Monitoring System [CMS] by facilitating the legislative requirements of enacting a competitive tender process allowing for the issue of a new license to operate the CMS. The CMS is a regulatory tool which all electronic gaming machines in New South Wales must be connected to—for both taxation and integrity purposes. The CMS provides information that is essential to calculating the gaming machine tax, collecting meter-reading information from all gaming machines, and identifying the integrity of all machines. While the CMS is essential to the collection of tax, the information collected within this system is also of great value to the gaming industry. Operators of the 3,000 gaming venues in New South Wales also pay a monthly fee to the licensee for each gaming machine connected to the CMS.

Under the former Labor Government, the operation of the CMS was outsourced through a statutory licence under the Gaming Machines Act 2001 to Maxgaming New South Wales Pty Ltd—also known as Tattersalls. This licence had a duration of 15 years. The licence is due to expire on 30 November 2016, and this bill will update the legislative framework for the CMS ahead of the Government completing a competitive tender process for the issuing of the next licence, or licences, for operation of the CMS. This legislation also includes provisions around the eligibility of a licensee and the mechanisms to discipline a licensee and suspend or cancel a licence if and when warranted.

Further, this bill provides for the Minister to approve new CMS services, defined as "approved ancillary CMS services", that the gaming industry could use. This could include things such as more detailed reporting on the performance of gaming machines or information to support the operation of loyalty programs. The proposed legislation provides that these new services would need to be approved by the Minister prior to their inception. However, there are no mechanisms in place within these legislative changes which indicate the public are to be informed that such an approval has been given. This would mean that such information could be collected in secret, with the patrons being oblivious to it.

Those of us on this side of the House firmly believe there needs to be greater transparency and accountability to this process. Any approved ancillary closed monitoring systems should be disclosed to the public. Something like this should never be hidden behind closed doors. We are happy to support the proposed amendments as they make sense and will improve the existing legislation. We do, however, have concerns about the lack of transparency and accountability for ancillary CMS services and would like to see further amendments passed in the other House to rectify this issue. As such, I commend this bill to the House.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) [7.40 p.m.]: I oppose the Gaming Machines Amendment (Centralised Monitoring System) Bill 2015 because it provides yet another handout to poker machine operators. Currently, across New South Wales there are 70,514 gaming machines in 1,212 registered clubs, 23,394 in 1,604 hotels, and 1,500 in the casino. More than half of gambling expenditure in New South Wales occurs on poker machines, and poker machines are the source of a large majority of problem gambling. Large numbers of people have lost their homes and jobs as a result of poker machine gambling and this has had personal impacts on them and their families. I have heard from constituents whose lives have been ruined from gaming machines.

The 2010 Productivity Commission report on gambling found people from New South Wales spend \$7.15 billion, which is 3.5 per cent of household consumption and higher than any other State or Territory, on gambling, with 55 per cent of that on electronic gaming machines in clubs and hotels—that is, \$10.5 billion a year. It is now much higher. Last month the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported an increase of \$7 billion in poker machine expenditure since 2011 with one-third of the total expenditure coming from five of the most disadvantaged Sydney areas. The 26 October article states that four of the five suburbs with the largest and fastest-growing losses are ranked by the Australian Bureau of Statistics as being in the top five most disadvantaged areas.

The 2010 Productivity Commission Report estimated that regular gaming machine players spend

a massive \$7,000 to \$8,000 a year. The report estimated that problem gamblers account for 22 to 60 per cent of gaming machine spending, which increases to 42 to 75 per cent when combined with use by moderate risk gamblers. Between 80,000 and 160,000 Australian adults suffer from a significant gambling problem and a further 230,000 to 350,000 are vulnerable. Research by the Victorian State Government, the Salvation Army and Southern Cross University, cited in a 2008 City of Sydney submission on draft poker machine legislation, found that the people most likely to develop a gaming machine problem are males aged 20 to 24 or 65 to 69 years of age, renters, people living in one-bedroom accommodation, people without children, social security recipients, and migrants of European and Asian descent. Poker machine impacts are the greatest on communities that already experience hardship and can exacerbate risks of homelessness.

Despite these serious impacts on the most vulnerable people in our community, the State Government has been giving licensed venues with poker machines exemptions to the lockout laws so that people can come and go after 1.30 a.m. to gamble their savings away. Exemptions are not being given to live music and live entertainment venues or small bars that help civilise the night-time economy. Unlike gaming machines, live music and live entertainment add to the culture and vibrancy of the State and support local arts and talent. This is another example of the Government having its priorities wrong. Why are we seeing another bill aimed at delivering more proceeds to this industry which profits from misery? Government and Opposition focus must shift towards winding down gambling and working to reduce gaming addiction rather than facilitating it.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Parliamentary Secretary) [7.44 p.m.], on behalf of Mr Troy Grant, in reply: I speak on behalf of the Government in reply on the Gaming Machines Amendment (Centralised Monitoring System) Bill 2015. I thank all honourable members for their contribution to this debate. I also thank the Opposition for not opposing the bill and acknowledge the contributions from members of the crossbench, including the member for Balmain. This bill implements a number of reforms to the licensing framework. The Centralised Monitoring System [CMS] is designed to introduce a modern regulatory framework that encourages innovation whilst 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. I would like to make it clear that while the next CMS licensee will be selected via a competitive tender process the key considerations throughout this process have been and will continue to be the reliability of the proposed service, the suitability of the proposed technical solution and the benefits that the next CMS will achieve both for venues and for the State of New South Wales. In selecting the next CMS licensee the Government will have been mindful of the needs both of venues and of the State and will select the most capable CMS provider.

The Liberal-Nationals Government recognises that registered clubs play a key role in the community, particularly in regional and remote areas—and I particularly acknowledge the contribution from the member for Tweed; I know all country members in this House will acknowledge the extraordinary contributions that clubs make to our communities—and that the CMS is a regulatory tool and not an additional form of taxation on venues. I reiterate that the current hardship scheme where the State pays the monitoring fee on behalf of venues with less than \$100,000 in metered gaming machine profit will continue. In closing, this bill strikes an appropriate balance of providing certainty to parties involved in the tender process for the next CMS licence while introducing a more modern, flexible regulatory regime that enables the Government to improve the CMS through the licence term. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Motion by Mr Gareth Ward, on behalf of Mr Troy Grant, agreed to:

That this bill be now read a third time.

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

PAYROLL TAX DEFERRAL (BLUESCOPE STEEL) BILL 2015

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 12 November 2015.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) [7.48 p.m.]: I am speaking first tonight because the member for Maroubra is running a little late. I am pleased to make a contribution to the debate on the Payroll Tax Deferral (BlueScope Steel) Bill 2015. The bill provides for a new Act to implement the Government's announcement that BlueScope Steel will be provided with a structured payroll tax deferral of up to \$60 million over the next three years via a defined payment schedule. The Opposition wholeheartedly supports the passage of this bill through the Parliament. It is a necessary response to the steel crisis in the Illawarra, which has seen tremendous uncertainty in the region since June, when BlueScope Steel executives leaked news that its board in Melbourne was considering the closure of the steelworks based at Port Kembla.

BlueScope Steel argued for a game changer which would reduce ongoing annual costs of steel production by up to \$200 million. Workers and the combined steel unions negotiated a painful agreement with BlueScope Steel management to deliver those cost reductions and some changed work practices. As a result of that agreement, over the coming months up to 500 steel workers will lose their jobs. This bill is an important component in helping to reduce BlueScope Steel costs. This was the first point in Labor's 10-point plan to support jobs in the Illawarra that was released on 4 September 2015. We are pleased that the Government has, after much delay, indecision and some fairly tawdry threats in trying to pressure workers and steel unions to agree to a new enterprise bargaining agreement through the Illawarra media, finally adopted the first point in Labor's 10-point plan. As I said in debate on the steel petition late last week, this is a positive move and the Government can, if it chooses, now adopt the other nine points.

This bill represents the easiest part of the challenge to ensure the viability of the steel industry in the Illawarra. I note that it only defers payroll tax payment by BlueScope Steel over the next three years and makes it clear that the \$60 million deferred payroll tax will be repaid over the next 10 years subject to a defined schedule of payments. This concession is not a gift from the taxpayer; it is a hand up to the steel industry to help it cope in an extraordinarily challenging global marketplace. Much more needs to be done by all parties to secure this industry's future. In the past the crucial area of procurement policy has been neglected.

As I said in debate on the steel petition, a range of proposals exist in the use of Australian made steel in State infrastructure projects. The proposals advocated by different groups offer up a minimum and maximum use of Australian made steel. Each of these proposals should be carefully examined as policy continues to be developed by the Government and the Opposition. As I said, I am particularly persuaded by the arguments presented in the report commissioned by the Australian Workers Union [AWU], produced by BIS Shrapnel, titled "The Benefits of a Local Procurement Policy for Local Steel in Government Construction". This extensive report comprehensively addresses the challenges facing the steel industry in Australia. I read onto *Hansard* a few key paragraphs in that report:

For the Australian steel industry to remain viable and profitable, it firstly needs to produce at (or

near) capacity and secondly, sell as much of its product as possible into the domestic market, and sell less into the less profitable (or often unprofitable) export markets where global over supply has pushed down prices and margins.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Melanie Gibbons): Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

Ms ANNA WATSON: The report states further:

One avenue which the Government should investigate is legislating to have procurement policy which aims to have at least 85 per cent to 90 per cent of local steel in all publicly funded projects. Such a policy may reinstate some advantage back to local producers, who are competing against overseas producers possessing an unfair advantage. In any case, local procurement policies exist in other countries such as the USA and Canada, while Victoria has also enacted its own local procurement policy. Victoria's policy has been successful, with local content proportion averaging 86 per cent over the decade to 2013-14, which has led to an estimated \$7 billion of import replacement.

BIS Shrapnel estimates that a local content policy achieving a 90 per cent local steel content:

- . Will cost an average \$61 to \$80 million annually in extra costs to the public sector ... which represents only an extra 0.2 per cent of total construction costs for public projects ...

Add a cumulative \$1.3 billion to real GDP over the next five years ...

