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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 23 February 2016

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

**The Speaker** read the Prayer and acknowledgement of country.

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

### Notices of Motions

**General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) given.**

*[During the giving of notices of motions.]*

**Mr Gareth Ward:** You are just a grub.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Kiama will desist from using such terms.

**Pursuant to sessional order private members' statements proceeded with.**

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

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### LANE COVE WEST PUBLIC SCHOOL

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS** (Lane Cove—Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy) [12.11 p.m.]: I put on the record today the remarkable efforts of the fantastic teachers across my electorate. Our teachers do some of the most important work in our communities each day, and too often their important contribution is overlooked. I receive a great deal of correspondence each week on a wide variety of topics. Late last year I received a letter from Lavinia and Matthew Hundleby relating to the excellent schools and teachers in Lane Cove. I was so pleased with this letter that I would like to read it to the House. It states:

Dear Minister,

We wanted to take the time to highlight to you our appreciation of Lane Cove West public school, its Principal and its staff. Our son Adrian Hundleby has attended this school for seven years. There were less than 280 children when he first started; now there are 600.

Adrian has had some fabulous teachers, that he truly loved, particularly in Years 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6. His Year 6 teacher, Mr Kieran Campbell is absolutely phenomenal, taking our children through that uncertain and crazy final year of school, with a wicked sense of humour, compassion, a broad knowledge and as with every last teacher in this school, dedication to the children and education.

Mrs Judy Doherty as Principal is never failing in our approach to what the school can do to make the journey for our children one that fulfils them on so many levels.

One of our family members in her 60s attended this year's production, written by the teachers,

and she was transported back to the 1960s; a time when life was simpler in so many ways, saying it made her feel optimistic.

Mrs Doherty's passion for the arts along with a keen understanding of educational needs to "grow" our children has meant our children enter the next phase of their lives, well prepared. It is a sad time for many of us, seeing our children say goodbye to their friends. We would like you to acknowledge Mrs Doherty and the teachers directly, especially Mr Campbell. Our son is off to St Aloysius—the only one from his cohort to go there, so it will be an exciting yet, challenging time.

Our wishes to you for a very peaceful Christmas with your family and a positive New Year.

Kind regards, Lavinia and Matthew Hundleby.

Madam Speaker, as you and all in the House today would well know, it is letters like these that are the most fulfilling aspect of our work in this place. I congratulate Lane Cove West Public School, the principal, Mrs Doherty, and all the teachers involved in its ongoing success and growth. I also acknowledge the work of all the schools and teachers across my electorate as well as the parents and parents and citizens associations that are the lifeblood of our community. I thank the Hundlebys for their letter to me, for their contribution to the community of Lane Cove and for their optimism and positivity. I wish their son, Adrian, all the very best as he embarks on his next adventure at St Aloysius; I am positive he will excel in whatever he decides to put his mind to.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister may recall that Mrs Judy Doherty is a longstanding friend of mine; we attended school together at North Sydney Girls High School. I ask the Minister to pass on to her my sincere congratulations.

## HUNTER REGION INFRASTRUCTURE

**Ms SONIA HORNERY** (Wallsend) [12.14 p.m.]: As the member for Wallsend I ask the Baird Government to urgently focus its attention on the need for improved human services in the western suburbs of the Hunter region. I refer particularly to the suburbs of Beresfield, Shortland, Jesmond, Lambton, New Lambton and Wallsend. My constituents express the view that the State Government acts as though the Hunter region is exclusively Newcastle, and they have ample evidence for holding that view; the Government has placed much focus on infrastructure in the Newcastle East area, to the detriment of the western suburbs of the Hunter.

My constituents are bombarded with media talk of the revitalisation of Newcastle and wonder what this means for them. My constituents are exasperated as they look at the extravagant sums of taxpayers' money spent ripping up perfectly good infrastructure in the inner city of Newcastle, and they ask why this Government has stalled on its promise to their electorate to build a new police station in Glendale. My constituents ask why their petitions to build a police station at Wallsend have constantly been ignored, despite overwhelming public support. My constituents ask why a perfectly good local police station at Beresfield sits unoccupied six days out of seven.

My constituents ask why the Government proposes to spend an extravagant amount of taxpayers' money on a light rail to replace a standard rail service that has worked perfectly well since the 1800s. My constituents constantly ask whether the Government has ever considered the urgent need for more public transport services in the western suburbs of the Hunter. They are angry and want bus routes and new timetables in the western suburbs of the Hunter to undergo an urgently needed overhaul.

My constituents ask when the Glendale transport interchange—identified by 11 local Hunter mayors as the Hunter region's number one infrastructure priority—will be seriously considered and resolved with a decision by this Government. Constituents in the suburbs of Beresfield and Tarro ask why their most direct transport link to the inner city of Newcastle has been cancelled. All these infrastructure

transport issues fly in the face of the fact that the major institutions that service the Hunter, of which the Government should be rightfully proud, are located in the western suburbs of Newcastle and in the Wallsend electorate—the University of Newcastle, the John Hunter Hospital, the Mater Hospital and the Hunter Medical Research Institute. The western suburbs of the Hunter are the engine room that drives the Hunter region and are undoubtedly the largest employer in the region.

I hope I am clarifying for the Parliament the missing links—transport and infrastructure—that are urgently required from this Government to support the Hunter region to work more effectively. Health services have received inexplicable cuts; for example, the Hunter New England Area Health Service has had drastic cuts to its counselling service, the Wallsend After Hours Medical Service has been closed without explanation and the John Hunter Hospital shuttle bus has lost its funding without explanation.

My constituents ask whether stage five of the Newcastle Inner City Bypass will have appropriate connectivity with the John Hunter Hospital—a powerful priority. My constituents ask when the Government will make an announcement about the status of a new hospital for the Lower Hunter. I do not want to paint a glum picture of life living in the western suburbs of Newcastle; thanks to the efforts of volunteer activists and Labor councillors we enjoy some fine amenities—parklands, sportsgrounds and swimming pools. We enjoy thriving commercial activity and, thanks to the wise investments by Labor governments at all levels we have a strong base from which to drive our economic development in the twenty-first century.

It behoves me to report that when my constituents look at this Government they cannot see a record of achievement in the western suburbs of the Hunter. This Government has made cuts that have hurt their families; they have taken away vital services. I call on the Baird Government to urgently consider all the matters of neglected governance that I have raised in this private member's statement and I ask that they be addressed urgently.

### **PORT MACQUARIE-HASTINGS AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS** (Port Macquarie—Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education) [12.19 p.m.]: This afternoon I inform the House about the wonderful contributions made to my local community by several outstanding volunteers who deservingly were recognised at this year's Australia Day celebrations. Whilst Australia Day means many things to many people, it is an opportunity to say thank you to men and women of all ages who go above and beyond the call of duty in various roles that they play in our community.

In Port Macquarie-Hastings, the category of community group of the year saw nominations for the Special Olympics Mid North Coast volunteers, Camden Haven Beach to Beach Riverwalk, Friends of Mrs York's Garden and Hastings Community 2WAY FM radio station volunteers. The winner was Camden Haven Beach to Beach Riverwalk. The Beach to Beach Riverwalk committee is working to build a multiuse path linking Pilot Beach in Dunbogan to Grants Beach at North Haven, with 720 metres of path already constructed. On two occasions, members of the committee have had the opportunity to meet with Minister Gay who, like me, has been very supportive. This project is an example of many people working together on a great community initiative. Congratulations to the committee members, including Andrew McCoubrie and Phil Higgins, and I look forward to seeing this pathway continue.

The nominations for the Senior Citizen of the Year are equally deserving of recognition. Congratulations to Lynne Overton, Janette Hyde, Jeanette Rainbow, Marcia Wells, Janet Kesby, Bob Kennett, Jean Bowley, Dr Geoffrey Fox and Fred Handebo on their nominations for the work they do in helping so many other people in the Port Macquarie-Hastings community. The winner in the seniors category was Jeanette Rainbow, from the Oxley electorate. There were two nominees for Young Citizen of the Year—Aaron Patton and Megan Cooper. Megan took out the award, and was recognised as being an excellent role model within our community. Megan has worked tirelessly for numerous charity events, including Red Nose Day, the Red Shield Appeal, the Relay for Life and the Cancer Council's Biggest

Morning Tea. At school at the Hastings Secondary College Westport Campus, Megan demonstrated excellent leadership attributes and has been an inspirational young woman and I particularly extend my congratulations to her.

The hotly contested Citizen of the Year section saw 12 local residents nominated for the prestigious award: Rick Wilson, Neil Black, Sheila Openshaw, Malcolm McNeil, Gary Rainbow, Lee-Ann Foord, Michael Reid, Pam Jackson, Martin Parish, Peter Nash, Keiren Freeman and Paul Smith, all of whom would have been very worthy recipients but, as the saying goes, there can be only one winner. This year's Port Macquarie-Hastings Citizen of the Year award was given to Shelia Openshaw.

Port Macquarie-Hastings Council's citation booklet glowingly describes Sheila as someone who became involved in fundraising for mental health when caring for her two sons. She was also honoured with the title of New South Wales Carer of the Year for 2015. She has been the public face of the Schizophrenia Fellowship of Australia in Port Macquarie for more than a decade. Sheila has worked tirelessly to improve mental health services in our community and to provide support to those with mental health disorders and their carers. Sheila is the founding member and group leader of Hastings Mental Health Support Group, which supports carers. She has a passion for fundraising for our community, with more than \$20,000 raised for Rotary Lodge and the Endeavour Clubhouse. On behalf of the Port Macquarie-Hastings community I congratulate all the nominees in this year's Australia Day awards, and I look forward to seeing them all continue their exceptional volunteer work into the future.

### **MONA VALE HOSPITAL PALLIATIVE CARE**

**Mr ROB STOKES** (Pittwater—Minister for Planning) [12.23 p.m.]: Mona Vale Hospital is one of the best venues in New South Wales for the provision of palliative care services. Now the Government is working to fulfil a vision to expand upon the existing outpatient services by introducing inpatient services to Mona Vale Hospital. The concept—to provide specialist physical and emotional care to those with life-limiting illnesses at Mona Vale Hospital—was conceived 20 or more years ago by a local general practitioner, Dr John Doran. With a talented and dedicated team of volunteers—especially the late Cora Adcock, OAM—Dr Doran started a movement that today supports families and loved ones during the most difficult circumstances.

As part of transforming and modernising Mona Vale Hospital, planning has commenced for the development of a dedicated inpatient palliative care unit. As the local member of Pittwater, I am very proud of the tenacious efforts and drive of my community to protect Mona Vale Hospital. I am delighted that planning has commenced for an inpatient palliative care service as part of the future vision for Mona Vale Hospital. A specialist inpatient palliative care service will be a valuable addition that helps meet the increasing needs of our community.

The northern beaches region is currently without a dedicated inpatient palliative care unit, so this new service will help offer greater convenience for local families during extremely challenging and emotional circumstances. This is all part of the ongoing work to bring specialist and high-level medical services to the northern beaches and to help reduce the need for local residents to travel to other parts of the State. Currently, the nearest dedicated inpatient palliative care units are situated at Greenwich and Neringah on the North Shore. Whilst these are fantastic units operated by outstanding leaders in palliative care services—HammondCare—the tyranny of distance for local residents travelling back and forth to the North Shore to spend time with their loved ones in the final stages of their lives is hugely problematic.

Planning for the new palliative care service follows a report examining the palliative care service needs of northern Sydney undertaken in 2015. It also demonstrates the New South Wales Liberal Government's continued commitment to transform Mona Vale Hospital to ensure that it offers exceptional healthcare services long into the future. Mona Vale Hospital's role will transform post-2018, when its focus will shift to high-level, subacute, community health, urgent care and primary care services in order to complement the acute care to be delivered at the new level 5 Northern Beaches Hospital.

In 2014 a committee was formed with dedicated local community members including Jo-Ann Steeves, Parry Thomas, Eileen Gordon, Gail Carew, Pittwater councillors Kylie Ferguson and Kay Millar, Lindsay Godfrey of Pittwater Council, Andrew Johnston from my electorate office, and renowned palliative care advocate Dr Yvonne McMaster, OAM. For more than 12 months the group helped to gather information and statistics, met with palliative care experts and senior health department officials, consulted with local families and helped to shine a spotlight on the growing need for locally based impatient palliative care services on the northern beaches.