Provide substantial net benefit to the economy, after accounting for only marginally higher public construction costs.

These are compelling arguments. It is fanciful—indeed, naïve—to consider that the steel industry operates in a theoretically perfect market function. Steel industries across the world are battling the same market conditions as Australia's steel producers. The steel industry is under extraordinary pressure from China's steel production. In my view, the Australian steel industry must be viewed as a strategic industry sector. Once such a view is accepted, all policy which will impact on the steel industry should be developed with this special designation in mind. That is why I am persuaded by the recommendation in the report that 90 per cent Australian steel use in State infrastructure projects appears to be an achievable target.

As a local Illawarra Labor member of Parliament, representing hundreds of steel workers and contractors employed by BlueScope Steel who live in my electorate, I will put this position as Labor's policy on procurement as it is developed. The shadow Minister, who also represents a regional area, understands the importance of developing a procurement policy in this State to maximise the use of Australian made steel in our infrastructure projects. In an email distributed by Ian Waters, the passionate proponent of the 15,300 signatory steel petition tabled and debated last week in this place, he has said some very kind words about my position. I thank him for those sentiments. This afternoon the member for Kiama criticised me in the *Illawarra Mercury* online. The hypocrisy of the member for Kiama—Mr Petition of the New South Wales Parliament—has no bounds. The man who proudly says it is his right as a local member of Parliament to champion his electorate regardless of his party's position in government—

Mr Gareth Ward: Point of order: The member for Shellharbour knows full well that motions attacking other members should be done by way of substantive motion. I thought this issue was beyond politics; clearly it is not when it comes to the member for Shellharbour.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Melanie Gibbons): Order! There is no point of order.

Ms ANNA WATSON: It is always one standard for the member for Kiama and another for everyone else. We do not need to re-invent the wheel in making changes to the State's procurement policy. Other countries and Australian jurisdictions have already implemented policies that place an emphasis on the use of locally made steel content in publicly funded infrastructure. We only need look to Victoria and the implementation of the Victorian Industry Participation Policy. This policy requires government entities to consider competitive local suppliers when awarding contracts valued at \$1 million or more in regional Victoria and \$3 million or more in metropolitan Melbourne. The report commissioned by the Australian Workers Union states:

The VIPP has been successful in encouraging the use of domestic suppliers. Since its inception in 2001, the VIPP has led to an estimated \$7 billion of import replacement ... Victoria's local content policy has been successful, with the local content proportion averaging 86 per cent annually over the decade to 2013/14.

In conclusion, the Opposition and all Illawarra members support this bill. It will provide further legislative guarantee of the cost reduction strategy agreed on by the workers, combined steel unions and BlueScope Steel. I again offer tribute to the AWU Port Kembla Branch Secretary, Wayne Phillips, for his outstanding leadership during this steel crisis. Wayne is a straight-shooter and a good friend. The region owes him a great debt. All AWU officials at the Port Kembla, New South Wales and national offices, as well as officials from the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union [AMWU] and the Electrical Trades Union [ETU], deserve recognition. I also recognise the important contribution of Arthur Rorris, secretary of the South Coast Labour Council, and its executive members during this time. The next time anyone in the Liberal-Nationals Coalition wishes to attack trade unions, they should think back to this steel crisis and to how the unions and their memberships worked together and made hard, painful decisions to secure the future of an industry they are passionate about. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) [7.58 p.m.]: I note that the member for Wollongong is in the Chamber. This crisis falls within her electorate and it has not been an easy task for her to work through these negotiations. I congratulate the member for Wollongong on her hard work. She is not listening when I am offering her a bouquet, not a brick-bat. The Payroll Tax Deferral (BlueScope Steel) Bill 2015 demonstrates the Government's commitment to the Illawarra region. It provides for a new Act to implement the Government's announcement that BlueScope Steel and certain other BlueScope Steel taxpayer entitlements will be provided with the structured deferral of payroll tax up to \$60 million over three years through a defined payment schedule.

Payroll tax payments due and payable during a calendar year will be deferred over three years, commencing from 1 January 2016. 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, where BlueScope Steel's liability to pay payroll tax exceeds the applicable threshold it will be required to make monthly payroll tax payments. From 1 December 2018, BlueScope Steel will be required to pay its payroll tax liability on a normal monthly basis. It will be required to pay its deferred payroll tax, plus its normal payroll tax, over a period of 10 years from 2020 to 2029.

Since coming to office in April 2011, in 12-month moving average terms, employment in the Illawarra region has risen by approximately 14,400. Employment in the region is diversifying, and it is promising. The Illawarra region is also well represented in Jobs Action Plan registrations. The Jobs Action Plan—which was opposed by Labor—provides a \$5,000 rebate to employers who create an additional position. The four local government areas in the Illawarra region—namely, Kiama, Shellharbour, Wingebar and Wollongong—have accounted for approximately 3,580 applications since the scheme commenced in 2011. The bill demonstrates the resolve of the Government: It is determined to ensure the livelihood of communities and jobs. It demonstrates that New South Wales is the first place to do business in Australia. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) [8.01 p.m.]: I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Payroll Tax Deferral (BlueScope Steel) Bill 2015. At the outset I express our appreciation for those people who have worked hard to effect an outcome despite the difficulty that BlueScope Steel is in. It is unfortunate that we are debating this legislation in the House because it means that BlueScope Steel, which is in the electorate of Wollongong, is facing difficulties. I will speak about the reasons for a number of those difficulties but we all wish we did not have to speak on the bill this evening. We wish that BlueScope Steel was trading successfully but it is facing difficulties as a result of international and local factors. The workers have entered into a draft agreement with the unions. They will meet on 19 November to ratify the draft agreement and we hope that it bears some fruit. The workers have agreed to take a pay freeze and approximately 5,000 jobs will be lost. They have painfully elected to save between 4,500 and 5,000 jobs for the Illawarra.

The Opposition, and indeed all members in this place, appreciate that members of Parliament have worked hard to apply pressure to the Government and BlueScope Steel to reach an agreement. The member for Wollongong, in whose electorate BlueScope Steel is located; the member for Keira, shadow Minister for the Illawarra; and the member for Shellharbour, who spoke earlier, have championed this cause with other Labor members for some time. The object of the bill is to provide for an authorisation to the Treasurer to enter into and give effect to a deed that provides for the deferral of payroll taxes for which BlueScope and certain BlueScope taxpayer entities [BTEs] are liable to pay in the period 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2018. The bill has annexed to it a Payroll Tax Structured Payment Plan, which sets out an instalment payment plan for the deferred payments.

The deferred payments are as follows: for the 2016 year, the lower of \$25 million or total payroll tax payable by the BTEs for that year at the applicable rate; for the 2017 year, the lower of \$20 million or total payroll tax payable by the BTEs for that year at the applicable rate; and for the 2018 year, the lower of \$15 million or total payroll tax payable by the BTEs for that year at the applicable rate. Any amounts exceeding those thresholds must be paid by the BTEs. The assistance that the Government is offering to BlueScope provides that \$60 million in deferred payroll tax payments must be repaid in full by BlueScope through the BTEs over 10 years from 2020 to 2029. While Opposition members welcome the assistance, it is important to put it in some context. Earlier this year the Government voted to extend the Payroll Tax Rebate Scheme for businesses.

Mr Gareth Ward: Different issue.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: It is a different issue; however, my friend, we are dealing with payroll tax. The Opposition voted for it in the last term of government for a couple of reasons, the most significant being that 90 per cent of businesses in New South Wales do not pay payroll tax. If the Payroll Tax Rebate Scheme is to be effected, which gives taxpayer funds back to large businesses on the basis that it is an incentive—and the Opposition says it is not—we do not agree with it. There is no way that scheme could be described as an incentive to business. I have spoken about that issue in this place many times. It was a financial reward—a gift—to businesses that would have employed people in the first place.

When the scheme was rolled out, the Treasurer said in her second reading speech that 101,000 applications had been received. Anyone can do the maths—\$4,000 or \$5,000 per application is a huge amount of money. It is a rebate—forgone by the Government—to large businesses that would have employed people in any event. The Opposition did not believe that was a good way to spend taxpayer funds. Now a facility of national significance is in trouble and the Government is offering it not a rebate, but a deferral of payroll tax. We say that speaks volumes about the priorities of this Government. The fact is that BlueScope Steel in Port Kembla is crucial to the economic future of the Illawarra and the Illawarra is crucial to the economic future of New South Wales.

If this facility were allowed to close, tens of thousands of jobs would leave not just the Illawarra but also New South Wales and Australia. The consequences of that would be catastrophic. There would be an immediate flow-on effect on industries such as transport and construction. Engineering cadetships

and apprenticeships would be gone. Small businesses in the area would close. It would certainly have an effect on house prices. Labor acknowledges that the unions and the workers, urged on by Labor members of Parliament from the Illawarra, have effected the outcome here. The Government was dragged kicking and screaming into the debate at the last minute to introduce this measure to defer payroll tax. If the Government could have got out of doing that, my view is that it would have done. Labor welcomes this legislation. I note that the Australian Workers Union commissioned a report from BIS Shrapnel. One need look no further than paragraph 5.4 on page 16 of that report, which says:

Under a complete shutdown scenario, the Australian economy would lose production of up to 5 million tonnes of steel and up to 10,000 jobs. This will subtract \$10 billion per annum from real GDP. The loss of jobs and businesses would also significantly reduce the amount of income taxes and indirect taxes to the federal and state 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 (similar to what happened in the Newcastle region when the Newcastle steelworks closed down).

This measure affects BlueScope Steel specifically. Let us hope that the measure does not have to be replicated anywhere else in the nation. Let us hope that our steelworks can survive and prosper. I note that the unions involved in the steel industry have been crying out for a meeting with the relevant State and Federal Ministers to discuss procurement. Chris Pyne is one of the Ministers they have been chasing, along with his New South Wales counterpart.

Mr Gareth Ward: They met with him. There was a meeting. There was a roundtable in Sydney.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: Those discussions have borne no fruit. Let us hope that they do. The Opposition is happy to support the bill.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Parliamentary Secretary) [8.11 p.m.]: I support the Payroll Tax Deferral (BlueScope Steel) Bill 2015 which will confirm the New South Wales Government's commitment to the deferral of payroll tax payments to assist the continued operation of BlueScope Steel. It will preserve thousands of jobs and maintain the livelihoods of families across the Illawarra region. As Parliamentary Secretary for the Illawarra and South Coast, jobs and employment are my priority. Regional areas traditionally have higher unemployment rates than Sydney. That is why we as a region need to work especially hard to cultivate new businesses, industries and technologies while sustaining traditional jobs such as steelmaking and encouraging innovation in these traditional sectors. My aspiration is for our region's young people to be able to choose to stay in our region, develop skills and build a pathway for a bright future. I do not want young people to have to leave in order to further their careers.

It may interest members of the House to learn that the modern steel industry had its genesis in the nineteenth century, in the days when goldmining and great landholdings were the engine room of eager prospectors and ambitious entrepreneurs. Just where the story begins is a matter of personal perspective. For some, it begins with John Lysaght in England, for others with Charles Rasp at Broken Hill, and for yet others with the Hoskins family in Port Kembla or Lithgow. All of them sought wealth from gold or silver, along the way to founding the Australian steel industry, and their ultimate success is now embodied in the company that has become BlueScope Steel Limited. Over the years the three main threads of this story—Lysaght, Broken Hill Pty Limited [BHP] and Hoskins—have been interwoven to create our modern steel industry. The result is a fascinating yet complex journey in the Australian tradition of initiative, hard work and determination.

With the benefit of hindsight, it may seem inevitable that the three threads of this story would one day be woven together, but it was a long time coming. The first of the mergers took place in 1935, when BHP bought Australian Iron and Steel Limited [AIS] through an exchange of scrip. Some 28 years after Charles Hoskins took the steelmaking reins at Lithgow, it was the end of the Hoskins era. Still, it would be many years before the Lysaght business was added to the BHP name, even though there had been

merger discussions as early as 1925, just four years after Lysaght set up in Newcastle. Even more remarkable achievements lay just over the horizon. Australia's steel companies made their contribution to the war effort as the prospect of a second global conflict grew large. Both BHP and Lysaght undertook major expansion at Port Kembla in the late 1930s, and both companies diversified into areas that would be rather surprising in peacetime.

In 1936 BHP joined forces with Broken Hill Associated Smelters Limited and four other companies to form the Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation. This cooperation of expertise was the dawn of the nation's aviation industry. Lysaght's surprising wartime contribution was the Owen submachine gun, which was developed by Wollongong inventor Evelyn "Evo" Owen. His prototype was shown to Lysaght managers, who brought it to the attention of BHP chief Essington Lewis, who was also in charge of Australia's wartime munitions production. After testing in 1941, the gun went into production at Port Kembla, with parts supplied by Lysaght's Newcastle plant. Production of the Owen gun, which became known as "the digger's darling", peaked at 800 a week, and 45,000 were made.

When my parents met at BHP in 1973 there were 25,000 people employed at the steelworks. In the 1970s, when people left school or moved to the region, there was a high likelihood of obtaining a job at the steelworks. Wollongong was then a company town—even the University of Wollongong, in its earlier incarnation as a regional campus of the University of New South Wales, was primarily focused on research and initiatives associated with steel manufacturing and support services. The Illawarra of the 1970s is a long way from the Illawarra of today. When I became the Parliamentary Secretary for the Illawarra and South Coast, following the most recent State election, I never envisaged that our region would so quickly confront the possible closure of the steelmaking business—a business that is as much iconic as it is important for so many families.

China currently produces around half of the world's steel, much of which is dumped on the market. With such a large amount of steel being dumped on the market, it is difficult for Australian companies to compete. Our currency and labour costs, versus the currency and labour costs of South-East Asian steel-producing nations, often mean the bottom line comparison between our steel and foreign steel is significant. However, unquestionably our produce is of superior quality and flexibility. One of the reasons that BlueScope was able to revise its earnings outlook upwards was the success of its Colorbond product, following the housing boom.

Colorbond is without dispute BlueScope's most competitive product and is responsible, in part, for the fortunes of steel manufacturing at Port Kembla. With the Baird Government about to invest \$20 billion in New South Wales infrastructure from the proceeds of the 49 per cent lease of poles and wires, the demand for steel in infrastructure will be enormous. As members of the House will recall, last week I used a debate on local procurement to call for the New South Wales Government to tighten its procurement rules to ensure stronger Australian standards, to give Australian companies and products a better chance of competing. There is a need for governments at all levels to focus not just on bottom line figures but also on all-of-life aspects, such as longevity and quality.

I also used my speech last week to outline how the New South Wales Government has used local steel products in two large local infrastructure projects. As members would be aware, one of the reasons I stood for Parliament was to upgrade the Princes Highway. To date, the New South Wales Government has invested record sums in the Princes Highway. Its upgrade has been funded 100 per cent by the New South Wales Government. I am pleased that Australian steel is being used in both the Gerringong upgrade and the Berry bypass. I call on the New South Wales Government also to ensure that Australian steel is used in the \$550 million Albion Park Rail bypass.

When BlueScope confirmed in September this year that the company needed to find \$200 million in savings at its steelmaking plant at Port Kembla, it was clear that our community faced unique and uncertain times. As Parliamentary Secretary for our region, I was strident in my advocacy on behalf of the region to the Premier, the Treasurer and the Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy. I thank my

friends in the Opposition. I particularly thank the member for Keira and shadow Minister for his bipartisan approach to this matter. From the initial announcement by BlueScope to the confirmation of government assistance that this bill formally provides, I worked hard, in partnership with our Government and BlueScope, to ensure our region would receive the assistance it needs. The bill provides for a new Act to implement the Government's announcement that BlueScope Steel and certain other BlueScope Steel taxpayer entities will be provided with a structured deferral of payroll tax of up to \$60 million over three years through a defined payment schedule.

Payroll tax payments due and payable during a calendar year will be deferred over three years, commencing from 1 January 2016. 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; 1 January 2018, deferral of up to \$15 million. For each of the above calendar years, where BlueScope Steel's liability to pay payroll tax exceeds the applicable threshold, BlueScope Steel will be required to make monthly payroll tax payments. From 1 December 2018, BlueScope Steel will be required to pay its payroll tax liability on a normal monthly basis. BlueScope Steel will be required to pay its deferred payroll tax, plus its normal payroll tax, over a period of 10 years, from 2020 to 2029.

It would be remiss of me not to thank the BlueScope workers, who made a series of very tough decisions with respect to the numbers of employees shed as well as changes to pay and conditions. These decisions were not easy but were necessary to reach the \$200 million target set by the BlueScope board. I express my sympathies to the BlueScope workers who have reluctantly taken a redundancy. Our thoughts and prayers are with you as you seek a new employment path. I also thank BlueScope management, including Paul O'Malley and Mark Vassella, for agreeing to continue their commitment to steelmaking at Port Kembla.

This has been a very difficult time for our region, and I sincerely hope that this bill provides the assistance, in the short and medium term, that BlueScope requires. What the future will hold for the company over the longer term is yet to be determined, but I can say for certain that both sides of this House have worked well together and put our region's interests first. I am proud to be a local member in this region. I am proud of the steelworks and its history, and I certainly hope its brightest days are ahead. I thank, again, the Treasurer, the Minister for Industrial Relations and all of the members of the State public service who have assisted in putting together this package, as well as all members of Parliament who have taken a deep and abiding interest in the needs and welfare of our community and its workforce. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms NOREEN HAY (Wollongong) [8.21 p.m.]: I contribute to this debate on the Payroll Tax Deferral (BlueScope Steel) Bill 2015. My contribution today is based on my passion for the Illawarra and Wollongong, and particularly for jobs. When I migrated to Australia 35 years ago with four young children Wollongong was recommended as the place to go because there was a steelworks there with ample employment. My late former husband thought that he could get work in his trade there, so we headed to Wollongong on the recommendation of Australia House in London.

On our arrival in Australia we found out that Australia House was about two years behind the times with respect to its information because BHP, as it was then, was in the process of laying off about 20,000 people. The company was doing it in stages but, nonetheless, there were huge job losses. It impacted on the entire community of the region because there was not only the loss of jobs at BHP but also the loss of jobs of contractors and many other associated workers. As a union official in the late 1980s, I represented cleaners and blue collar workers at BlueScope. I climbed ladders at the steelworks; in those days I did not have a problem with heights. It was interesting that the steelworkers wore safety helmets and steel-capped boots and all the safety gear but the cleaners ran around in joggers.

Most of those blue-collar workers were migrants from non-English speaking backgrounds and they all had a work ethic that was second to none. They were working at the steelworks to earn their keep, to raise their families and to build our community. We have heard today about the history of

steelmaking at BlueScope. That is fine, but I want to tell people about the impact of the recent history of the steelmaking industry and the effects that that has had on many families who live in the Illawarra and Wollongong today. The loss of hundreds or thousands of jobs will have a devastating impact on an entire community.

As I said, when I was a union official I represented the cleaners and other general staff at BlueScope. I want to pay tribute to the workers who at recent union meetings voted for hundreds to lose their jobs in order for the industry to survive and for the protection, as much as possible, of their region. They did that in the hope that there will be a future for steelmaking in the Illawarra for years to come. I cannot emphasise enough the importance of that decision. I place on record my recognition of the Australian Workers Union, the Labor Council of New South Wales and the workforce for their preparedness to do whatever it took to keep the industry viable.

I believe it took the Government a long time to act—I do not wish to be petty but that is my honest belief—but I am grateful that it has eventually come to the party. I remind members that the bill relates to a deferral of payroll tax. However, it is important to note that hundreds of families are going to suffer. Hundreds of families, at this time of year, are going to be without work and without regular income but still have to pay the bills and put food on the table. They will find it difficult to give their children the opportunities that they had hoped for them. While we congratulate all those involved in retaining BlueScope in the region, we have to take that into account.