In addition to thanking the hardworking members of the committee, I also thank and acknowledge the extremely dedicated general manager of Mona Vale Hospital, Mr Frank Bazik; the chief executive of the Northern Sydney Local Health District, Adjunct Associate Professor Vicki Taylor; the acting chief executive Dr Andrew Montague; and, importantly, the Minister for Health, Jillian Skinner, who has been a great supporter and a breath of fresh air for Mona Vale Hospital and for overall health services in the northern beaches region. What started as a vision all those years ago by the likes of Dr John Doran and Cora Adcock is now set to become a reality. I congratulate all those involved. On Friday night the Mona Vale Chamber of Commerce held a fundraising dinner for Mona Vale Hospital's Rehabilitation and Assessment Unit. The evening was a huge success, raising around \$40,000 to purchase new specialist equipment which will help complement the ongoing building and renovation works, which are continuing. I offer a huge thank you to Simon Dunn, president of the Mona Vale Chamber of Commerce, and all his fellow members, for organising such a successful and enjoyable evening.

A special thank you also goes to John Scutt, vice-president of the Mona Vale Chamber of Commerce, for the countless hours he spent organising the sponsors, logistics and entertainment. The event simply would not have occurred without his input. I also thank the emcee of the evening—the renowned and extremely talented journalist, Brady Halls, for donating his time and expertise for such a worthy event. There are also many sponsors to mention, who helped make the night possible, including: KS Black and Co Chartered Accountants, Gateway Medical Centre, Medfin of NAB Health, Dirk and Di Chinchin, Lindfield Partners and the Karinya Women's A Cappella Choir. There is no doubt that Mona Vale Hospital is vitally important to our community and it is fantastic to see such strong support for its ongoing success. Mona Vale Hospital was opened in 1964 and this month we celebrate 52 years of continuing service to the communities of the northern beaches. We looked forward to what the next 50 years may bring.

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA** (Davidson—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.27 p.m.]: As a fellow representative of the northern beaches and also Parliamentary Secretary, on behalf of the Government I thank the member for Pittwater for sharing aspects of the vision for health service delivery on the northern beaches—particularly the palliative care outpatient and inpatient services of Mona Vale Hospital. Palliative care is an extremely important aspect of proper health care. I congratulate the member for Pittwater on his leadership and for his strong support for palliative care, particularly with respect to Mona Vale Hospital.

### **TRIBUTE TO BENITO SARO "SAM" MUSOLINO**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI** (Fairfield) [12.28 p.m.]: Today I pay tribute to a remarkable Fairfield man, Mr Benito Saro Musolino, born in Oppido Mamertina, Reggio Calabria, Italy, on 29 August 1939 and called to eternal rest in Sydney on 25 December 2015. Mr Musolino is survived by his wife, Monica, daughters, Roselina and Elvira, sons-in-law and four grandchildren. Mr Musolino was a local businessman who operated Sam's Orthopaedic Shoes in Ware Street, Fairfield, for 49 years. Otherwise affectionately known as Sam, he was a local icon in the Fairfield community.

Sam was a shoemaker by trade. He learnt the craft back in Italy and plied his skills in this country. Sam left Italy in 1957 by boat with his father and his brother in search of work. Sam could always be seen in his shop working away repairing and making new shoes. His display of shoes told the story of many

people who sought his assistance to walk in comfort and style. Sam mostly worked by hand. He did not have the modern machines; rather he had the old-fashioned stitching, buffing and polishing machines. A focal point of his shop was the vintage push-button cash register. It was a timeless piece that highlighted the era in which Sam began his business in Fairfield.

As Sam's shop was in the thoroughfare of the Fairfield Arcade between Ware Street and the Nelson Street car park, he could be seen stitching shoes, buffing and polishing shoes or cutting large pieces of leather in readiness for clamping to shoe moulds. Sam's shop was a masterpiece in progress, with shoes placed on the racks awaiting his master touch in the finishing process. Sam was a likable and charming character, always happy to stop his work to have a chat on a wide range of topics. Although he was incredibly busy with his business on a daily basis, he always made time for his family. Sam had a strong sense of duty to family; indeed, he would shut his shop in the mid-afternoon so he could pick up his grandchildren from the local primary school and take them home before returning to work. Sam was also very committed to his Catholic faith and was a valued parishioner at Our Lady of the Rosary in Fairfield.

This was the Sam whom everyone knew. He commanded the respect of our community because he had well and truly earned it over the many years he spent in Fairfield. Sam's shop had been a permanent fixture in one of the busiest thoroughfares in Fairfield. There was good reason why Sam was so well known in the community; he was a local legend. Sam was a master craftsman and his technique and ability to create and restore something so remarkable was the reason so many residents would go not once but many times to Sam's shop each year. Sam was good at his trade. I have seen Sam in action, creating a pair of shoes from scratch, and the finished product would rival any shoe from the racks in Milan, Italy.

In recent years Sam specialised in orthopaedic shoes for the elderly, with local doctors referring their patients to Sam in order to get custom-made shoes specific to their needs. Sam's longstanding contributions to the community were honoured and celebrated, with his business receiving one of Fairfield City Council's inaugural Lifetime Business Awards in 2015. Sam's workshop is a snapshot of a bygone era where people always felt as though they were taking a step back in time. Sam will be dearly missed by local residents who came to know him as "Sam the shoe man". They would never consider turning to anybody but Sam to get their shoes fixed. On behalf of the Chamber, the residents of the Fairfield electorate and the wider area, I extend our sincere condolences to the family. Vale Benito Saro Musolino.

## **BATHURST AND LITHGOW LIBRARIES**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE** (Bathurst—Minister for Local Government) [12.33 p.m.]: It gives me great pleasure to speak about two significant funding investments that were made recently in the Bathurst electorate. The Government is investing in libraries across New South Wales and I am pleased to announce that the Bathurst electorate has received almost \$350,000 for two significant projects. Today's libraries have evolved over time. Traditionally people have visited libraries to borrow books but today libraries are much more than book-borrowing facilities, they are important pieces of infrastructures in our communities. With technological advancements, our libraries are now social hubs where people gather, collect and share information.

I place on record my appreciation for the incredible work undertaken by the staff of both Bathurst and Lithgow libraries on behalf of their communities. They are dedicated to promoting the joy of reading to people of all ages who walk through their doors. On the day I made the funding announcement I saw staff warmly greeting people at the door and helping them to find whatever information or resources they were seeking. Although libraries today are accessible, I commend Bathurst Regional Council for its program supporting housebound and disadvantaged people who do not have the ability to visit a library.

Only a few months ago the Government allocated \$50,000 towards a mobile outreach van that travels to rural and remote communities, such as the outlying villages of Bathurst, where people can

borrow books from a van parked outside their front door. This important service has been operating for a number of years and is growing. The Bathurst library also has a gift shop where people can purchase birthday presents or thank you gifts. It also has a kids' activities centre, an after-school program and a school kids' club program and young children have access to a Sony PlayStation. In addition, people can use the photocopier or fax machine and the library meeting room can be hired for conferences, meetings or training sessions.

Bathurst Regional Council applied for funding for the library and was granted \$200,000 to create a community living room. This project, which was funded by the Government, will involve additional reading and study rooms, collection zones and flexible spaces for enjoyment by the growing community; it will benefit people of all ages. Entrances will be upgraded and new carpet will be laid. Lithgow library will receive just over \$118,000 to establish, revitalise and re-imagine areas within the library. The project will create a new area to house new technology, including a touchscreen personal computer, a self-checker and a personal computer booking system, and new furniture will be installed in the children's area. At Lithgow entrances will also be upgraded and new carpet will be laid.

The mayor of Bathurst Regional Council, Councillor Gary Rush, and the mayor of Lithgow City Council, Councillor Maree Statham, both were very complimentary of the support the Government is giving to libraries in regional communities. They said that libraries are popular meeting places and this significant investment by the State Government will go a long way towards benefiting all sections of the community. The New South Wales Government has a strong track record in delivering for public libraries. It has invested more than \$27.5 million in 2015-16 to meet the growing and varied needs of our communities. I am pleased that the Government continues to support regional libraries across New South Wales.

## URBAN SANCTUARIES AND GREEN SPACE

**Ms JENNY LEONG** (Newtown) [12.38 p.m.]: Today I bring to the attention of the Parliament the concerns of many residents, constituents and users of our wonderful urban sanctuaries and open green spaces in our city as well as those campaigning to prevent the loss of beautiful old trees in our inner city. Recently some constituents have contacted me expressing their serious concerns about the loss of old trees on Anzac Parade. For example, Judith explains that she, together with other constituents, is engaged in a struggle with the State Coalition Government to protect the Anzac Parade and Alison Road trees. She lives in Redfern and uses Moore Park every day. A constituent named Sonia writes:

I am writing to voice my **ABSOLUTE** and **UNQUALIFIED OBJECTION** to the demolition of the trees which line Anzac Parade to make way for the light rail line ...

This is **NOT** progress—there **MUST** be an alternative to demolishing trees that are nearly 150 years old ...

[This] is just a clear indication that, just like the WestConnex project, **you are not listening**—

Sonia is referring to the Government—

to the voice of the electorate who object to these "overblown" projects that will deliver no long term benefits or solutions to our transport issues.

John urges:

Before any more work is undertaken on this project, the Australian and International community need to be fully informed of the full effects of the project on our natural and man made environment, to be able to decide if this is the progress that we want, or not.



Last year the Total Environment Centre launched a campaign around the need for protecting urban sanctuaries and green space in our inner-city areas. It is clear that communities are standing up, not just across the electorate of Newtown but throughout the Sydney metropolitan area. These communities are saying they do not want the destruction of our urban sanctuaries and green space. The Total Environment Centre released the Urban Sanctuary Charter, which in part states:

A sustainable city must be planned on the basis of enshrined protection of its natural areas and public spaces.

Further it states:

Sydney's remnant natural areas and park lands, must be legally protected from urbanisation, over use, weed infestation, illegal dumping, pollution, poorly planned infrastructure and unregulated development.

In an op-ed in the *Sydney Morning Herald* last year, Jeff Angel from the Total Environment Centre expressed concerns that the project had "catalogued more than 20 current assaults on urban bush and parks in Sydney alone". I bring to the attention of the House three issues that are threatening those who live in the electorate of Newtown and the green spaces and urban sanctuaries we love so much. The first of those issues is WestConnex. Acres of our precious Sydney Park will be lost as a result of WestConnex. This is an outrageous loss not just of old trees but also of precious green space. The City of Sydney has invested millions of dollars in amazing wetlands projects to revitalise that area in the heart of the inner city and inner west parkland.

It is not just Sydney Park that is under threat from WestConnex. There is also the outrageous destruction of 75 hectares of vegetation including the endangered turpentine ironbark forest and the critically endangered Cooks River-Castlereagh Ironbark Forest, as well as a loss of habitat of the vulnerable green and golden bell frog at Kogarah Golf Club. The most outrageous aspect of this loss is that when the original M5 was built these areas were deemed so precious that protections were put in place. Less than 20 years later, these areas are being destroyed as a result of the widening of the road.

Another serious threat that has been raised with my office is that of the loss of trees on Anzac Parade. We know we need to invest in infrastructure and public transport for our city, but that should not be at the cost of old and beautiful trees like the ones on Anzac Parade. There are other solutions, and we must make sure that the historic 100-year-old Moreton Bay and Jackson Bay figs are not destroyed. We also need an immediate inquiry into the CBD and South East Light Rail project and the loss of trees on Anzac Parade and Alison Road. On this matter, I support my colleague in the other place Dr Mehreen Faruqi.

The final green space and urban sanctuary area that is under threat is in Moore Park. A couple of weeks ago the Minister for Sport attempted what could only be described as a land grab of the beautiful Kippax Lake and green space at Moore Park. It is important for this Government to realise that green space and open space are not areas that can be grabbed for development. This space is a valuable asset at the heart of our city. As Bob Brown said in his first speech in Federal Parliament:

The future will either be green or not at all.

The Greens commit to standing with the community to protect our urban sanctuaries and green spaces.

## **AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

**Ms TRISH DOYLE** (Blue Mountains) [12.43 p.m.]: As all members of this House are aware, we are experiencing a housing and homelessness crisis in this State. The cost of housing for prospective buyers and those in the rental market has blown out in recent years. This in turn has pushed low-income

earners and workers to the absolute limit as it has become increasingly impossible for them to afford housing. With the push by many in business and our conservative governments toward casualised, insecure employment, more people are living in housing stress.

The National Council of Social Services and Shelter NSW consider affordable housing to be a key contributor to building cohesive, sustainable communities. Affordable housing is an essential service for which government and the property development industry must take responsibility. My office is regularly contacted by people who may be considered the working poor or those on casual wages or Centrelink benefits whose rental property has been sold and who face eviction. With the volatility of the rental market and the massive increases in rent, many of these people face homelessness for the first time in their lives.

Members may be shocked to learn that more than one-quarter of all homeless people in this State are families with children and that the single biggest group of people at risk of homelessness are women and children escaping domestic violence. Nerolie, in my electorate, left her partner of seven years following a domestic violence assault. She was assisted by the local women's refuge. She qualified for housing support and was located in a private rental property for which she pays market rent. Unfortunately, her ex-partner has located her and has moved in with friends who live close by. In the past six months he has seriously assaulted her twice. She must move to keep her children and herself safe. Yet she is at the mercy of the private rental market. She has a number of support services providing advocacy, yet to date she remains at serious risk in her home with the perpetrator living close by.

Government must invest in the supply side of the housing market. This is the only way to correct the abject failure of the market to provide secure, affordable housing to much of the working classes. I welcome and applaud the Federal Labor Opposition's review of negative gearing and encourage a renewed focus on building new housing to increase supply and relieve the pressure on existing housing prices. Improving land release and planning approval processes would also help ease the pressure, but this must be done with a view to long-term sustainability and positive community outcomes.

Those who stand to make a substantial profit out of developing a greenfield or a brownfield site should be required to contribute towards the level of long-term community wellbeing in that development. In my view, developer levies must remain a significant contributor to the development of social infrastructure in order to achieve positive social outcomes for local communities. The lack of social housing in New South Wales and its contribution to homelessness and housing-related poverty is well documented. The waiting time for public or social housing in the Blue Mountains is more than 12 years. I relate Christy's story:

After leaving my ex-husband, I was told I would not be considered for housing and certainly not a priority because we had family who were willing to take us in.

Even though that meant 7 of us living in a 3 bedroom house, the 3 boys and I sharing 1 bedroom, the 3 boys sharing a double bed and I was sleeping on an inflatable mattress on the floor.

We would only be considered for housing if my parents wrote a letter stating that they could not have us living at their house (basically lie) which my parents would not do.

In 2010, I was part of a fantastic task force looking at this issue. The Labor Government at the time established the Blue Mountains Nepean Taskforce on Social Housing and Homelessness. A fantastic team of people from across the region, across the socio-economic divide and across the political spectrum came together. We discussed this complex problem and put forward recommendations around developing a plan to ease the crisis of local homelessness. We ran community consultations, worked with others on regional strategies and celebrated achievements such as Project 40 and the Housing First programs. Working with the most disadvantaged homeless people is tough. I take the opportunity to thank those in the social housing and emergency housing sector who work with and for the most isolated and

vulnerable people in society. I thank those in our community who offer a kind word, a glimmer of hope and a smile and afford dignity to those less fortunate.

### **MAURICE VAN RYN DISTRICT COURT SENTENCE**

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE** (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) [12.48 p.m.]: Today I speak to the House about one of the most disturbing child sexual assault cases to have occurred on the far south coast of New South Wales in the electorate I serve as the member for Bega. Over the years, many in the electorate of Bega have come to know Maurice Van Ryn as an active participant in the community and a business leader in the Bega valley. At the same time, and in the shadows, Van Ryn was committing atrocities against local children in the most horrendous, unimaginable and vile ways possible.

This degenerate has been found guilty of child sexual assault offences, of violating the innocence of nine children over an 11-year period, from 2003 to 2014. I pray that there are no other victims. I will not canvass the exact nature of the crimes in my address to Parliament, but I convey on behalf of my community the outrage at the inappropriate handling of this matter by the District Court. I do not do so lightly. I believe this matter is so serious that it cannot pass without further review. An appropriate action would be for the Judicial Commission of New South Wales to carefully examine this matter. It is entirely appropriate for the community to make such a request, and I am expecting that to occur shortly.

Over the past two years I have approached the Attorney General of New South Wales, both the Hon. Gabrielle Upton and the previous Attorney General, the Hon. Brad Hazzard, on matters pertaining to the prosecution of Van Ryn. I acknowledge in particular Attorney General Upton, who has been responsive and who took action to rectify challenges associated with videoconferencing in Bega District Court. I represented my local community when presenting to both Ministers concerns relating to bail and the gobsmackingly incompetent sentencing of Van Ryn by Judge Jeffreys in the District Court.

Van Ryn was sentenced in the District Court on 9 September 2015 to an aggregate term of imprisonment of 13 years with a non-parole period—and I emphasise a non-parole period—of seven years for his crimes. The sentence was a mere slap on the wrist and can only suggest that the judge made a significant error of judgement. The Director of Public Prosecutions, on behalf of the Crown, filed an appeal against the sentence and that matter was heard in the Court of Criminal Appeal. As a result, Van Ryn was sentenced to an aggregate term of imprisonment of 18 years with a non-parole period of 13 years and six months—a doubling of the original sentence, which brought some relief to victims and their families. The judgment of the Court of Criminal Appeal was damning. Justice Hulme stated:

I am of the view that the sentence is manifestly inadequate. There were a number of specific errors made by the judge in his approach to sentencing which may explain the inadequacy of the sentence. Even if the errors were not the cause of the inadequacy, the sentence is so unreasonable and plainly unjust that it amounts to an affront to the administration of criminal justice.

In my humble opinion and that of my community, Van Ryn should never be released to reoffend again. The anger within my community at the sentencing by the District Court has caused me to ask Judge Jeffreys to consider and reflect upon his appointment, which I understand occurred in March 2011. The words of the Court of Criminal Appeal about the sentence handed down by Judge Jeffreys ring out loudly: it is "unreasonable" and "it amounts to an affront to the administration of criminal justice". Those words were not used lightly.

I suggest that Judge Jeffreys look within himself at what has occurred as a result of his decision. He must surely consider his position as a result of this ruling. I am sure it would cause most people to reflect on the sentence handed down, particularly given the seriousness of the crimes. I ask Judge Jeffreys to consider carefully the pain that has been caused by the actions of Van Ryn and whether his sentencing is reflective of community expectations of punishment for such heinous crimes. The

community, the victims and their families have been badly hurt. I know that it is an unusual step for a politician to take this measure, but I say again that I will seek a judicial review. I hope that Judge Jeffreys considers his position.

### **THOMAS KELLY YOUTH FOUNDATION**

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA** (Davidson—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.53 p.m.]: Kathy Kelly lost her son, Thomas, as a result of a senseless, violent act. Kathy has fought hard to reduce the likelihood of anyone else experiencing the torment her family was forced to suffer and continues to suffer. She has chosen to make a difference in the name of her son. Kathy and her husband, Ralph, are co-founders of the Thomas Kelly Youth Foundation [TKYF]. The charity fosters a more responsible drinking culture through education and initiatives targeting youth, families, sporting groups and the broader community. The TAKE Kare initiative is the foundation's central platform for changing the behaviour associated with alcohol and drinking habits. TAKE Kare is all about responsible drinking. This means looking after oneself as well as family, friends and even strangers. It educates young people to know when enough is enough, to step back from situations that get out of control and to know their limitations. It also focuses on the potential consequences a wrong decision can have on many families for the rest of their lives.

The Thomas Kelly Youth Foundation has raised \$1.4 million for safe spaces in the central business district of Sydney and in Darlinghurst on Friday and Saturday nights. Its volunteers, who wear high-visibility jackets, help to diffuse conflict, prevent sexual assault and support intoxicated young people. I understand that since December 2014 the TKYF has instigated 20,000 preventative interactions to help young people to get home safely. Kathy and her husband have fought hard to change the laws and ethos associated with the "booze and bash culture" that was becoming increasingly prevalent in city nightspots. There is now mandatory sentencing for one-punch killings, there are new lockout laws, and there is the foundation that actively helps to keep kids safe in city nightspots.

The Kelly's have fiercely fought to make a difference to the lives of many people and to instigate positive change. Kathy deserves recognition for the wonderful contribution she has made to our society. The 2016 New South Wales Women of the Year Awards are a way for the Government and the Parliament to officially recognise contributions made by exceptional women in New South Wales. As part of the Women of the Year Awards, the A. H. Beard Community Hero award is an opportunity to honour women who are positive role models and who inspire others to contribute to our community. From a field of 250 nominees, Kathy Kelly has joined three others as a finalist for that award. I congratulate her, particularly as she is a resident of my electorate.

Regardless of whether Kathy wins the award, she has made sure that her son's life was not taken in vain. She has channelled her grief to help propel numerous behavioural, social and legal changes to the drinking culture of young people and to ensure that other families will never experience the type of senseless loss her family continues to endure. I note that the A. H. Beard Community Hero award is subject to public voting. I encourage not only those who share the electorate of Davidson as their home but people across New South Wales to speak out by way of voting for one of the four candidates. I strongly recommend that they consider a vote for Kathy Kelly, who is a shining light in the local community and in New South Wales more broadly.

### **DOONSIDE RAILWAY STATION EASY ACCESS**

**Mr JOHN ROBERTSON** (Blacktown) [12.58 p.m.]: I speak on an issue of great concern to the people of my electorate of Blacktown, especially those who live in the suburbs of Doonside, Bungarribee and Woodcroft. Whenever I go out into my community and speak to people on the streets they always raise with me the issue of the lack of easy access lifts at Doonside station for the elderly, people with disabilities and parents with prams. I have previously raised this issue, and do so again, as it goes to the heart of the Government's neglect of the Blacktown electorate. The 2015 State budget did not deliver a single dollar for the installation of lifts at Doonside train station. Other stations received funding for lifts,

refurbishments and colourful signage but the people of Doonside missed out.

The suburb of Doonside, in my electorate, is home to decent Australians who are a pleasure to meet. They always receive the short end of the stick from this Government but do the best they can with the limited resources and opportunities available to them. Currently the unemployment rate in Doonside is 9.2 per cent and the average personal weekly income is \$432. The community is frustrated and the station upgrade has become a symbol of the disregard for our local area. Last year, in the lead-up to the last election, I committed to fight for my community. Constituents can rest assured that I will continue to pressure the Government for an easy access upgrade at Doonside station. The issue is no longer simply about an easy access lift; it is about greater equality and getting our fair share. The Blacktown electorate is regularly short-changed and its lack of infrastructure hampers the efforts of the great people in my electorate, who have such potential, to succeed. In this day and age it is astonishing that an area like Doonside, with a train station that serves more than 4,500 commuters on a weekly basis, that has an international tourist destination nearby and several sporting precincts, including one that hosted the 2016 World Baseball Classic qualifier and the Australian Football League NAB Challenge Cup games, does not have an easy access lift for people with disabilities and the elderly.

Last year I asked the locals for their stories about Doonside station and how the lack of an easy access lift was impacting their lives. Those stories were, to say the least, shocking. For example, people cannot use mobility scooters to access trains because of the steep incline of the ramps as well as the stairs from the overpass to the platform. A 93-year-old pensioner feels it is too dangerous to use the station and wonders who will be liable for accidents caused through unsafe access. An 83-year-old heart patient, who regularly travels to Westmead Hospital for check-ups, is forced to catch a bus to Blacktown station because the steep ramps at Doonside could be dangerous to her condition. These are only a few of the hundreds of stories that flooded my office, and over the course of the year I will be telling more stories. The easy access upgrade at Doonside train station is well and truly overdue.

### **SOUTH COAST ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS**

**Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK** (South Coast—The Speaker) [1.02 p.m.]: Today I congratulate the five Shoalhaven residents who recently received Australia Day awards for their outstanding achievements and contributions to their local communities. The first recorded celebration of Australia Day was on 26 January 1808. The official title of our national day was adopted by all the States and Territories in 1946, but the Australia-wide celebration of the event on the actual day did not occur until 1994. Australia Day provides an excellent opportunity to celebrate and reward inspiring and selfless citizens for their involvement in creating a better Australia. On Thursday 21 January 2016, in company with Shoalhaven Mayor Joanna Gash and Australia Day Ambassador and meteorologist Dick Whitaker, I attended the Shoalhaven Australia Day Awards ceremony, held at the beautifully redeveloped Ulladulla Civic Centre, to acknowledge these five inspiring citizens.

In conjunction with the Australia Day Council of NSW, Shoalhaven City Council presented Australia Day awards to the Shoalhaven Citizen of the Year and the Shoalhaven Young Citizen of the Year. This year the ceremony included the Shoalhaven Medal awards. The winner of the Shoalhaven Citizen of the Year and Shoalhaven Gold Medal was Mr Rick Meehan. Mr Meehan is a former naval officer who now lives in Nowra. He was recognised for his work in raising awareness of the issues faced by war veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts. Rick is secretary of the Nowra RSL Sub-Branch. He chairs the Shoalhaven Anzac Centenary Committee. He played a major role in organising the 2015 Digger Day and, as a part of his work with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, he maintains the Nowra War Cemetery. He established the Kane's Kokoda Challenge and an Australia Veterans Suicide Register office. He volunteers at the Fleet Air Arm Museum, convenes the Shoalhaven Boer War Day and helped to found the Iraq Afghanistan and Middle East Veterans Association of Australia. Rick has received the RSL and Services Clubs Association Spirit of Anzac Award and the Medal of the Order of Australia in recognition of his volunteering commitments, including his help and support of veterans. The Shoalhaven Citizen of the Year award could not be more deserved.