I do not underestimate what would have been the impact on the economy if BlueScope Steel had closed down. But there will still be a significant impact on our economy, with hundreds of people now facing unemployment. In my contribution to debate on this issue last week, I said—and I will say it again because it is important—that we must recognise the sacrifice of these workers, even though it was necessary. I travelled recently to the United Kingdom where I met with workers and union representatives from the steel plant at Teesside. Apart from the dumping of cheap steel, their biggest complaint was that everything had happened suddenly. They did not have time to negotiate or to put a plan together. In Wollongong we have benefited from getting in early and acting to save the plant and to save jobs.

In that sense, I welcome the decision by the Government to assist BlueScope. I say again that a government procurement policy is essential to ensuring that we retain our steel production and retain jobs into the future. I state on record once again that this would not be the first time that positive discrimination had been used to protect jobs in our own country. I attended a meeting with Christopher Pyne, representatives of the business chamber and other members from both sides of this House where I made the point that our anti-dumping laws must be strengthened. We must strengthen our laws to stop the dumping of cheap steel to achieve a positive outcome and we must have a procurement policy that ensures the use of Australian steel.

I do not have anything against others, but I am very proud of my own, and that is the way it has to be if we want to keep our jobs. I congratulate the Australian Workers Union for commissioning the report. I remind members that if the unions and workers had not made this decision, it would have impacted on not just the economy of Wollongong and the Illawarra but also the economy of New South Wales. I am concerned that we look to the future of BlueScope. I can think of other industries where taxpayers' money has been used to support them but they eventually went offshore.

I want to see government support for BlueScope through not only subsidies provided from taxpayers' dollars but also procurement policies and anti-dumping laws and regulations at a Federal level. The dumping of cheap steel has a negative impact, as it did in Teesside. When I arrived in Australia in the 1980s the downgrading of positions at BHP affected migrants, young people, women and men; and, importantly, many hundreds of apprenticeships were lost and were never seen again. All the community suffered: young and old, male and female. We need to do whatever we can to avoid that happening again. At that time, contractors and other unemployed people flooded the market looking for work. When that happens, it is soul-destroying. I welcome the decision that has been made. I acknowledge the

member for Heathcote for his kind words in relation to my representations. *[Extension of time agreed to.]*

I agree with the member for Kiama when he said that that this issue—not unlike issues in the past relating to health—has shown that our region is represented by members on both sides of the House who, when push comes to shove, will work together in a positive way—although I would like the Government to do a bit more in a positive way. Nonetheless, this is a positive outcome. It is the beginning and we need to ensure that all the good work does not slip away and fall through the cracks. I acknowledge Hansard because it would be very difficult for them to have to listen to me saying nice things about those opposite. But it is Christmas time and I am feeling Christian like—although the member for Hawkesbury has just come into Chamber which has killed my good mood. In conclusion, I seriously worry for the families who are facing a difficult struggle. The decision was made for the greater good, for the majority. I congratulate all those involved. I say again to the Government that we need the procurement policy and the anti-dumping laws and then we will be right.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [8.33 p.m.]: On behalf of The Greens I address the Payroll Tax Deferral (BlueScope Steel) Bill 2015. I support the bill. It provides BlueScope Steel and associated taxpayer entities with up to a \$60 million deferral of payroll tax for the calendar years 2016 and 2017 and up to 1 December 2018, after which normal payroll tax obligations will begin again. I am not the biggest fan of corporate welfare, such as the diesel fuel excise for the mining industry, but it is important that we look at the overall economic impact and assess each case on its merits. Obviously, the steelmaking industry in the Illawarra has a significant workforce and the closure of this business would have led to a sudden and large-scale increase in unemployment in the Illawarra and a strategic loss of capacity for New South Wales in manufacturing. We need to look seriously at infrastructure manufacturing in terms of renewable energy and at having the capacity for a renewable energy future.

BlueScope Steel produces high-quality, raw commodity steel from the one remaining blast furnace, known as No. 5. The blast furnace production capacity is quite high at about 2.6 million tonnes a year. While the plant is not able to run at full capacity, it is clear that it produces much more than the domestic market can absorb. The company had plans to close the front-end blast furnace and import commodity steel unless it received support. International steel prices and dumping issues are important matters for us to consider, but our most important consideration is the more than 1,000 on-site employees who may well have lost their jobs if the blast furnace had closed.

The total head count at Port Kembla Steelworks is about 3,500. Only 500 of those are employed at the Springhill back-end fabrication plant and the remainder support the front-end steelmaking function. It is critical for us today to acknowledge the sacrifice made by the steelworkers and their community to keep the industry alive. Many have agreed to exit the industry in which they have spent their entire working lives and, in some cases, the industry in which their parents and grandparents spent their entire working lives. All have accepted a hit to their income and tougher working conditions in order to maintain their neighbours' livelihood and their community's solvency.

It is a pity that shareholders do not act out of the same sense of shared values and national interest that the steelworkers have exhibited. I acknowledge the role of the Australian Workers Union, Port Kembla Branch, and the South Coast Labour Council in providing leadership and direction to a workforce that was facing significant threats and to a community that was facing economic devastation. Many of the workers thought this might have been a plan by the bosses to try to force down wages and conditions. On balance, it is fair to say that there was a genuine issue at the plant that needed to be addressed and the workers have made a significant contribution to meeting that challenge.

Wayne Phillips and Arthur Rorris, in particular, have played a singular and historic role in saving Port Kembla, the Illawarra and New South Wales from an economic downturn that could have taken decades to overcome. Activists in the union and the wider community have campaigned hard for their steel industry and they deserve to be congratulated on their work, on their ability to inspire an entire region and on helping to inspire the Baird Government to take action. The steel mill has been saved for

now, but the risk is that low steel prices and dumping will continue beyond 2018 and the threat to the company will not fully resolve. As previous speakers have said, our alternative is procurement. The Illawarra Greens have been robust within the party; I will outline some of their policy. At a State delegates conference in 2014 The Greens resolved to:

- (1) Recognise
 - (a) the significant role that steel plays in the transition to a 100% renewable economy and the capacity for the development of a clean energy export industry in the Illawarra and across NSW;
 - (b) the importance of the Port Kembla Steel Works, including the blast furnace, to employment in the Illawarra and to the local and state economies;
 - (c) the absence of any greenhouse gas emissions benefit from importing raw steel; and
 - (d) The adverse social, economic and environmental consequences of the closure of the blast furnace at Port Kembla for the Illawarra and for NSW.
- (2) Support calls from Illawarra unions for each NSW government infrastructure project to require at least 50 per cent of steel sourced from an Australian blast furnace.
- (3) Actively support the campaign to protect the Port Kembla steel industry coordinated by the South Coast Labour Council and other unions.
- (4) Propose to the Australian Greens to provide support at a national level for government purchasing to prioritise Australian sourced steel.

The policy goes on. I put that on the record because our position is not just about protecting jobs and industry in the area, it is also about looking at environmental opportunities in the future and recognising the environmental impact of importing steel from overseas. Our policy is that our infrastructure projects should contain at least 50 per cent Australian steel. The Government will be spending a significant amount of taxpayers' money on infrastructure in the future and part of that money should go to investing in what the public wants, that is, to help support jobs in Australia. We have already lost a lot of the manufacturing industry; the region and the nation cannot afford to lose any more. The clean energy future will use a lot of steel and making the steel in Australia is better for the environment, for employment and for the economy. But a strong steel industry in the Illawarra also will be a platform for the growth of jobs in the renewable energy industry involved in the manufacture of efficient building products and the next generation of public transport. If the blast furnace ceases to exist, New South Wales risks missing out on future employment opportunities.

We know that steel manufacturing emits huge volumes of greenhouse gases that are adversely affecting our climate, but irrespective of where steel is made millions of tonnes of carbon dioxide will be released each year. Each year BlueScope uses approximately three million tonnes of coal, which is a tiny fraction of the total quantity of coal mined in New South Wales. The vast majority of metallurgical coal extracted in New South Wales is exported to China, Korea and India. There are exciting new developments in steelmaking that could cut the use of coal and replace it with hydrogen made from seawater or large arrays of solar panels. We have seen evidence of that already. The Greens believe that the Illawarra can be a world leader in low-coal steel. Getting ahead of the rest of the world will open up new markets as industrialised nations look to cut their carbon footprints.

The Greens are calling on State and Federal governments to lock in the future of steelmaking by the use of infrastructure procurement policies. The Greens also are campaigning for the Government to be more involved in developing advantageous procurement policies. We all have heard of the

BIS-Shrapnel report that makes clear the average cost to government of using locally produced steel will be not insignificant—a cost ranging from \$61 million to \$80 million annually to the public sector—but that represents only an extra 0.2 per cent of total construction costs for public projects. The extra cost is based on the assumption that the price for locally sourced steel is 10 per cent higher than the equivalent imported product. That cost will add a cumulative \$1.3 billion to real gross domestic product [GDP] over the next five years and will provide substantial net benefits to the economy, but only after accounting for marginally higher public construction costs.

The report estimates that if a local content policy could achieve a 90 per cent share in publicly funded projects, the use of domestic steel would increase considerably. Very good arguments could be advanced for continuation of the steel industry not just on the basis of employment and social impacts on the Illawarra, even though they are critical, but also on the basis of the good environmental and economic arguments. I acknowledge the role of the Government, the member for Kiama, the member for Keira, the member for Wollongong, the member for Shoalhaven and others who all have worked in the most constructive manner possible to achieve the best possible outcome, despite the adversarial system that operates in this country.

I conclude by recognising the grit, guts and determination of workers who decided that the employment of some members of the workforce would be terminated, some members of the workforce would forgo their jobs and that those who remained would take a hit to their wages and conditions—solidarity that I think none of us fully understand. I pay tribute to those workers and to the honour they have displayed by protecting their neighbours and their community. The Greens, the political party of which I am a member, will do everything possible to commit ourselves to continually supporting the manufacturing sector by achieving good policy as well as by supporting procurement that starts at 50 per cent, which is the unions' position, and by supporting the petition seeking at least 100 per cent procurement.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) [8.42 p.m.]: In participating in debate on this important bill, the Payroll Tax Deferral (BlueScope Steel) Bill 2015, I acknowledge at the outset members who preceded me in this debate—the shadow Treasurer and member for Maroubra, the member for Shellharbour, the member for Wollongong and my Government colleagues such as the member for Heathcote as well as the Parliamentary Secretary for the Illawarra and South Coast and member for Kiama. The looming closure of BlueScope Steel was an issue that galvanised all members who represent electorates in the Illawarra region. It has been an extremely difficult time and a tough issue to try to resolve. I do not always acknowledge the work of the Ministers but, as the Treasurer is present in the House, I pay tribute to her for introducing this legislation and devising the policy underpinning it.