Mr Samuel Dunnett was the worthy 22-year-old recipient of the Shoalhaven Australia Day Junior Citizen of the Year for his marvellous environmental and volunteer work. From a young age Sam showed an interest in preserving local bushland, volunteering with Berrara Bushcare and the Third Avenue Reserve, Cudmirrah group. For the last 14 years Sam has also volunteered with Clean Up Australia. Amongst his other contributions to community, was his involvement with the Sussex Inlet Surf Life Saving Club and the Cudmirrah Berrara Rural Fire Brigade. Sam is currently studying for his Diploma of Conservation and Land Management at Yallah TAFE and runs his own bushcare group at Dyball Reserve, Swanhaven.

June Spurr was awarded a silver medal in recognition of her 21 years as a volunteer with Shoalhaven Palliative Care Service to help ease the pain and suffering of the very ill. For the past five years June has also volunteered at the David Berry Hospital Rehabilitation Ward where she mentors and supports other volunteers. When she is not at the palliative care service or the rehabilitation ward, June knits beanies for cancer patients and prosthetics for women who have undergone a mastectomy. The second silver medallist, and a good friend of mine, is William "Bill" McInnes. In 1990, following several motor vehicle deaths of teenagers in the area, Bill helped to establish the Milton Ulladulla Driver Education Group. This group, which comprises police, ambulance, fire brigade and community members, educates year 11 students to become safer drivers. In addition to his 25 years of dedication to the driver education group, Bill has also volunteered with the Southern Shoalhaven State Emergency Service. He became unit controller in 1998. He is also a former colleague of mine—he was the head science teacher when I taught at Ulladulla High School.

The bronze medal was awarded to Bill Carter, a former Inspector of the NSW Police Force. Bill served with the NSW Police Force for 30 years. In that time he became a member of the Shoalhaven Marine Rescue Association and held the positions of search and rescue coordinator, watch keeper, rescue skipper and fundraiser. He went on to chair the NSW Volunteer Rescue Association Marine Committee and assisted in founding Marine Rescue NSW. In 2011 Bill was awarded the Emergency Services Medal and is currently serving as a director on the Board of Marine Rescue NSW.

I also acknowledge those who were nominated but did not receive an award such as Luke "Stono" Stojanovic from St Georges Basin. Luke overcame a brain injury, and by raising money for the Brain Injury Rehabilitation Unit at Liverpool Hospital he now helps others who suffer from similar injuries. Luke's contribution is valued and needed. We should remember to celebrate and encourage volunteers all year, not only around Australia Day. Once again I congratulate Rick Meehan, Samuel Dunnett, June Spurr, Bill Carter, Bill McInnes and all those who were nominated for an award.

**Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON** (Cootamundra—Parliamentary Secretary) [1.07 p.m.]: On behalf of the Government I congratulate the worthy Australia Day recipients whose names were listed in *Hansard* by the member for the South Coast. I heartily congratulate Rick Meehan, Samuel Dunnett, June Spurr, Bill Carter and Bill McInnes on their awards and wish Luke Stojanovich, a very fine individual, all the best for the future.

### **MOUNT DRUITT ELECTORATE STORM DAMAGE**

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA** (Mount Druitt) [1.08 p.m.]: On the afternoon of Thursday 14 January 2016 heavy storms swept through the Mount Druitt electorate. Mount Druitt was one of the worst-affected suburbs, with more than 1,500 homes losing power. The strong winds, which were described as a mini tornado, caused damage to a number of cars and buildings. I watched from my office as the storm intensified. I witnessed large uprooted trees flying with the wind, as if they were made from paper. It was a scary time. I saw people running to avoid flying debris and narrowly escape falling trees.

At the Mount Druitt Hub and library, trees fell on cars in the car park. Mount Druitt swimming pool sustained damage as trees came down and damaged the shade cloth over the pools. A resident said that

driving around Mount Druitt looked like a movie scene because so many trees were down. Traffic was chaotic as many streets were blocked by fallen trees on the roads. Trains were disrupted from Mt Druitt to Schofields because of fallen trees on the rail tracks. It is fortunate no lives were lost in our city.

Blacktown City Council and the New South Wales State Emergency Service [SES] attended to the emergency and worked hard to clean up the debris from the affected properties and roads. More than 1,800 calls for assistance were made to council and the SES. State Emergency Service crews from as far away as Manly were sent to Mt Druitt to aid in the clean-up. I thank the dedicated council staff and the SES who attended to the emergency and worked extremely hard in the most trying of conditions to clean up the mess left by this severe storm.

I understand that up to 60 council staff were involved in the clean-up and much of the work was carried out in searing heat or torrential rain. This vital work continued after normal working hours and over weekends in order to restore safe access to roads, footpaths and private property. The logistics of this exercise were large and complex. Twenty-five streets that had been closed during the storm were reopened within 2½ days. More than 5,000 cubic metres of green waste has been collected from the storm damage. In fact, the clean-up is still continuing. I am enormously grateful to the council staff and the State Emergency Service for their dedication and professionalism. I say well done to everyone.

### **LIGHT UP THE OAKS CHRISTMAS NIGHT**

**Mr JAI ROWELL** (Wollondilly) [1.11 p.m.]: It was my pleasure to attend and to act as master of ceremonies for the eleventh annual Light up The Oaks Christmas Night at the end of last year. It was held at the Dudley Chesham Oval for the first time. The event is hosted by The Oaks Community Chamber of Commerce, which is led by the fantastic Deputy Mayor of Wollondilly Shire Council, and a good friend of mine, Councillor Hilton Gibbs, and he obviously gets a lot of support from his wife, Pat; and local community identity Sharon Robertson, who also did a fantastic job; and Lyn Rainer, who helped in many different ways and organised the stalls. This amazing family and community event was a resounding success, and enjoyed by those who attended.

There were many highlights throughout the night but one that stands out was the appearance of Santa Clause, to the delight of many children in attendance. Jim Rudd turned up in a 1926 Chev truck, courtesy of Frank and Jill Mackie. Jim was assisted by Santa's helper Judy Rudd. Jim has a long history of community service, previously being awarded Wollondilly Citizen of the Year. I thank Bob Doyle, who once again supplied Santa's lollies. The night also saw a visit from Batman, much to the delight of the children in attendance and me. Many thanks must go to Rob Care of The Oaks Car Clinic for his sponsorship.

The night was supported and sponsored by local businesses and government: Wollondilly Shire Council, CPE Tree Service at Mount Hunter, United Realty at The Oaks and Bringelly, Zumba with Chelle, Bendigo Bank Picton, Rain Saver Water Systems, and Shear n Dipity hairdressers at Oakdale and Bargo. I thank The Oaks Rural Fire Brigade for its continued support of and participation at this event. I make special mention of Captain Colin Brown; Brigade President and Deputy Captain Terry Bruce; Brigade Secretary and Senior Deputy Captain Jeremy Wilson; Deputy Captain Rodney Wellington; and members Debborah Kerr, Patrick Reeve, Shane Thomas and Thomas Sinclair. They and the other members of the brigade do a fantastic job and are always supporting our community.

In addition to The Oaks Rural Fire Brigade, I thank The Oaks Tigers Rugby League Football Club, which has always been a great supporter of this event and whose members cook an amazing barbeque every year. This would not happen without the dedication and the hard work of Michael and Kim Pes, Mitchell Brasington, Zoe Wise, Phillip Perry, Nick Parker, Erin Jones, Bean Eagles, Christie Harvey and Brent Kelly. Special mention must also go to Tim Bennett-Smith from the Picton-Thirlmere-Bargo RSL Sub-Branch. He brought his Saracen personnel carrier to the night. I note that the Minister for Corrections, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Veterans Affairs is with us in the Chamber.

He would have been very pleased to see that, and I am sure he will come out and spend some time with Tim shortly.

I also acknowledge those others who made the day so enjoyable. Stan 'the clown' Chichocki donated his time to entertain the children with his balloon-making skills. Stan can often be found at various Wollondilly events entertaining the crowds. Local electrician Clayton Jenkins stepped in at the last minute to fix a problem with the lights as it was getting darker and the lights went out—the true essence of community spirit. The event was accompanied by amazing entertainment as The Oaks Preschool Choir gave a dazzling performance. Thank you to Jennie Downie and her team for the effort they put in to make the choir a success.

The Light Up The Oaks Christmas Night also saw Zumba displays by Michelle Pinosa and her dancers. Dylan Wheeler made the night extremely enjoyable with his double-decker bus. He made regular pick-up runs around Oakdale and The Oaks and made sure everyone was safe. This was truly one of the big hits on the night. Maggie Harriman also provided an amazing service throughout the night with her continuous posts on Facebook to keep residents updated on the event. She did an amazing job in encouraging people to attend. Many thousands of people came down to the event. It was a great night.

More thanks must also go to Paul Bunyan, from the Wollondilly Shire Council, for cleaning up the grounds, as well as to the set-up and pack-up crew: Agnes Brown, Jess Pearce, Michelle Pinosa, Alyson Sinclair, David Robertson, Daryl Brown, Steve Pearce and Thomas Sinclair. I congratulate and thank again Hilton and Sharon and the entire community of The Oaks. I know that a significant amount of work goes into organising this event, particularly given its size, and I know that this year's Light Up The Oaks Christmas Night will be even bigger and better.

#### **PREMIER'S ANZAC AMBASSADORS ESSAY COMPETITION**

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT** (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Corrections, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) [1.15 p.m.]: In his great funeral oration Pericles said:

For the whole earth is the tomb of famous men; not only are they commemorated by columns and inscriptions in their own country, but in foreign lands there dwells also an unwritten memorial of them, graven not on stone but in the hearts of men. Make them your examples, and understanding that happiness requires freedom and freedom requires courage, do not take lightly the perils of war.

Thucydides recounted these words, delivered for those who had died defending Athens and its young democracy, in his *History of the Peloponnesian War*. This profound exhortation immediately rings true for Australians when considering the sacrifice of our Anzacs. Our urban, suburban and rural landscape is dotted by monuments to our greatest generation but there are still pockets of the world, far beyond our shores, where the Anzacs are known and loved deeply. Nowhere is this appreciation felt as strongly as in the little French town of Villers-Bretonneux. On 24 April 1918 the Germans seized the town in the world's first tank battle, but that night and the next day it was recaptured by two brigades of the First Australian Imperial Force—1,200 men lost their lives. The town's mayor spoke of the Australian troops on 14 July 1919 when unveiling a memorial in their honour:

The first inhabitants of Villers-Bretonneux to re-establish themselves in the ruins of what was once a flourishing little town have, by means of donations, shown a desire to thank the valorous Australian Armies, who with the spontaneous enthusiasm and characteristic dash of their race, in a few hours drove out an enemy ten times their number. They offer a memorial tablet, a gift which is but the least expression of their gratitude, compared with the brilliant feat which was accomplished by the sons of Australia. Soldiers of Australia, whose brothers lie here in French soil, be assured that your memory will always be kept alive, and that the burial places of your dead will always be respected and cared for.



Whether it is Villers-Bretonneux, Gallipoli or the Somme, it is true that the whole earth is the tomb of these great men. And so, we should make them our example. This was my motivation for establishing the Premier's Anzac Ambassadors program. This year six high school students will learn about the contribution of Anzac soldiers and nurses during a once-in-a-lifetime journey to key battlefields in Europe as part of the scholarship. This follows on from the initial scholarship program run in 2014, when six Western Sydney students joined me and Dr Roza Sage, the former member for Blue Mountains, on a pilgrimage to Gallipoli.

In April, Eduardo Bianchino, Shehani De Silva, Petra Stojnic, Joshua Bednar, Lauren Sullivan and Liam Rickard will visit Athens, Lemnos, Crete, Paris, Ypres and the Somme as part of a two-week tour sponsored by ClubsNSW. They will spend Anzac Day at that sacred site of Villers-Bretonneux. The competition for this scholarship was very strong. While not everyone who entered was successful, I hope it has continued a conversation amongst our youth about the significance of the Anzac story to Australia's history.

The program will give these young people an incredible opportunity to gain firsthand knowledge of the contribution made by Australian soldiers and, of course, our wonderful nurses. It will provide them with a story of hope that they can pass on to their peers when they return home. I also hope that at the end of their scholarship these students will understand that the happiness we all now take for granted is due to the freedom we enjoy. That freedom has been preserved due to the courage and sacrifice of the Anzacs defending our young democracy. Lest we forget.

### **CANBERRA AIRPORT INTERNATIONAL FREIGHT SERVICES**

**Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON** (Cootamundra—Parliamentary Secretary) [1.20 p.m.]: The recent announcement that regularly scheduled international flights will commence from Canberra Airport in September this year is great news for the Cootamundra electorate and southern New South Wales. Our close access to airfreight export services will provide significant export market opportunities for local agribusinesses and drive regional economic growth that will deliver multiple benefits. Canberra Airport will be the second international airport servicing New South Wales, and the only international airport without a curfew between Brisbane and Melbourne. A significant international gateway for the region will open with the potential for a foothold to be established for our region in direct international freight capacity.

Four weekly flights will be leaving Canberra for Singapore at 11.30 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays. That means that if exporters get their produce to Canberra by 9.00 p.m., produce will arrive in Singapore the next morning, potentially being on shelves by lunchtime or mid-afternoon. This is a less than 24-hour turnaround for wholesalers and a great win for both consumers and exporters. But these exported foods and products will not necessarily stop at Singapore, because Changi Airport is a strategic hub and an important gateway to South East Asia and the Middle East with their burgeoning middle class markets and demand for high-quality, fresh and reliable produce.

This is an important strategic initiative for our region. It will help to grow businesses and significantly secure the region's competitiveness into the future, which is a significant building block in driving economic growth. Our horizons will expand and agribusinesses of all sizes will have the opportunity to explore previously unavailable, untapped export markets. I have been told that from a supply perspective 80 tonnes of capacity will be available each week in the immediate term to Singapore, starting in September. From a demand perspective, a minimum of 49 tonnes of local catchment airfreight is available daily that could be diverted to an Asian freight hub. This is the current demand and excludes the stimulatory effect of direct freight connections making export easier, cheaper and more convenient for producers. Of course, the timing of the commencement of international airfreight capability from Canberra Airport could not be better given the recent signing of free trade agreements with China, Japan and Korea. Those agreements will result in better access to important Asian markets and an improved competitive position for Australian exports. Combined with the current low Australian dollar, things are

looking rosy for local and southern New South Wales agricultural exporters.

With higher than average population growth forecast for southern New South Wales over the next 20 years, agribusiness opportunities are expected to increase. The availability of international airfreight services from Canberra will more than halve the travel time for produce from southern New South Wales to the nearest international airport. That is an important consideration when exporting fresh produce and perishable goods to international markets. Southern New South Wales, including the Cootamundra electorate, is renowned for its clean, green and fresh produce and its stable and diverse economy. The electorate enjoys a reputation for exceptional quality viticulture and agricultural products, and farmers are constantly looking for ways to add value to their produce. Export opportunities will open up for regional agribusinesses producing aquaculture, citrus, livestock genetics, cherries and other stone fruit, chilled beef products, and wine and nut crops amongst others.

China is Australia's largest agriculture, forestry and fisheries export market, and its booming middle class is driving exponential demand for our high-quality agriculture and food products. About 90 per cent of online shopping in China is transacted through e-commerce marketplaces, which have the potential to bring China's online consumers within reach of even the smallest Australian exporters. Growing demand for top-quality Australian produce has seen consumers turning to online malls like China's *JD.com* and *YHD.com* to snap up each season's harvest. Export opportunities will abound—they will be ripe for the picking—for the hungry regional entrepreneur from southern New South Wales.

Hilltops Meats from Young in the electorate of Cootamundra already exports to eight countries worldwide, with 15.625 million kilograms of beef cattle processed per annum. It is currently exploring opportunities to export to China, and the potential to export out of Canberra will reduce expense and turnaround times. Poultry from the region, and ducks from Harden Shire, in particular, have huge potential for export to Asia. Cherries, plums and sugar plums from Young and Harden are already renowned worldwide, and growers stand to benefit from reduced travel time and costs by exporting by air from Canberra. The electorate's producers who provide fresh lamb, beef and pork, merino wool, mining commodities, wine, olive, canola, eucalyptus and mustard seed oils, organic liquorice and chocolate, honey, and fresh vegetables will also benefit from the increased export opportunities that will result from international airfreight services out of Canberra Airport.

I am excited about these export opportunities for local agribusinesses. I congratulate Singapore Airlines, its alliance partner Virgin Australia, and visionary Canberra Airport chairman Mr Terry Snow, AM, on fulfilling a dream for many in my electorate. This initiative will provide local access to fresh fruit and produce for international markets. Prime Minister Malcom Turnbull recently stated that there was no better time to be an Australian. My Nationals colleague and the new Deputy Leader of the Federal Nationals, Fiona Nash, recently stated there was no better time to be a regional Australian. I contend there is no better time to be a southern New South Wales regional agribusiness exporter.

**Private members' statements concluded.**

*[Acting-Speaker (Mr Lee Evans) left the chair at 1.25 p.m. The House resumed at 2.15 p.m.]*

**VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I extend a warm welcome to the 34 year 10 and year 12 school leaders and their teachers from St Ursula's College, Kingsgrove, St George Christian School, Marist College, Penshurst, Blakehurst High School and Georges River College—the Penshurst Girls Campus, Hurstville Boys Campus and Peakhurst Campus, guests of the Deputy Government Whip and member for Oatley. I hope you enjoy question time. I also acknowledge and welcome our four visitors from Lebanon in the gallery today, guests of the member for Lakemba. I wish a happy birthday to the member for Swansea—she is young enough that we can recognise her birthday.

## CENTENARY OF FIRST WORLD WAR

**The SPEAKER:** Servants of this Parliament from all levels and all walks of life gave further service to their country in the Great War. William Fraser Dunn—Labor member for Mudgee from 1910 to 1920, Wammerawa from 1920 to 1927, and Mudgee again from 1927 to 1932 and 1935 to 1950—had a distinguished career in several Labor ministries and in the leadership of his party. A footballer turned country teacher, he was one of the pioneers of the Labor Party's attempts to identify itself with rural interests and the economic plight of country people. Dunn enlisted on 6 February 1916 and was granted leave to serve with the First Australian Imperial Force [AIF]. As part of the 35th Battalion he was attached to the British Expeditionary Force and served as a quartermaster with the rank of honorary captain.

Frederick Langley served this Parliament in the Clerk's office for over 40 years and as Clerk of the Legislative Assembly from 1947. He enlisted in February 1916 as a sergeant and was promoted to lieutenant in March 1917. Langley was mentioned in despatches and recommended for the Military Cross. The commendation stated:

In all weathers and under all conditions of shell fire, machine gun fire and bombing he has ably carried out his duties without the slightest thought of self and with the single idea of doing his job thoroughly.

Little is known of Edward George Jerrom, who enlisted in 1914 and fell ill in Egypt en route to France before returning to Australia. Upon recovery he returned to France, arriving in February 1916 and serving in the Australian Medical Corps. On his AIF enlistment papers he is shown as a "Parliament messenger". A member, minister and party leader; a junior officer and a Clerk; and a simple parliamentary messenger—how truly representative of the body of men who made up the AIF where their prior status and standing meant far less than their united determination to serve their King and country. Lest we forget.

## REPRESENTATION OF MINISTERS ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** I inform the House that the Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Medical Research, Assistant Minister for Health, Minister for Women, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault will answer questions in the absence from the Chamber this week of the Minister for Health. The Minister for Finance, Services and Property will answer questions in the absence of the Minister for Trade, Tourism and Major Events, and Minister for Sport.

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

### Notices of Motions

**Government Business Notices of Motions (for Bills) given.**

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

## QUESTION TIME

*[Question time commenced at 2.24 p.m.]*

## MEMBER FOR EAST HILLS ELECTION EXPENDITURE

**Mr LUKE FOLEY:** My question is directed to the Premier. What action has been taken following admissions from the member for East Hills that he made election expenditure from his personal bank account in breach of the Election Funding Act, and that this expenditure exceeded the legal spending cap?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will come to order.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** We are seeing the real Leader of the Opposition. The Electoral Commission has already said it is considering the issues he has raised. It is incredible that a week after returning to Parliament the Leader of the Opposition has not asked one question of this Government about policy. He has not because he loves to smear.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Premier has just started his answer. What is the member's point of order?

**Mr Michael Daley:** It is Standing Order 129, relevance. The question was about the member for smear. Why does the Premier not deal with him?

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** I always want to cheer when the member for Maroubra stands up. We want desperately to support him. There is so much going on over there with members who want to undermine him. We are backing in the member for Maroubra. He should keep taking points of order. It is no wonder that the people of New South Wales are looking at Opposition members and are wondering what on earth it is they stand for. They say they will ask questions about all types of things, whether it be schools, health or infrastructure, which are the real issues that the people of New South Wales are interested in. They have no idea.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Port Stephens will cease interjecting and come to order. The member for Maitland will cease interjecting.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** It is no wonder that the member for Canterbury wants to get out of here and go to Federal politics.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order: How is the battle with Bronwyn Bishop going? Is that good?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Maroubra will resume his seat. Does the member have a point of order?

**Mr Michael Daley:** It is Standing Order 129, relevance. This is a serious issue about electoral expenditure. The Premier let all the Hunter members of Parliament off the hook. We want him to answer this question.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** Regarding the judgement of the Leader of the Opposition, is it any wonder that there are leadership rumblings on that side? Over the summer it was fascinating to hear about the dream team—the member for Strathfield and the member for Keira. The dream team was rising to take over the leadership. It is no wonder, considering the judgement of the Leader of the Opposition. It was fascinating that when they were mentioned as the dream team they did not ignore it; they took it to social media.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Point of order—

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

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** The last point of order was upheld. The Premier has not come back to the leave of the question.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** I wish the member for Swansea a happy birthday. What the Leader of the Opposition is interested in is there for everyone in this State to see. He is not interested in the issues that matter to the people across New South Wales. He is interested in his own political causes and in smearing Government members. Last week he came in here and attacked the Minister and he did not hold a press conference to talk about it.

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will come to order. I need to hear the member's point of order.

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** My point of order is with respect to Standing Order 73. If the Premier is going to make allegations about the Leader of the Opposition, he should look at the smear that is coming from his own side. The Premier did nothing in the Hunter. What is he doing in Sydney?

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** I like the member for Maitland as well. It is very clear that this Government is getting on with looking after the people of this State, whether it be with respect to health, education or building the infrastructure that is needed. Members of this Government are very proud to do that, because that is what the people of New South Wales have asked us to do. We will continue to do exactly that.

## STATE INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY:** My question is addressed to the Premier. How is the Government delivering improved infrastructure to the people of New South Wales? How does that compare with the record of those opposite?

*[Interruption]*

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** I say to the member for Keira, who is interjecting, "Hello dream; where is your team?" What a great question from a great member. He understands, more than anyone, what is needed across this great city in respect of infrastructure. We are so proud to be delivering infrastructure. Over the summer break I was accused of all types of things, but I find the attack of the Leader of the Opposition very unusual. He has decided to say that I and this Government have focused too much on roads and transport. The brains trust put this together and said, "I know how we can attack them. We should come together and say that the Government has put too much focus on roads and transport." That is genius. But that is absolutely right: We are going to deliver the roads and transport that this State needs and deserves and which the Opposition did not deliver. For 16 years members of the Opposition stood here and promised and promised but delivered absolutely nothing.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** We are proud to be getting on with the job. No matter where people turn they will see infrastructure starting to be delivered.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** The Sydney Metro Northwest project is underway, with 30 kilometres of tunnelling completed. Members of the community there understand that. They see that being done and

they cannot wait for it to be operating. The South West Rail Link has been delivered ahead of time and under budget. It is a great example of how one should deliver infrastructure.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** The funding has been allocated to Parramatta Light Rail and that project is getting underway. I turn to the WestConnex project. We know that there are some members in this House who do not want to see improvements to the M4 and M5. We think that is what this great city needs. We are getting on and delivering that.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** The NorthConnex project is taking 5,000 trucks off the road. That is a very important project for that area.

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, relevance. The question is about the State. Members on this side of the House have had no issue about roads and rail around the whole State; this answer is confined to Sydney. What is happening in the regions?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Maitland will resume her seat. This is no point of order. The Premier remains relevant to the question. I remind the member for Maitland that this is not an opportunity to argue with the Premier.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** The member for Maitland might want to visit regional New South Wales to see what the Government is doing there. She might see Wagga Wagga Base Hospital. For how many years did the Opposition promise Wagga Wagga Base Hospital? It made promises year after year but it delivered nothing. The hospital has been built. That is a little difference.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** The member for Maitland should take some notes and listen to what is going on across regional New South Wales.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will stop shouting and waving. The member for Newcastle will cease interjecting.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** It is quite exciting when members of the Opposition start to talk about policy. It is very rare.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** You wait for it.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** I hear the member opposite saying, "You wait for it." I look forward to that. A couple of weeks ago the Leader of the Opposition spoke about something.