Having sat through so many Cabinet subcommittees that I cannot bear to think about it, I know how difficult it is when Ministers embark upon setting precedents of providing assistance to private sector companies that will have a great impact on the State budget. While I acknowledge that the Treasurer has made a positive move, all members acknowledge that the real heroes in this issue are the men and women of the steelworks and the trade union movement who have made the most important but difficult sacrifices members of Parliament will ever see. It has been difficult for those people to attend meetings while knowing that hundreds of their colleagues will lose their jobs during the advent of the festive season, as the member for Shellharbour and the member for Wollongong so rightly pointed out.

The plight of those workers whose employment has been terminated is difficult for members of Parliament to comprehend fully, but what those workers expect from members of Parliament—and what they will certainly get from me as the shadow Minister—is a determination to ensure that their sacrifices are never forgotten and lost. To meet that expectation, members of Parliament should go beyond the legislation and work in a bipartisan fashion to strengthen procurement. In a manner similar to the approach adopted by workers in Canada and other parts of the world who strengthened their own industries through procurement policies that support their local industries, New South Wales should take similar action in relation to the steel industry, which is a strategically important industry for our country. As

great turmoil is being experienced all over the world, New South Wales should not be placed in the position of being unable to produce steel if, heaven forbid, Australia comes under some type of foreign attack.

The steel industry is important strategically, economically and locally—to the men and women of the Illawarra region whom I am fortunate to represent as the shadow Minister. This issue has been developing for some time. For the most part, the situation has been beyond the control of members of the New South Wales Parliament and, dare I say, members of the Federal Parliament in Canberra. Many of the challenges faced by BlueScope have been global challenges. The issue in the steel industry of dumping was outlined by members who preceded me in the debate, but members of Parliament should unite to ring fence and strengthen procurement policies for the next stage of BlueScope's manufacturing future to ensure the State has a strong steel industry.

The shadow Minister for Finance, Services and Property and member for Cessnock is present in the Chamber. I thank him for his support throughout the process of resolving the problems. He has joined other Opposition members in detailed discussions with representatives of industries and stakeholders to develop a strong procurement policy for this great State that hopefully will be implemented in a bipartisan fashion. All the efforts of the Government and the Opposition have been directed to ensuring the State will continue to benefit from a strong and profitable steel industry at Port Kembla and to retaining the jobs that that represents for the local community.

I state for the record my thanks to not only the men and women of the steelworks but also the trade union movement, in particular those representing the Australian Workers Union and the South Coast Labour Council, who fought hard, doggedly and determinedly not just to protect local jobs but also to protect an iconic industry that is of great importance to the nation's economy. Each and every worker and trade union representative will be recorded in history as real champions for the Illawarra region. I pay my respects to one and all for their efforts in relation to resolving this issue.

This legislation presents the members of this House with an opportunity to work closely and to ensure that, on the next occasion we are faced with similar challenges, we do not resort to short-term and reactionary measures but, rather, exercise the powers of government to strengthen procurement policy and ensure that Australian standards are strong and adhered to. At a Federal level, we must ensure that strong anti-dumping legislation is in place. On the next occasion that large and strategic companies such as BlueScope battle against global economic headwinds, hopefully we will be able to rely on steps taken now to do everything possible to support the men and women of adversely affected communities.

I hope it will be possible for steel to be produced for many decades in the Illawarra region. As the son of a fitter and turner, obviously it gives me great pleasure to know that the door to the continuance of the steel industry in the Illawarra remains open, the steelworks continues to operate and the majority of workers continue with their employment. I acknowledge the spirit and determination of every member of Parliament who represents an electorate in the Illawarra and South Coast region as well as their efforts in fighting hard for the continued prosperity of their region. I express my appreciation of their willingness to put aside political differences in deference to working as a united group and to secure benefits for the Illawarra.

They demonstrated the adoption of a unified approach to this issue and I am sure they will adopt the same attitude in relation to many other issues in the future. Through no fault of their own but rather due to global economic circumstances, they battled headwinds while seeking to protect and represent their electorates. They represent a mining and heavy industry region that also has developing service and knowledge sectors, and no doubt we will face similar challenges in the short term or the medium term. However, it is my fervent hope that all members who represent Illawarra and South Coast electorates will continue to cooperate in the same spirit that has been evident over the past few months.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) [8.49 p.m.]: I make a brief contribution to debate on the Payroll

Tax Deferral (BlueScope Steel) Bill 2015 and welcome its introduction to the House. Obviously I endorse Labor's support for the bill. I am happy to go on record as saying that the Treasurer is undoubtedly the best female Treasurer the State has ever had and leave things at that. She knows how much I admire her role and the work Treasury does because in essence Treasury is about balancing the books, figuring out how much money is available, where to spend the money and on what.

Earlier the House debated legislation to change the taxation on racing. We as a State in a bipartisan way made the decision to forgo future earnings of about \$90 million a year to support that industry. That money will go back into the industry and hopefully the industry will grow and prosper. I refer also to the Jobs Action Plan, of which Labor supported the first instalment but not the second instalment. Regardless of one's politics, it is about forgoing money or spending money so as to bring about a certain result and obviously the targeted result in this case is to generate employment.

This brings me to procurement and to the procurement policy which must be about more than just the cheapest price. Indeed the procurement policy conditions of this Government directly and indirectly allude to that. Some of the procurement policy conditions refer to the broader implications and up-front costs such as price but also costs for the social impact and fibre of the community. They refer also to some of the downstream costs, such as the longevity of the project and how long the building or infrastructure will exist. In my work with the Illawarra community, particularly the steel industry, I have been concerned with allegations it has made about the quality of the steel being used in projects and whether or not the required length of service will be achieved. Interestingly, the question of procurement was teased out during budget estimates this year. Being a little sick of mind I attend most budget estimates and have been privy to many of these exchanges.

When the Minister for Transport was asked whether the procurement policy was his responsibility, he said it was the responsibility of the Minister for Finance, Services and Property yet the very next day when the Minister for Finance, Services and Property was asked whether the procurement policy for transport projects was his responsibility, he said it was the responsibility of the Minister for Transport. Without getting bogged down with the obvious error, it is important for us to be deliberate about procurement policies so that we do not end up with a scenario like that of BlueScope Steel. The figure is a bit fluid but the Government frequently talks about its record investment in infrastructure throughout the State—sometimes the number is \$60 billion, sometimes it is \$63 billion, sometimes it is \$64 billion—

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Sixty-eight.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: I thank the Treasurer; \$68 billion is a really big number. I would have thought that at a time of record investment in infrastructure we should not be struggling to support a local steel industry because of the contribution it makes to the local economy.

Mr Gareth Ward: Do you want a copy of the bill?

Mr CLAYTON BARR: No, I have a copy of the bill but I am taking the lead of the member for Kiama who rarely speaks to a bill when making any contribution in this Chamber. However, I appreciate his interjection. I am using the scope of the second reading debate to talk about these issues. I offer this observation about the Payroll Tax Deferral (BlueScope Steel) Bill 2015 because the local community that I have the great pleasure of representing lost its hydro aluminium smelter in similar circumstances. In that case about 550 jobs were lost and about 500 jobs will disappear from BlueScope Steel. This equates to around \$10 million a year going out of the local economy. I understand that the workers lose their jobs, but with the closing of the smelter the revenue of the local bowling club went down by about 18 per cent so staff shifts were reduced by the same amount. The guy who sells tyres lost about \$1 million a year, so it was necessary for him to make adjustments to his business, which meant people were laid off.

A local contractor essentially lost its major contract with the closure of the hydro aluminium smelter so that contractor went bust. These were direct flow-on effects from the loss of hundreds of jobs. I

appreciate the Government's intervention to prevent more job losses by the introduction of this payroll tax deferral bill. Indeed, I have heard about the potential for some 5,000 jobs to disappear if BlueScope were to go under and 5,000 jobs would really mean a loss of about \$25 million to the local economy every year. That would impact on newsagents, restaurants, schools, local dancing clubs, netball clubs and so on. I did not appreciate the significance of these flow-on effects prior to becoming a member of Parliament but I certainly appreciate it now.

We need to do all we can to support industries such as BlueScope Steel right across New South Wales. We need to do that through our procurement policies and long-term decisions on what we want in New South Wales and from where we want to purchase. EDI Downer, United Goninan, Volgren and Forgacs are examples where decisions were made to outsource work and companies outside New South Wales were paid to provide the services. In this day and age, with record investment of \$68 billion in infrastructure across New South Wales, a steel entity should not be under threat. To that end, I welcome the Payroll Tax Deferral (BlueScope Steel) Bill 2015 and commend it to the House.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations) [8.57 p.m.], in reply: I thank all those who contributed to this debate—the members representing the electorates of Kiama, Heathcote, Shellharbour, Maroubra, Cessnock, Keira, Wollongong and Balmain. This important piece of legislation reiterates and confirms the Government's commitment to support BlueScope Steel in Port Kembla as an important job preservation strategy and, more importantly, as a sign of confidence in the region.

I note from the contributions of members representing the Illawarra that everybody has a story, memory or sentiment associated with that company. There is no doubt that for anyone who calls the Illawarra home BlueScope Steel is a significant asset to the local community. That is why the Government worked hard behind closed doors. I acknowledge the work of the Parliamentary Secretary for the Illawarra, the member for Kiama, who I know was instrumental in bringing many members of the Illawarra together, in addition to hosting various meetings and making sure that Government members were aware of what was going on in his community.