**Mr Guy Zangari:** Point of order: My point of order is with respect to Standing Order 129, relevance.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Fairfield will resume his seat. If the member takes another frivolous point of order I will place him on a call to order. The member for Swansea will come to order.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** The member for Liverpool was listening when the Leader of the Opposition got to his feet to speak; he put his copy of *Das Kapital* down for a minute. He listened to hear whether the Leader of the Opposition would talk about getting rid of the socialist objective again; but the Leader of the

Opposition did not do that so the member for Liverpool was very happy. It was very clear that in that speech the Leader of the Opposition failed to mention public transport once.

**Mr Luke Foley:** Point of order: The Premier is misleading the House. I talked about the \$1 billion he blew on trains that do not fit the platforms.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat. It was difficult to hear what he said.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** Opposition members have no plans for public transport. I have never seen a group of people so against public transport. They are the APT—the anti-public transport party. That is their new platform. If we start a project they want to cancel it. I have never seen anything like it.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Opposition members will come to order. All members will come to order. There are too many interjections and arguments.

**Pursuant to standing order additional information provided.**

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** There is a very clear difference. Members on this side of the House understand the importance of public transport and roads. We are investing record amounts. The Opposition did not promise the Sydney Metro because it could not fund it. Indeed, the shadow Treasurer said that it was uneconomic to do that. The Opposition had no interest in metro for this great city. The Parramatta Light Rail was not in the Opposition's infrastructure program but all of a sudden it added an annexure: Yes, it was included, although it could not fund it. Ours is a very different story. We understand that the people of this great State need public transport and they need investment in roads. This Government has funded a record amount, and we are very proud to be delivering that.

While those opposite might want to go on smear campaigns—they do not want to talk about public transport and the investment in infrastructure—this Government will continue to invest in road and transport. Opposition members can criticise all they like, but infrastructure is exactly what the State needs. We are very proud to be delivering it.

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

#### **MEMBER FOR EAST HILLS AND CARL TRAD**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT:** My question is directed to the Premier. Why did the Premier approve grants that were recommended by the member for East Hills totalling \$28,000 to a convicted money launderer, Carl Trad?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will cease arguing with the member for Prospect. He is entitled to ask a question. The member for Kiama will come to order.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** The member for Prospect should answer this question: Why was one of his staff members suspended from the Labor Party? He should answer that question. I have already commented about the Community Building Partnership grants program. That is being considered. We are looking for opportunities to strengthen that program but I make no apologies for providing the Community Building Partnership program. I think it delivers good things for the people of New South Wales.

Yes, I have commented on this matter. I have said that the program can be strengthened, and that we are looking at that. Opposition members need to understand that the people of this State are interested in a Government and an Opposition—an Opposition focusing on the issues that matter is helpful to the overall process—delivering for the people of New South Wales. If the member for Prospect

wants to continue with the smear campaign, good luck to him. We are into the second week of Parliament, but Opposition members are yet to ask a policy question. Doesn't that say it all?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Cessnock will come to order. I call the member for Shellharbour to order for the first time. I call the member for Canterbury to order for the first time.

**Dr Hugh McDermott:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The question was about why the Premier—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Premier is being relevant to the question. The member for Prospect will resume his seat. He does not need to repeat the question. There is too much audible conversation from Government members. The Premier has the call.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** As to the credibility of these smear campaigns, we saw last week those opposite come into the Chamber and ask all their questions about one matter. Have we heard a peep about it this week?

**Mr Paul Lynch:** Don't worry; it is coming back.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** We have heard nothing. If the people of New South Wales saw the approach this Opposition is taking I think they would be ashamed. We will continue to deliver on a daily basis good things to the people of this State in the areas that matter to them.

## **JOBS GROWTH**

**Ms ELENI PETINOS:** My question is addressed to the Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations. How is the Government delivering on its commitment to drive employment growth across the State, and what were the results in 2015?

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I thank the member for Miranda for her question because that I know she and the families in her community appreciate the importance of jobs growth. I know that the many students in the gallery from the Oatley electorate also care about jobs for the future. That is why we are very proud to say that the New South Wales Liberals and The Nationals have made sure that New South Wales is the jobs capital of Australia. Last year alone 168,000 jobs were created in New South Wales. That is 55 per cent of the total jobs created in the whole country. New South Wales created more jobs than all the other States combined. That is something we are very proud of. Not only are we proud of that figure but also we are proud of the fact that, as last week's figures demonstrated, New South Wales has the lowest unemployment in the country, and has held that position for at least the past eight months.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I am very proud that not only did we create 168,000 jobs last year but also since we have been in government we have created more than 300,000 jobs.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** This increase is more than 80 per cent—

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** This increase is more than 80 per cent higher than that of the next highest State. Not only do we have the greatest jobs growth and the lowest unemployment but also we



are ensuring that we keep our policies strong in supporting business and infrastructure to keep those jobs growing now and into the future. Those opposite love to talk about jobs; they love to talk about workers. But when it came to delivering, they were appalling. Let us compare our figures with what they managed to do when they were in government. In its last term in government Labor created just 26 per cent of jobs.

**Mr Guy Zangari:** You've been in government for six years.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I am demonstrating how appalling you are at this. Those opposite are high on rhetoric but low on delivery. In their last term of government they created 26 per cent of the jobs in the country. That is half the rate that we are creating at the moment. In 40 of the last 48 months that Labor was in government the New South Wales unemployment figure was higher than the national average.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** What this demonstrates is that the only jobs they care about are their own. Over the summer we heard about the member for Kogarah wanting the job of the member for Maroubra. We heard about the member for Maroubra wanting the Leader of the Opposition's job. We know that the member—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will come to order.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I will get back to that later. The other jobs figure we are very proud of is that regional New South Wales has the strongest regional jobs growth of anywhere in Australia. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics data—

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** —nearly 78,000 jobs have been created in regional New South Wales. That is an increase of 6½ per cent. I am proud to say there is no doubt that New South Wales has the strongest economy in the nation and the strongest budget in the nation. But what is great about our position in New South Wales is that everybody is benefiting: Whether you live in a large city or in regional New South Wales, there is strong jobs growth and strong economic conditions.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order: I am having trouble hearing the Treasurer because there are so many interjections.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The interjections are from Opposition members. The member for Maroubra will resume his seat. There is no point of order.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I reiterate that members on this side of the House appreciate how important it is to create jobs.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Hornsby and the member for Maroubra will cease arguing across the table.

**Pursuant to standing order additional information provided.**

**Mr Guy Zangari:** Don't be cruel to humans.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Fairfield will come to order. That remark was inappropriate.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** So was the wink he gave me afterwards.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Does the member for Fairfield seek to withdraw the remark?

**Mr Guy Zangari:** Yes.

**The SPEAKER:** That is good. The Treasurer has the call. The member for Castle Hill will come to order.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** We do not mind the interjections or the rhetoric because when it comes to supporting families, individuals and jobs growth it is this side of the House that delivers. We will continue to work day and night to ensure that not only is New South Wales the strongest economy but also families and individuals can be confident that New South Wales is the place to work and the place to live.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Maitland. The member will be heard in silence. I hope that Government members are listening. Members who continue to interject will be placed on calls to order.

#### **MEMBER FOR EAST HILLS' CAMPAIGN DIRECTOR**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** My question is directed to the Premier. What action has the Premier taken in response to residents' complaints that his party's campaign director in East Hills distributed unauthorised material that sought to link political opponents to paedophiles?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will come to order.

**Mr Anthony Roberts:** Point of order: This is a robust Parliament, where there is robust debate. It is well known as the bear pit. But the member for Maitland should know by now that the question is inappropriate. It contains an allegation and I ask the member to reword it. If the member has such allegations she should show this place the respect it deserves and take them to the appropriate authority.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I uphold the point of order. I rule the question out of order under Standing Order 128 (1), subparagraphs (b), argument; (c), inference; and (d), imputation. The member for Maitland may reword the question if she wishes to do so.

#### **EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI:** My question is addressed to the Minister for Education. How is the Government delivering the education infrastructure needed to prepare our students for the jobs of the future?

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

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI:** What a poor performance by the member for Maitland. I have never seen a political party in a constant state of crisis like the Labor Party—there is one crisis meeting after another.

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

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI:** I can tell members exactly why these crisis meetings happen. The unemployment rate in New South Wales is the lowest or second-lowest in Australia.

**Ms Gladys Berejiklian:** The lowest.

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI:** It is the lowest in Australia—so there is a crisis meeting in the Labor Party.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Hornsby will cease interjecting and come to order. The member for Drummoyne will cease interjecting. The Minister for Family and Community Services will cease interjecting.

**Mr John Robertson:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129, relevance. The question related to education infrastructure, and so far the Minister has attacked the member for Maitland for her question, talked about internal matters of the Labor Party and gone nowhere near speaking about education. It may well be he is embarrassed about the Learning Management and Business Reform and that is why he does not want to talk about education infrastructure.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister has just started his answer. I am sure that he will return to the leave of the question. The member for Blacktown will resume his seat.

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI:** Every time there is good news in education there is another crisis meeting. Those opposite pray for bad news in New South Wales every night when they go to bed.

**Mr Luke Foley:** You are giving us heaps.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Leader of the Opposition will cease interjecting. The member for Maitland will cease interjecting.

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI:** It is appropriate that the member for Blacktown should take a point of order because I got—admittedly in a year—only the second question the member has ever put on notice. There were two questions for the year. It was a question about the sale of education land in Doonside. That is a fair question. We sold some property in the member's electorate and it is fair enough that he asked a question about it. The member for Blacktown asked the question on 16 February; the only problem was the auction was on 27 October last year. At least somebody—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will come to order. This is not an argument or a debate.

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI:** —in the Labor Party has been taking the memo seriously. The member for Blacktown has been doing a good job—the hard work starts tomorrow. The New South Wales Government is proud to be about to spend \$1 billion—

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

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI:** —from the Rebuilding NSW schools fund to transform public education in this State over the next 10 years, building up to 1,600 new or refurbished classrooms across New South Wales. In the past four years 23 new or relocated public schools have been built or committed to, along with 50 major upgrades. And—thank you, member for Strathfield—there are 20 new classrooms at Homebush West Public School. We are getting on with the job.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister will resume his seat. The member for Strathfield rises on a point of order.

*[Interruption]*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister will resume his seat.

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI:** I was too excited, Madam Speaker.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I realise that. The member for Strathfield has a point of order.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** If the Minister is going to bring up Homebush West Public School, I would like to know where the classrooms will be built when there is no land.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Strathfield to order for the first time. There is no point of order.

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI:** Of course, there is the \$100 million redevelopment of those two fantastic schools in Parramatta—Arthur Phillip High School and Parramatta Public School. We have released the winning design, which is absolutely fantastic. Because of the innovative design, there will be three times as much outdoor space. These future-focused schools will be highly adaptable, technology-rich environments—the sort of environment that we expect in modern schools, given that the jobs and workplaces of the future demand this type of education. I am proud to be part of a government that is delivering it. There is a new \$40 million high school at Ballina that will be state-of-the art; it will be the finest school in regional Australia. There is a \$60 million rebuild of Cleveland Street High School in the inner city. We are building modern schools with modern classrooms and modern teaching practices.

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

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI:** We need that in New South Wales. It is all good news in education, which is why those opposite have constant crisis meetings. But we will get on with the job.

#### **MEMBER FOR EAST HILLS COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT**

**Mr RYAN PARK:** My question is directed to the Premier. Will the Premier advise the House of the particular qualities of the member for East Hills—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I remind the member for Keira of my previous ruling. I ruled out the previous question because it contained imputations and inferences. Members will come to order.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** —that led the Government to appoint the member to the Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics?

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** Is the member for Keira trying to say that there are candidates for the parliamentary ethics committee on the other side of the House? I say to every member—

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

**Dr Hugh McDermott:** Are you trying to give us a lecture?

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** Yes, I am.