I acknowledge the contribution of all members because I appreciate how strongly they feel about the issue and the future of the Illawarra. The Government operated as a team with workers, unions and management which demonstrated that when we cast aside our differences for the greater good we are able to achieve great things. I know that for 4,500 families Christmas will be a little better this year because their jobs are assured. I know also that many other families who rely on those workers for support, local businesses and the region as a whole will feel buoyed by this issue. I acknowledge the efforts of management and confirm that behind the scenes the Government was working very closely with management to find the best option. I also acknowledge the Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy because the Government did consider all options in deciding the best one to see Port Kembla steelworks through this difficult time.

We appreciate that the Government's support in this instance will ensure that Port Kembla Steelworks continues operating as a going concern and believe that the company will then be in a position to resume making a contribution through its payroll tax obligations. I take this opportunity to thank community members who fought so hard to get this outcome. I acknowledge the role of workers, unions, management and the State Government working together, with each stakeholder doing their bit to ensure a positive outcome. This resolution is a symbol of how the Baird-Grant Government works. We look at things on a case-by-case basis and make sure we get the right outcome for the community. I stress that this is a one-off solution for unique circumstances.

Very few regions have an organisation employing so many people and that is why the Government made certain that we played our part and were part of the solution. I acknowledge the many people who contacted the Government to give their views on the challenges faced by BlueScope Steel. I assure all concerned that this legislation is confirmation of the Government's actions in relation to

ensuring the ongoing viability of Port Kembla steelworks. I again express my appreciation for all members who made a contribution to the second reading debate. I acknowledge the strength of feeling they expressed in representing their constituents in the Illawarra. I also appreciate the strong community ties over generations that BlueScope Steel has with the region and the company's importance to the region.

I pay tribute to the Illawarra Business Chamber. I was recently in the area with the member for Kiama to support all local businesses in that community. We were the only members of Parliament at that function and we were pleased to show our support for all businesses in the Illawarra. As a Liberal-Nationals Government we are committed to creating and supporting jobs and to supporting businesses hiring workers. On that basis I pay tribute to the entire business community of the Illawarra as well as all the stakeholders who played a strong part in supporting this positive outcome for 4,500 workers and the future of Port Kembla steelworks. This is a huge boost of confidence for the Illawarra. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Motion by Ms Gladys Berejiklian agreed to:

That this bill be now read a third time.

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

Pursuant to sessional order private members' statements proceeded with.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Homebush-Strathfield RSL Sub-Branch

#YCPROJECT

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) [9.03 p.m.]: I bring to the attention of the House the work of the Homebush-Strathfield RSL Sub-Branch and specifically draw Parliament's attention to the dedication and perseverance of one of my community's shining lights, Marlene Doran, OAM. On Sunday 8 November at Davey Square in Homebush I witnessed a wonderful Remembrance Day service that combined the unveiling of the restored World War I memorial and re-dedication of 340 plaques that were originally displayed in the former Homebush-Strathfield RSL Sub-Branch. The plaques now have a new garden home and are available for viewing in a beautiful setting that honours the fallen from our community.

Marlene Doran, in her capacity as a member of the ladies auxiliary, was determined to ensure the safekeeping of the original plaques and that they were catalogued and cared for until a new home could be found. With the help of Allan Chapple and Michael Smith of the RSL sub-branch who carried out research, they set about applying for funding to realise the dream. A Federal grant was provided to meet the cost and Strathfield Municipal Council and its amazing landscape department set about their work. Every effort was made to contact relatives of the named soldiers to fill in the missing information. Relatives who attended to see that their loved ones were being honoured in this special and lasting way gained a great deal of comfort.

In addition to personally installing the plaques with Allan Chapple, Marlene Doran rallied the community to knit hundreds of poppies. Originally hoping to get 350 to mark each of the plaques, Marlene received over 600 poppies. The Strathfield Girl Guides, senior citizens and members of the community responded, knitting enough to create a field of poppies. This is a testament to the community's capacity to pitch in. I congratulate the members of the Homebush-Strathfield RSL Sub-Branch and in particular the drivers of the project, Marlene, Allan and Michael. On the day, World War I historian Christine Hurley shared a poem that helped those who gathered to understand the anguish and sadness of the families of those who died during the Great War. I have no doubt that this lasting tribute will be visited by people from far and wide to enjoy quiet contemplation. I also bring to the attention of the House the premiere of a short film that I will attend this week compiled by a young woman in my electorate. I now read onto the *Hansard* the story of Rose Cox.

My name is Rose Cox. I am 16 years old and a young carer for my mum who has transverse myelitis—in other words she is confined to a wheelchair and requires daily assistance. She is an incomplete quadriplegic. I have been a young carer for over 7½ years providing physical, emotional and medical support. I use my life experience to advocate on behalf of young carers.

As a member of the NSW Carers Ministerial Advisory Council, I can present a formal voice to Government and as the youth ambassador for the Australian Kookaburra Kids Foundation I can bring other perspectives to the table. However, I am also a young carer leader through Carers NSW Young Carers Program, a branch of Carers NSW. These not-for-profit organisations help improve the lives of carers living within New South Wales by arranging specific services to meet individual needs such as respite and counselling. Being a young carer leader provides me with the opportunity to participate in hands-on activities that allow me to work in teams interacting with young people going through similar situations. Most recently I have been fortunate to work on a WhoCares app and now a DVD resource.

This initiative, which is to be launched in Parliament this week, is called #YCProject. It is a DVD resource to highlight who a young carer is and what they actually do. It is modern, uplifting and engages its target audience of young people under the age of 25. The main message of the short film is to support young people unsure of their caring responsibilities, present some brief information and service links and acknowledge the importance of the estimated 104,000 young carers in New South Wales. My role in the process was initially working in small groups brainstorming ideas, to which our group's idea was selected. I attended numerous camps throughout the year to work on it and even had an acting role in the final stage. Together, over 20 young carers from across the State used their hard work and leadership skills to work alongside Carers NSW to produce a very useful source which can be utilised by an array of people in the community.

I congratulate Rose Cox, who lives in my electorate, for the work she does in the community and the care she gives her mother. I look forward to the premiere of this short film this week.

NATIONAL CHERRY FESTIVAL

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Cootamundra—Parliamentary Secretary) [9.08 p.m.]: Young, in my electorate of Cootamundra, is well known for its food, fibre, wine and fruit. But Young is probably most famous for its cherries. The sixty-sixth National Cherry Festival will be held on the first weekend of December, at the height of the cherry picking season. This festival highlights the magnificent cherry that has been part of the landscape around Young for over 150 years. Key events include the cherry pie eating contest, always very messy; the cherry pip spit, an exciting event; the cherry festival street parade; and the markets. People who come to the cherry festival have a lot of fun and it is fantastic for regional tourism, its principal purpose. Young receives thousands of visitors from around Australia and even beyond during the festival. It provides the opportunity to the community of Young, also known as the

cherry capital of Australia, to celebrate not only the cherry season and the harvest, which is in November and December, but also the very strong sense of pride that exists in Young itself.

Cherry Festival committee chairman Lenore Schiller and her committee have been working very hard for this year's festival. The highlights over the three-day period include on Friday 4 December the Cherry and Charity Queen and King crowning, fireworks, live music and sideshow alley amusements and rides. On Saturday 5 December: performances by the Young High School band, the Young Shire band, Sing Australia and the Dance School; wonderful Cherry Festival farmers' markets; market stalls at Anderson Park and Town Hall; Hilltops Heritage Rally at Carrington Park; the National Cherry Festival street parade; the National Cherry Festival car show in association with Autopro; Wilder's cherry pie eating competition; the Celtic Tattoo parade; Boorowa Street buskers and Christmas shopping; tickets from the Visitor Information Centre to catch a bus for visitors to pick their own cherries on farm in orchards; and sideshow alley amusements and rides. It is a very big festival for the town of Young. The diva of Australian music, Christine Anu, will perform live at the Young Services Club.

On Sunday 6 December Donges Supa IGA will be hosting the big breakfast, there will be bush poets, Hilltops Heritage Rally at Carrington Park, handmade and home grown markets, a cherry pip spitting competition and the Hawkesbury working kelpies demonstrations. If members have not seen a working kelpie demonstration they should do themselves a favour, because it is absolutely fantastic, and go to Young on Sunday 6 December. This year three women were nominated for the Young Cherry Queen contest, which is being held in conjunction with the sixty-sixth National Cherry Festival in December. This is a very long-running feature of the Cherry Festival and is always finalised on the first night of the festival. The three candidates all work in Young. The candidates for 2015 are: Clare Palmer, April Strong and Kate Edwards. Young Health Service, Young Mercy Care, CanAssist and the LFE Ageing in Place housing project will benefit from their fundraising this year.

Clare Palmer was the first confirmed entrant and works at LFE as a retail supervisor. Her charity is LFE. She is very pleased about the LFE project to provide aged care facilities for disabled people in the Young community, a very worthwhile goal. Clare is a member of the LFE business house relay swim team and is very sporty. In fact, they are all very sporty. April Strong has selected another popular local charity, raising funds for the Young Health Service, which is a great goal, so well done April. Kate Edwards is a champion sports person who has represented Australia in clay target shooting. Kate has two roles in retail at Young, working both at Regency Jewellers and the Amcal Pharmacy.

The orchards that will be open for the Young Cherry Festival are: Allambie Orchard, Glenn Mohr Farm, Valley Fresh Cherries and Stone Fruit, Ballinaclash Orchard and Cellar Door, Hill-Lock Orchard, Willayoung Orchard, Fairfields Orchard, Main Range Orchard and Wombat Heights. Visitors can pick their own cherries or purchase cherries from their roadside stores. The sponsors are: Quayle Milling, McDonald's, Young Services Club, E. B. Batinich & Co, The Base, Donges Supa IGA, Wilders Flight Centre, Young Motors, 2LF Rocky FM, YLAD, Young Regional School of Music and Canberra region, and the Young Shire Council. We are looking forward to a great weekend in Young on the first weekend of December.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Parliamentary Secretary) [9.13 p.m.]: I commend the member for Cootamundra for her advocacy of the people of Young and the Young Cherry Festival. The member for Cootamundra is without peer when it comes to not only advocating for her community but also for the agricultural sector in this House. I always enjoy listening to her speeches not just about her electorate but about all of the activities and the great work particularly in relation to charities. I am constantly amazed by the hard work of the member for Cootamundra in recognising those people who give of themselves, who put service above self, and combining that with an agricultural theme in a country community which she so passionately represents. I thank the member for Cootamundra for bringing to the attention of the House the Young Cherry Festival.