**Dr Hugh McDermott:** Let's do that.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Prospect will come to order. This is not a debate.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** I will put it this way for the member for Prospect: It is an encouragement. The encouragement is this—

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** Before members launch an attack such as this they should read the maiden speech of the member for East Hills. Those opposite should ask themselves how someone faced with the challenges that the member has had in life could end up here.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Prospect to order for the third time. The member for Swansea will cease shouting and arguing with the Premier. I call the member for Keira to order for the first time.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** Those opposite can attack us if they want, but the member for Maitland—

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** —took a point of order to ask, "Why don't you talk about regional New South Wales?" What did she do? She asked a question not about Maitland, not about regional New South Wales, but about smear. Those opposite have tactics and strategies; that is what they are going to do.

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

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Maroubra will wait until members come to order. Ministers will come to order.

**Mr Michael Daley:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 73. Does the Premier not think that those stickers in East Hills were a smear on Cameron Murphy?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Maroubra will resume his seat. There is no point of order. I call the member for Maroubra to order for the first time.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** Make an allegation.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** The concerns raised by those opposite are being considered by the Electoral Commission, and they know that.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** Opposition members come into this place and ask that sort of hypocritical question. What did they do to the former member for Newcastle—on their own side—to undermine her?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Keira to order for the second time. I remind the member for Prospect that he is on three calls to order. If the member continues to interject he will be removed from the Chamber.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order—

**Mr Luke Foley:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Strathfield. She sought the call first. Government

members will come to order. I call the member for Kiama to order for the first time. I call the member for Drummoynes to order for the first time. Government members who continue to interject will be removed from the Chamber. I call the member for Kiama to order for the second time.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. Given the issues that the Premier raised, I think I can ask for an answer to the question.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Premier is being relevant to the question. There is no point of order. The member for Strathfield will resume her seat. The member for Monaro will come to order or he will be placed on a call to order. Government members will come to order. Government members who continue to interject will be removed from the Chamber. I call the member for Port Stephens to order for the third time.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** Opposition members can make any allegations they wish outside the Chamber. Those opposite can use question time as an opportunity for a second smear. If the new tactic is to attack individual members, then go ahead. But the Government is united and focused on the issues that matter to the people of New South Wales.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** The people want the Government to invest in public transport and build the transport infrastructure that they desperately need. They also want us to build the roads. For 16 years the Labor Government did absolutely nothing to the M4 and M5. We are getting on with the job and building it.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order—

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

**Ms Jodi McKay:** It is under Standing Order 129. The Premier has failed to answer the question.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Premier is being relevant to the question. There is no point of order. The member for Strathfield will not direct the Premier how to answer the question.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** As disappointed as I am in the Opposition, it is no surprise that this is the line of attack it chooses to take. The good news for the people of New South Wales is that this Government will back its team and get on and deliver the projects that will make a difference to their lives.

## **FUTURE TRANSPORT NSW SUMMIT**

**Mr MATT KEAN:** I address my question to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. How is the Government delivering on the State's future transport needs?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Strathfield will come to order. The member for Strathfield will not encourage the member for Kiama. I remind the member that he is on three calls to order.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** I thank the member for Hornsby for that sensible policy question. My advice to the Labor Party is: Do not turn up for the rest of the week and it will be less embarrassing. The Government has made a conscious decision to take the New South Wales transport agency to a new level with a future focus on technology. Recently I announced Future Transport NSW as an initiative to take our transport agency in this State to a new level. We live in a State where the uptake of technology is at unprecedented levels. The smart phone penetration is amongst the highest in the world. Feedback from the people of New South Wales is that they want more technology and they want to see transport transformed into a technology business. With ridesharing, the Opal card, the use of big data and the

ongoing initiatives across the smart phone technology space, New South Wales is incredibly well placed to lead the world in this regard.

In April there will be a two-day summit that will be attended by the best minds and thought leaders on the application of technology and transport from around the world. There are some big names attending. They will bring to our city and State ideas that will transform the network and start to move people in ways that we have never seen before. Transport NSW will be announcing a number of ongoing key initiatives to improve the customer experience. We recently partnered with Woolworths on the Click & Collect initiative, which allows people to order their groceries online in the morning and pick them up at the train station in the afternoon on the way home. A trial has commenced at Bondi Junction and we are expecting to roll out a trial across Western Sydney. It is a smart way to ensure that customers receive the benefit of not rushing to the supermarket after work but ordering groceries online and picking them up on the way home.

There are further entrants in the ridesharing space. Only this morning it was reported that GoCar will increase competition in the liberated booking space of the point to point transport market. This would not be happening without direct action by the Government. The big data collected courtesy of Opal is being used to plan better transport services and timetables. Yesterday I was joined by the member for Kiama to announce a number of initiatives that improve the express services out of Austinmer. That was due to the big data available through Opal. Pleasingly, today I can confirm and announce for regional customers the ability to use real-time data in terms of train and coach movements around the State.

People in the bush have become used to the Fires Near Me app run by the Rural Fire Service. The Government is now throwing open the data to the private sector and allowing it to utilise the information to develop smart phone applications that can improve the customer experience. In regional New South Wales there will be enormous opportunities for commuters to rely on transport apps such as Triptastic, Arrivo, TripView and Moovit—the list goes on. We live in an age of incredible change in the transport space. One of the key components of the April summit will be the use of autonomous vehicles in terms of driverless cars. A driverless train is being built at the moment for the Sydney metro and there will be driverless buses in the future. We live in an exciting age and the Government will ensure that Transport for NSW is number one when it comes to technology.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I remind the member for Kiama that he is on three calls to order. If he continues to interject he will be removed from the Chamber.

#### **MEMBER FOR EAST HILLS AND UNAUTHORISED ELECTION MATERIAL**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** I direct my question to the Premier. As the Minister responsible for electoral matters, what action has he taken in response to residents' concerns about the distribution of unauthorised material in the electorate of East Hills, seeking to link candidates to paedophiles?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will come to order.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** I have answered this question. Allegations have been made and are being investigated. The member for East Hills has denied the allegations. All of sudden, those opposite are raising smear and allegations. They did this last week.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** They came in here last week with all types of allegations and we have not heard a word since. As I have said, if this is the Opposition's new approach it can do that. But the responsibility has to come back to the leader. It is the leader who is overseeing this strategy and it is the leader who must be held to account for it.

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** Point of order—

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

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** It is relevance. The Premier spoke about leadership responsibility and that is what I am asking him to show.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I have ruled that the Premier is being relevant to the question. The member for Maitland will not use a point of order as a debating point. There is no point of order.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** We are letting the authorities investigate what they need to investigate. The member for Maitland makes a big song and dance about regional New South Wales and her electorate. Backbench members ask these sorts of questions; frontbench members do not want to do it. The dream team did, for some reason; I do not know why the member did it. It is no wonder the Leader of the Opposition's judgement is questionable when he undertakes this sort of strategy. It is no wonder that when new leadership teams come forward all of a sudden, such as the dream team, they engage in this behaviour. When the dream team first emerged through the media as the new hope of the Labor Party the member for Keira turned to Facebook and posted, "In the middle of eating dinner with my family and I heard my name mentioned as taking over as the new leader of the New South Wales ALP". He could not eat anymore.

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** Point of order: I refer to Standing Order 73. The Premier is casting aspersions on the character of people who are willing to stand up for their community.

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

*[Interruption]*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Maitland will remove herself from the Chamber for a period of one hour. Her behaviour was completely unwarranted, given the nature of the questions and the imputations contained therein. The member will not pull faces at the Premier.

*[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Maitland left the Chamber at 3.09 p.m.]*

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** Hello pot, where's your kettle? The member for Keira was on social media talking about the dream team. At the end of his message he said, "By the way, it's not happening. I support my leader." The other member of the dream team, the member for Strathfield, said, "I'm in, too. Yep, I heard my name mentioned."

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order: I refer to Standing Order 129, relevance.

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

**Ms Jodi McKay:** The Premier knows this is not relevant.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Sometimes members get the answers they deserve. All Opposition questions today have been borderline out of order. The member for Strathfield will resume her seat.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** She went on, "Apparently I was unavailable for comment. I was free all day to take a phone call." Where were all the requests for the member to join the dream team? She waited and waited, but the phone never rang. It is no wonder members of the team dream or dream team, whatever it is, are talking about that, given the judgement of the Leader of the Opposition.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order: I refer again to Standing Order 129. This is a serious matter



relating to the behaviour of—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Strathfield will resume her seat. This is not a debate; I will rule on the matter. There is no point of order.

### **RESOURCES FOR REGIONS**

**Mr ANDREW GEE:** I address my question to the Minister for Regional Development. How is the Government delivering for regional mining communities?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Strathfield to order for the second time. If she continues to interject she will be removed from the Chamber. I call the member for Cessnock to order for the second time.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** The member for Orange is a true champion for regional New South Wales and the communities of the electorate of Orange in advocating to ensure that they get their fair share. This Government prides itself on honouring its election commitments: When it makes a commitment it is honoured. It has made commitments with regard to the provision of road and rail infrastructure, schools and hospitals across metropolitan and regional New South Wales and it has a record of delivering.

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

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** The Resources for Regions program provides a mechanism to invest in regional communities that are impacted by the mining industry. The Government recognises the importance of the mining industry in creating jobs in regional New South Wales. It has a balanced approach to mining activities making a contribution to the economy and to ensuring that regional communities continue to have opportunities to grow. However, the Government also accepts and understands that communities that have mining in their backyard also feel its unique impact. This Government's Resources for Regions program provides an opportunity to invest in infrastructure and amenities for those communities that are impacted by mining. We know it is a good program when the Hon. Mick Veitch, MLC, says that one of the Australian Labor Party's greatest mistakes during the 2011 election campaign was not having a resources for regions fund. That is an admission by Opposition members that they know this Government's Resources for Regions program is returning resources to and investing in regional New South Wales.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Government members will come to order. The Minister does not require any assistance.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** We also know that during the 2015 election campaign, the Opposition planned to destroy the coalmining industry in an attempt to grab votes from the minority parties. Members opposite wanted to destroy 100,000 jobs and this State's economy. We heard earlier from the Treasurer that many jobs have been created in the past 12 months in this State, but more important from my perspective is that 77,800 jobs have been created in regional New South Wales. Many sectors have played an important role in creating those jobs. I read a statement from the member for Maitland in the *Maitland Mercury* made in response to the Government's announcement about jobs growth. She said, "As far as I am aware, it hasn't changed." She is completely out of touch with what is happening in her own backyard in regional New South Wales.

The Government accepts that sectors like mining are in decline, but other sectors are emerging and creating jobs. Through the Government's Jobs Action Plan it is working with industry to ensure that jobs are created across regional New South Wales. Of the 77,800 new jobs created in regional New South Wales, 17,000 were created in the Central West. That is a result of this Government's commitment to ensuring that regional New South Wales shares in the benefits and the prosperity that result from government and private sector investment. The Government is leveraging tax dollars to create jobs, to

grow the economy and, of course, to provide opportunities for our regional communities.

The Leader of the Opposition said during the 2015 election campaign that the Australian Labor Party was interested in future discussions with mining stakeholders about a resources for regions-type program. The Opposition is talking while the Government is delivering. While members opposite are having discussions this Government is delivering. What have members opposite done during the 12 months since the election as a result of talking with councils and stakeholders? They have done zero—the centre of a donut. They have done nothing in this space in preparing a policy setting to provide resources for regions.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Point of order: I refer to Standing Order 129. Can the Minister confirm that the Resources for Regions program—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister's answer is entirely relevant to the question. The member for Cessnock will resume his seat.

**Pursuant to standing order additional information provided.**

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** I do not know why the member for Cessnock gets so upset about the Resource for Regions program. Cessnock and Singleton have received \$16.7 million for the planning of road upgrades in his electorate. He should thank the Government. During the 2015 election campaign the Deputy Premier and Minister responsible, the Hon. Troy Grant, committed the Government to expanding the fund criteria. It has announced a \$32 million funding round and has expanded the criteria to provide opportunities for local government authorities which may not have mining in their backyard but which may nevertheless be impacted. Those local government authorities in regional New South Wales will now have the opportunity to apply for funding to ensure that they get the investment in infrastructure that they need to support their communities.

Unlike members opposite, who when they want something tweet and attack the Government, the member for Lake Macquarie came to my office to speak to me about expanding the fund. I congratulate him on doing that. This fund is about investing in regional infrastructure that makes a difference. Over the past four years, \$208 million has been invested in regional New South Wales through the Resources for Regions program. In addition, \$20 million has been spent on the Muswellbrook Hospital emergency department upgrade, and \$6 million has been spent to upgrade the livestock markets at Singleton, which the member for Upper Hunter recently opened. The Government has also spent \$10 million to replace the Portland Waste Water Treatment Plant. Before I hear the question "What about Maitland?", I advise the local member that \$9.9 million has been spent on the renovation of High Street. As members know, \$506 million has been spent on upgrades in Newcastle. This Government is committed to delivering for the people of regional New South Wales, growing the economy, growing jobs and supporting regional communities.