KINCOPPAL ROSE BAY SPRING FAIR

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse—Attorney General) [9.14 p.m.]: The Kincoppal Rose Bay Spring Fair, held every three years, is a highlight on the calendar for my local community. I was delighted to be present to officially open the Spring Fair on Sunday 8 November, alongside Principal Hilary Johnston-Croke, school council chair Bryan Curtin, representatives of the Parents and Friends Committee, and major sponsors of the event. I also thank Head Boarder Georgina Harrison for warmly welcoming me to the school on the day. It was encouraging to once again see such terrific support for this year's fair. This was in spite of the day being cloudy and threatening to storm. It is not surprising the event is so popular when one considers the extraordinary diversity of entertainment, art, food and drink, shopping, and activities on offer at this fair.

Kincoppal's Spring Fair provides an opportunity for the school to showcase the students' unique talents, whether in music, dance, visual arts, gymnastics or martial arts, and also to raise funds to continue to provide a quality learning environment for all students. Amongst this year's line-up were the Scots College's award-winning and world-famous pipe and drums band, hip-hop and jazz dancers, and the very popular KRB Junior School rock band, "Dude 3". There has also been much involvement from parents from country New South Wales, particularly through the boarders' stall. Kincoppal Rose Bay has 150 boarders and it was pleasing to see the strong support from those families on show on Sunday. And reflective of the parts of the State from which the families come, a sheep shearing demonstration was held and there were stalls with fresh produce straight from the farm. I understand there were also donations of bales of hay from families in Young.

It was terrific to see Rose Bay police in attendance speaking with locals about community safety and their work in our local community. They had a very impressive Jaguar XF, which the local area command took delivery of earlier this year, which was a point of interest for everybody on the day. The Spring Fair has a strong focus on social justice and multiculturalism. On Sunday there were stalls selling the work of artisans from countries such as Myanmar, with the goal of supporting fair trade and fair working conditions for local artisans; and a variety of food and exhibits from different cultures. There were also plenty of rides, a giant bungee trampoline, a fibreglass fun slide, an obstacle course, a pet zoo, face painting, and more than 100 market stalls. It was a very impressive display and a great day out for local community and beyond.

Events like these, quite apart from demanding a huge amount of planning from the school community, also require input from the whole school community—students and parents, both past and present, teachers, the Parents and Friends, local businesses and the broader local community. I acknowledge the major sponsors: Philips Pantzer Donnelley, Vision, Green Options, Striking Smile Dentistry and Solutions Property Services who supported the day in kind. I was impressed to see the energy and enthusiasm with which my community supports one of its many local schools. This terrific spirit is just one of many things that make the Vaucluse electorate such a great place to live, work, and raise a family. I commend my private member's statement to the House.

NATIONAL ASBESTOS AWARENESS MONTH

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) [9.17 p.m.]: November is National Asbestos Awareness Month, an opportunity to reflect on the many lives we have lost to asbestos-related diseases and to educate the community about the ongoing risk of asbestos exposure. When we think of asbestos, many of us think of it as something from the past, a so-called "wonder product" condemned to the dustbin of history once its deadly properties were exposed. The reality is very different. Asbestos continues to pose a real and present danger. The NSW Heads of Asbestos Coordination Authorities [HACA] estimate that one in three homes across out State contains asbestos, most likely including every home built before 1987. Until that time, asbestos was ubiquitous in our homes and workplaces, despite the fact that experts knew of its dangers.

Between 1930 and 1983, 1.5 million tonnes of asbestos was imported into Australia, much of it

used in the materials that built our houses, garden sheds, workplaces, schools and hospitals. It was used in insulation, cement boards, guttering, carpet underlays, fibro boards, roofing materials, pipes and electrical wires, tiles and vinyl flooring, and in gyprock compound and putty. While much of this asbestos is safe if left undisturbed, each time we renovate our homes we run the risk of exposure if we do not take proper precautions. Far too many Australians face the risk of asbestos exposure at work. Unions NSW estimates that more than 1,000 Australians die from asbestos-related disease each year, the vast bulk of whom are workers exposed while doing their job. Historically, the highest rates of diagnosis have been amongst men—asbestos miners and waterside workers who loaded asbestos on the frontline. Electricians, engineers, plumbers, railroad workers, sheet metalworkers, welders and mechanics have also had high levels of diagnosis due to exposure to asbestos-laced products.

Worryingly, Australia is now seeing a third wave of diagnoses, with younger people, including women, having being exposed to asbestos dust as children, sometimes from their father's overalls. It is expected that rates of malignant mesothelioma will rise. The United Kingdom's mesothelioma centre noted that Australia has the second highest rate of deaths from this disease in the world. Experts predict that this rise will be spurred by a fourth wave of diagnoses due to the boom in do-it-yourself renovations posing additional risks to asbestos exposure. Unions have a proud record of protecting workers from asbestos—successfully campaigning to ban asbestos in workplaces in 2004 and currently fighting to ban the importation of asbestos, with the deadly material still arriving in products from overseas.

Unions have fought to establish compensation for victims and the families who are left devastated and often destitute. For decades the Dust Diseases Board was a critical source of comfort and security for victims and their families. However, despite the continuing threat of asbestos, the board is now slated for abolition by the Baird Government. The board connects families with much needed support. It helps with medical appointments, makes travel arrangements, provides oxygen generators, helps with bills and even mows lawns. It also helps to organise funerals, and supports widows and children who are left behind, some of whom will face their own battle with mesothelioma and asbestos-related disease. The board is a helping hand to those in need at the most difficult time in their life. The Government's decision to abolish the board can only be seen as a short-sighted and cruel decision.

So, too, is the Baird Government's failure to include white asbestos in the definition of loose-fill insulation in the recent Home Building and Duties Amendment (Loose-fill Asbestos Insulation Affected Premises) Bill 2015. While the bill was a welcome attempt to protect the safety of home owners and tradespeople, it is ineffective without the inclusion of white asbestos in the definition of loose-fill insulation. The unfortunate reality we must face is that the rate of asbestos-related disease will climb, particularly as home owners continue to risk exposure. I applaud the work of unions, local councils, organisations and activists who fight every day to educate the community about the dangers of asbestos. I also encourage all New South Wales residents to visit www.asbestosawareness.com.au to learn more about how they can protect themselves and their families from asbestos exposure. Together, we can truly make asbestos a thing of the past.

MILLERS POINT PUBLIC HOUSING

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) [9.22 p.m.]: Millers Point has a long history of providing housing for workers, the vulnerable and the elderly. Not long ago the area supported more than 500 such people in almost 400 social housing tenancies in a tight-knit community of public and private tenants, home owners and service providers who look out for each other and provide support and care. Now only about 100 tenancies remain, with most properties empty and awaiting sale to the private market. This is the result of an ill-informed policy to sell homes in areas of high value to fund housing on the fringes of the city far from jobs, transport, and health and welfare services. It goes against world's best practice of providing a diverse mix of housing across the city, with low cost housing included in areas of high value. The policy puts social housing tenants in any area at risk of eviction if values rise.

Implementation of the Millers Point sales process has been generally very concerning. Soon after

coming to power the Coalition Government began reviewing all public housing properties in Millers Point, Dawes Point and The Rocks. In response, the community tried to work with Government to find a win-win solution, such as selling only vacant homes while residents age in place. We successfully got the review of properties to include a social impact assessment on the social costs of displacing vulnerable tenants from their homes. As expected, the social impact assessment showed that relocation would have devastating health and welfare impacts on vulnerable tenants. Evidence shows that moving people late in life from well-established communities and supports into other areas or into aged care results in faster deterioration in health and reduced life quality and expectancy.

But the Government did not take these findings into account and pursued a wholesale sell-off of all Millers Point social housing, including the homes of the most vulnerable tenants. Government officials frantically letterboxed notices to tenants to inform them of their looming eviction while the then Minister made a public announcement. Many tenants were not home and found out through the media or when they read a letter slipped under their door. This caused extensive stress and anguish among tenants. Throughout the media, the Government claimed that these were luxury homes with harbour views and heritage restrictions making them expensive to maintain; but many are low key purpose-built and accessible small units.

The prospect of splitting this community apart has brought residents together. A group of tenants and residents established the Millers Point Community Working Party. I have been working with the group to lobby the Government to allow the most vulnerable tenants to stay in their community and age in place, in line with the Government ageing in place policy. The SGS economics report, "Millers Point and The Rocks: An alternative way forward", identified existing properties that are in good condition, have low ongoing maintenance costs and are of an appropriate size and accessibility to meet the needs of older tenants and continue to provide social housing. The community working party has been calling for these properties to be retained while the Government sells other properties.

A staged sale would reduce disruption to the community and individual tenants while ensuring a better return by not flooding the market with properties all at once. In response to the community working party's hard work and advocacy, the Government has agreed to retain 28 properties on Kent Street and Argyle Place for the most vulnerable remaining tenants who have compelling reasons to stay. I strongly welcome this provision and congratulate Minister Hazzard on finally including compassion in this process. While the community greatly appreciates this offer and will work to help those most in need to stay, there is still a great concern that many vulnerable people will have to move because 24 of these properties are one bedroom and the most vulnerable people will need a second room to house a carer.

Other properties could and should be retained to ensure that those who would experience real hardship from a relocation could stay. Multi-unit properties sold for redevelopment should be required to provide a minimum number of social and affordable housing units, with these properties reserved for existing Millers Point housing tenants. This is being done in Macquarie Fields and Glebe as part of estate redevelopments and should form a model for redevelopment across the State. While the Government has provided some welcome relief for existing tenants under the current proposal, many who should stay will have to move. Older tenants and those with strong community ties must be able to remain in their homes or be relocated to suitable accommodation within this precinct. The achievement so far is testament to the strength and perseverance of this community to stay together. I am committed to continuing to work with Millers Point residents to ensure that existing tenants can stay.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Parliamentary Secretary) [9.27 p.m.]: Whilst there is no doubt that from time to time there are differences between the Government and the member for Sydney, I am constantly impressed with the diligence with which the member for Sydney raises concerns articulately on behalf of his community. He should be commended. Unlike many members in this place, when the member has an issue or concern on behalf of his community he brings forward thoughtful suggestions and amendments, and argues them succinctly. I commend that sort of politics in this place. The biggest gap in the world today is the difference between the size of our problems and the smallest of our politics.

If more members of this House operated like the member for Sydney I am sure that this Chamber would be a much better place to be. I thank the member for Sydney for bringing forward the concerns of his community and I thank him for his contribution this evening.

Private members' statements concluded.

Pursuant to sessional order matter of public importance proceeded with.

MOVEMBER

Matter of Public Importance

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Parliamentary Secretary) [9.28 p.m.]: I ask the House to note as a matter of public importance Movember, the month when thousands of Aussie blokes start sporting hairy top lips to raise money and boost awareness of men's health. I am one of those men and that is why I am delighted to sport my Merv Hughes look-alike moustache in an effort to raise money and awareness for this important cause. Movember was an idea that was sparked 12 years ago when friends Travis Garone and Luke Slattery met up for a quiet beer in Melbourne and in the past decade it has been responsible for breaking down the taboo surrounding male illness. The levity and quirkiness of moustaches aim to get men talking—the first step towards fully opening up to one another about their problems.

From its humble beginnings Movember has proved an invaluable conversation starter all over the world by raising awareness of male conditions and breaking down social barriers that have previously prevented men from sharing their fears and problems. Movember has not only played an important role in raising awareness but also raised more than \$685 million to fund more than 1,000 programs focusing on prostate cancer, testicular cancer, poor mental health and physical inactivity. Diseases such as those—the silent killers—are thriving in the absence of male conversation. Admitting weakness and seeking out help are both sore points for men because they are actions that bring about feelings of emasculation.

The power of the moustache has worked as a catalyst for change all over the world—not just in this Chamber—and prompted public and private conversation about men's health. Movember started with a conversation in a pub between a few mates and spawned a global movement. Simple conversations remain one of the most important things we can do to look after ourselves both physically and mentally. Sadly, too many men do not talk about their health and do not take action—die too young. The idea behind Movember is to encourage men to take responsibility for all aspects of their health and take action whenever necessary. The Movember Foundation works year round to help men live happier, healthier and longer lives because we want men to know the risks to their health, to talk and take action.

The campaign this year is particularly personal following my father's battle with prostate cancer. Like so many Australians, we were shocked when dad heard those frightening words, "You've got cancer." The sad reality is that this year more than 6,000 Australians will be like my dad and also hear those frightening words. Prostate cancer is the most common cancer diagnosed in Australia and the third most common cause of cancer death. Whilst we do not know the exact causes of prostate cancer, we do know that through early detection there is every reason to expect a positive outcome. That is why it is so important to encourage males to have regular check-ups and pay attention to their bodies.

Fortunately, my dad is one of the lucky ones. Through early detection and the right medical treatment dad is now cancer free. However, that does not mean the battle is over. It means we now need to do our bit to raise awareness and funds to defeat that insidious disease once and for all. That is why I am sporting my moustache. As itchy as it is and as revolting as it looks, it is serving a great purpose by raising much-needed funds for an important cause and sparking a conversation. I hope that many members in this House have been prompted to talk about these issues because of this thing on my face.

I encourage all members to participate by growing a moustache as I have or by raising awareness and money for this important cause through other means. We should not discuss men's health only in November. Males and females who have fathers, brothers, husbands and partners should talk about these issues throughout the year. We know that male lifespans are often shorter than female lifespans because we do not take action to deal with our health issues. I encourage men to have a conversation with their mates, families and friends, and to get the check-ups they need that may one day save their life.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) [9.33 p.m.]: I have great admiration for the member for Hornsby for bringing this matter of public importance to the House. The member for Hornsby and I have a terrific relationship. We have done some committee work together in the past and forged a good, strong friendship. But that moustache! The member for Hornsby referred to it as a Merv Hughes. I have heard it referred to in this House as a Hulk Hogan or a Chopper Read. People reading *Hansard* who cannot see the member for Hornsby will never fully understand the level of sacrifice this fine young man has made for the cause.

I once grew a moustache for Movember and I looked incredibly ridiculous. For one thing, I looked like I definitely should not be working with children. Being able to carry off a moustache is not a grey area; it is black or white. A person can either carry one off or they cannot. I am definitely not in the category of people who can. I applaud the member for Hornsby—live long and prosper. I hope that itchy moustache comes off his face sometime soon so we can restore normalcy to this Chamber, but I support the member and will ensure that I make a donation to his cause.

Mr Geoff Provest: Sizable.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: Yes, a sizable contribution. In fact, we might have to work out a scheme for him to keep it for as long as possible, perhaps a per day rate. It is incredible that the Movember campaign has raised more than \$685 million over the past 12 or 13 years. I have worked for charities and I know that raising money is extremely difficult. People supporting fantastic causes are out looking for a dollar every day of every week. For something as simple as Movember to have raised in excess of \$685 million is incredible. I can imagine the conversation between those two blokes over a beer at the pub. I would suggest that the idea came to them later in the night rather than earlier.

Raising funds for prostate cancer, testicular cancer, mental health and physical inactivity are worthy causes. In preparing for my contribution I was interested to learn that testicular cancer is the second most common form of cancer in men aged 18 to 39. Men of that age are in the prime of their lives. They are in relationships, and exploring the world and who they are. Being diagnosed with testicular cancer must be very challenging for their self-confidence and self-esteem. I can only imagine that it would be difficult to have a conversation about testicular cancer but, like the member for Hornsby, I urge all young men to have those conversations. I hope that the men who do not have that disease be big, strong and bold enough to engage in those conversations with their family and friends so that the topic is normalised and not treated as a laughing matter.

The member for Hornsby and I share a passion for men's mental health. It is said that 48.1 per cent of men will tackle a mental health condition during the course of their lives. That is half of all men. In this Chamber there are 93 members, about 70 of whom are men. That statistic means that 35 of us will be affected by a mental health condition at some stage during our lives. Some conditions will be acute and easily solved and some will be longer term. Some members may face an ongoing battle for the rest of their lives, but they will learn to live with their condition. Movember also seeks to raise awareness about the importance of physical activity. I think Australian Bureau of Statistics data indicates that my electorate is home to one of the most overweight and physically inactive populations in Australia. I give a big shout out to the people of Cessnock to get off their backsides and do some exercise, particularly if they are male. The purpose of Movember is to have an everlasting impact on men's health. I hope that it will.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) [9.38 p.m.]: It is a pleasure to make a brief contribution to the discussion on Movember as the matter of public importance. I praise the member for Hornsby for trying to grow a moustache and for his ongoing support of a good cause. I also acknowledge the member for Cessnock and his wise words. Although we can laugh about moustaches, this is an important cause. I know Mr Temporary Speaker Adam Marshall has tried to grow a moustache on a number of occasions. One day it will happen, and we are all looking forward to it. It is important to note that Movember was initiated in Australia in 2003 with the intention of having a bit of fun while raising awareness and perhaps saving someone's life.

Australian males traditionally say, "She'll be right, mate. I don't need to see the doctor." That is why mental health issues affect more men than women. Three-quarters of suicides worldwide are committed by men, and Australia records the same statistics. We have seen the launch of a number of initiatives other than Movember, including R U OK? Day and so on. The more we can do in this area the better. Men traditionally will not ask for help; they will not discuss their medical conditions. Movember is a worthwhile exercise not only because it raises money but also because it gets people talking. The member for Cessnock referred to testicular cancer and prostate cancer, and the member for Hornsby shared his family's experience. A number of my friends have been diagnosed with prostate cancer and have survived, but it took enormous mental strength. Men can gain a great deal from these awareness-raising campaigns. Women are far better at talking about these issues; in fact, they are probably far better than men at doing many things in life. I believe that I am the first member to put that on the official record in this place.

Mr Clayton Barr: With my full support.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: I am sure I have bipartisan support. We must support our mates, and Australia has a long history of mateship since the Anzacs. Movember allows us to make enormous strides in raising awareness. I compliment the member for Cessnock on his contribution, and I thank the member for Hornsby for drawing this important subject to the attention of the House.

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Parliamentary Secretary) [9.41 p.m.], in reply: Participating in Movember is a bit of fun, but it is fun in a good cause. Growing this moustache has not been without its challenges. Getting through security staff to attend events has been particularly difficult, and I am almost over my girlfriend making me sleep in the spare room. It is incredibly itchy, and being mistaken for notorious criminals has been challenging, even for a politician. That said, it is done in support of an outstanding cause—we are raising funds for research into finding a cure for these insidious diseases and silent killers. My colleagues the member for Cessnock and the member for Tweed mentioned testicular cancer and prostate cancer. This campaign is also about finding ways to deal with mental illness. We all know that suicide is the largest killer of men under the age of 44. That is a national disgrace and we must do more to address it. That is why the Movember Foundation is raising funds to support organisations such as beyondblue. Those funds will make an incredible difference.

Raising money is one thing but, more importantly, Movember is about raising awareness and encouraging men to have a simple conversation with friends, workmates and loved ones about the need to have a medical check-up and to take care of themselves. That does not mean only being aware of testicular cancer and prostate cancer; it also includes being aware of the full spectrum of men's health issues. We should also have our cholesterol and blood pressure checked. It could be the difference between living a long and happy life or not. I am grateful to the members who have supported this cause.

There has been a lot of good humour in this place about this horrible thing on my face. I am counting down the days until 31 November when I can shave it off. It is 17 November, and I still have 13 days in which to suffer. I participated in a fun run a few days ago and was beaten by the member for Davidson. I blame the moustache because I am definitely carrying extra weight. This is an extremely important issue. It is very close to my heart because of my family's experience, and it is something that

many Australians will confront. However, if prostate cancer is found early, it can be cured and people can go on to live a happy and fulfilling life.

Discussion concluded.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 9.44 p.m. until
Wednesday 18 November 2015 at 10.00 a.m.**