#### **MEMBER FOR EAST HILLS AND COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING**

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** I direct my question to the member for East Hills in his capacity as chair of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Environment and Planning. How many reports has the committee delivered since he was elected chair of that committee following the election last year?

**Mr Anthony Roberts:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 127. Madam Speaker, I ask you to rule the question out of order.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! A question may be directed to the chair of a committee so long as it is relevant to the business of the committee. I believe the relevant standing order refers to "the affairs of the committee". The question is in order.

**Mr GLENN BROOKES:** I refer the member for Maroubra to the public record. If he has a look at it he will be able to see for himself.

**Question time concluded at 3.20 p.m.**

## **LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**

### **Report**

**Mr Michael Johnsen**, as Chair, tabled the report of the Legislation Review Committee entitled "Legislation Review Digest No. 13", dated 23 February 2016, together with minutes of the committee meeting regarding Legislation Review Digest No. 12/56, dated 16 February 2016.

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

## **BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

### **Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Motion Accorded Priority**

**Motion by Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS agreed to:**

That standing and sessional orders be suspended at this sitting to postpone the commencement of Government business until the conclusion of the motion accorded priority.

## **CONDUCT DIVISION OF THE JUDICIAL COMMISSION OF NEW SOUTH WALES**

### **Appointment of Community Representatives**

**Motion by Ms GABRIELLE UPTON, by leave, agreed to:**

That, pursuant to clause 4 of Schedule 2A of the Judicial Officers Act 1986:

- (1) This House nominates Ken Moroney, AO, APM, and Professor Nalini Joshi as community representatives for appointment to a panel of the Conduct Division of the Judicial Commission of New South Wales.
- (2) A message be sent requesting the Legislative Council's concurrence in the nominations.

## **PETITIONS**

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

### **Powerhouse Museum Ultimo**

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

### **Edgecliff Railway Station and Interchange**

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

### **Surry Hills Light Rail Station**

Petition calling on the Government to build a second light rail station in Surry Hills at the Wimbo Park-Olivia Gardens site, using appropriate landscaping to minimise visual and noise impacts and provide a quality park for the local community, received from **Ms Jenny Leong**.

#### **Inner-city Social Housing**

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

#### **Tenants Advice and Advocacy Services**

Petition requesting the Government increase funding for Tenants Advice and Advocacy Services and that the funding continue to grow in line with the increase in tenants, and that the interest on bonds returned to tenants be paid at a higher rate of interest, received from **Dr Geoff Lee**.

#### **Pet Shops**

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

#### **Slaughterhouse Monitoring**

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

**The Clerk announced that the following petition signed by more than 500 persons was 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**.

### **CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO BE ACCORDED PRIORITY**

#### **Jobs Creation**

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS** (Castle Hill—Parliamentary Secretary) [3.24 p.m.]: We could not be discussing a more important issue on behalf of the people of New South Wales than the creation of jobs. Apart from the record investment of \$68.5 billion by this Government into critical infrastructure, the investment of more than \$20 billion from the proceeds of the lease of the poles and wires, this Government places an extraordinary focus on ensuring that it provides jobs for the communities of New South Wales. On that measure this Government has given us a lot to be grateful for. Since 2011, 300,500 jobs have been created and, importantly, half of those jobs have been created in regional and rural areas. The Minister for Small Business, the representative of that great electorate of Monaro, stated that 17,000 of those jobs were created in the Central West, an area that is particularly close to my heart.

Recently I had an opportunity to travel through the Monaro and to talk to farmers and others. Right across New South Wales the business community and the wider community are grateful that finally we have a government that provides not only the infrastructure they need—the public transport and the roads, or the health and educational facilities that the Opposition does not want to talk about—but also the opportunities for young people and communities by creating jobs. There is much to celebrate about this Government's initiatives—whether it be payroll tax deductions or the millions of dollars of support for regional and rural communities and communities in other parts of New South Wales—which will create

jobs that are so necessary for the future. There will never be a greater creator of jobs than what we are witnessing at the moment. This record investment in infrastructure has created thousands of jobs and it will continue to do so. No motion is more important or more deserving of being accorded priority than this one. Let us compare the record of this Government with the record of the Labor Government when there was record unemployment in this State. This Government has turned that around and it will continue to work hard to ensure that this State remains number one.

### **TAFE Funding**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY** (Swansea) [3.27 p.m.]: With the return of students for the 2016 TAFE year yesterday, one thing has become abundantly clear: The Liberal-Nationals Government has taken a wrecking ball to our TAFE system. The destructive plan that this Government has implemented for our TAFE is ripping it to shreds. Under the Baird Government's Smart and Skilled program, student enrolments are down by more than 40,000, with 80,000 fewer students enrolled in TAFE than in 2012. Thousands of TAFE teachers and staff have been sacked. I take this opportunity to ask Government members why they do not tell the truth about their agenda for our TAFE system.

The so-called Smart and Skilled program is nothing more than a poorly disguised ideological attack on public vocational education by a bunch of free marketeers hell-bent on crushing the future of thousands of people eager to get the skills that they need to get a good job—people like those who live in my electorate of Swansea. The people in the electorate of Swansea are very worried about our local campus, Belmont TAFE. As one of the 25 campuses earmarked by the Minister for closure, opportunities for our young people to train and take apprenticeships will be gone, and so will the opportunities for those in my electorate who want to reskill or retrain.

With youth unemployment at 12.4 per cent, young people should be provided with an affordable avenue to enter the workforce by learning new skills or retraining to get a good job. Instead this Government is forcing students to abandon studies as they simply cannot afford an education under this regime. Just last week, the Minister admitted on ABC Radio that he would be finding "more efficiencies" in the TAFE sector and he flagged further cuts to "backroom positions". We know what that is, Minister—that is code for further cuts. Heaven only knows from where the Minister will cut them as they have already been cut to the bone.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! Members will remain silent.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** More than 2,500 jobs for teachers and educational support staff were cut in 2014-15. Over the past three years the jobs of more than 3,600 TAFE teachers have been axed and more jobs will be cut.

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

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** The Minister should hang his head in shame. The Premier also should hang his head in shame. I draw the attention of members to the *Sydney Morning Herald* editorial of 14 January 2016 entitled "Empty classrooms and empty gestures ...". I lay that article on the table of the House.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! The member's time has expired. I direct the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms to remove the member for Prospect from the Chamber for the remainder of the day.

*[Pursuant to standing order the member for Prospect left the Chamber, accompanied by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms.]*

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! I direct the member for Canterbury to remove herself from the Chamber for a period of one hour.

*[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Canterbury left the Chamber at 3.30 p.m.]*

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

**The House divided.**

**Ayes, 48**

Mr Anderson	Mr Grant	Mr Provest
Mr Aplin	Mr Gulaptis	Mr Rowell
Mr Baird	Mr Hazzard	Mr Sidoti
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 Maguire	Mr Ward
Mr Dominello	Mr Marshall	Mr Williams
Mr Elliott	Mr Notley-Smith	Mrs Williams
Mr Evans	Mr O'Dea	
Mr Fraser	Mrs Pavey	
Mr Gee	Mr Perrottet	<i>Tellers,</i>
Ms Gibbons	Ms Petinos	Mr Bromhead
Ms Goward	Mr Piccoli	Mr Patterson

**Noes, 33**

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

**Pairs**

Mr Ayres	Ms Hay
Mrs Davies	Mr Kamper
Mrs Skinner	Mr Minns

**Question resolved in the affirmative.**

## **JOB CREATION**

### **Motion Accorded Priority**

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS** (Castle Hill—Parliamentary Secretary) [3.38 p.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that 300,500 jobs have been created since 2011 under the policies of the Government.
- (2) Notes that New South Wales created more jobs in the last 12 months than all other States combined.
- (3) Notes that under the previous Government, New South Wales had the lowest employment growth of any State.
- (4) Acknowledges the Government has well and truly made New South Wales number one again.

I commence this debate by outlining the figures to indicate where we are in this current term. One year into this term, this Government has helped to create half of the jobs that have been created nationally. Those who have listened to the comments of the Prime Minister of Australia will know that 300,000 jobs have been created nationally, and exactly half of those jobs have been created right here in New South Wales. The great news about that is—and The Nationals know this only too well—of those 150,000 jobs, some 75,000 have been created in rural and regional New South Wales.

There can be no greater measure of a government than its ability to create jobs because jobs provide opportunities for everybody. Job growth provides sustainability for families. It provides families with the ability to create wealth and to use that wealth to buy houses and raise their children. In turn, prosperity grows right across the nation. The Baird Government has a very proud record. Since April 2015, 118,700 jobs have been created in New South Wales—more than any other State. Let us compare that with the preceding government. In the last year 150,000 have been created; in the last two terms of the former Labor Government less than a quarter of that number were created. That highlights the stark difference between the economic and financial management of the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government and the former Labor Government. I think that is quite remarkable.

In the current budget the Government has invested \$68.5 billion in infrastructure, including funding for roads, rail and hospitals in the Sydney metropolitan area. Two new hospitals will be created through the funds received from the poles and wires. Those two hospitals will be at Campbelltown and Rouse Hill—two of the largest growth areas in the north and south of Sydney. We have had significant growth in New South Wales, especially in those areas of metropolitan Sydney and there is a need to provide health services for those communities. We have also had the greatest number of housing approvals in the past 50 years. Last year there were some 60,000 housing approvals for people moving to this great State of New South Wales; it is projected that in the next 15 or 16 years more than 100,000 people will move to New South Wales, and the large majority of those 1.6 million people will move to Western Sydney. That is why this Government is committed to improving infrastructure in Western Sydney and to providing jobs not only in Western Sydney but across New South Wales, including rural and regional areas.

This is a good news story but this Government will not be resting on its laurels. There is much more to do. With an increased population there will be an increased demand for jobs. The Government is working very hard through initiatives such as the payroll tax deduction initiative to support business and to encourage investment in Western Sydney and across New South Wales. I am very proud to be part of a government that is focused on employment.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY** (Maroubra) [3.43 p.m.]: I agree with the member for Castle Hill that the strength of jobs growth and the unemployment rate in a state or nation is an indication of its health. At the moment New South Wales is enjoying a confluence of factors, which is very rare. Pent-up demand in the housing industry is driving jobs growth. There have also been historically low interest rates and high population growth in New South Wales and nationally. The Government can take no credit for any of those factors—individually or combined. With the confluence of those factors, particularly the very low interest rates, the New South Wales economy should be doing better.

The current, conservative Government inherited an economy and a budget that were in excellent shape. New South Wales had a AAA credit rating. Labor went into the global financial crisis having delivered a budget surplus in every single year of government. We dipped into deficit for one year and came out of the global financial crisis—which is a matter of great pride—without having to sack one single government worker to get the budget back into the black within one year. Contrast that with the opening salvo of this Government on its own workers in March 2011. The first thing it did was to sack 15,000 workers. The Government cannot crow about efforts to grow the economy when, as if it were a badge of honour, the Premier and Treasurer called government workers fat cats and bludgers and proceeded to sack 15,000 of them.

In its last two years in government Labor created 200,000 jobs. That was not during a mining boom or when the economy was rocking along; it was post-global financial crisis. This Government cannot match that. I remind the House that when Labor left office the employment rate in New South Wales was 5.1 per cent; it is now 5.5 per cent. About 35,000 more people are now out of work than when we were last in office. That is not an improvement. With all the economic circumstances that have been bestowed upon this Government, through no good work of its own, it should be doing better. Thirty-five thousand people being out of work is not a good indication of a State economy that is rocking along. In fact, 14,500 people lost their jobs last month. Members opposite should remember those sobering facts when they move these self-congratulatory motions.

One of the avenues open to the Government to help improve the economy and the budget, and to get people into work, is a capital expenditure program. I have pointed out many times in this place, in press releases and at press conferences that up to the end of December 2015—over the previous four years—this Government had underspent its own capital expenditure budget by more than \$5 billion. That means that tens of thousands of people who should have been employed were not. That is why these figures are worse than they need to be. The Premier's response is to slash \$1.7 billion from education and destroy TAFE. If there is one lever that a government can pull to nobble its future economic prosperity it is to rip into the education sector. That is what Premier Mike Baird is doing. Add to that Malcolm Turnbull's cuts, which are to begin next year, of \$1 billion to education. Premier Mike Baird's only offering to get people back into work is to burden families with a 50 per cent rise in the goods and services tax. He wants to araldite to that economic shock, leaving bracket creep in place until the mid-1920s. Ripping young people out of work and destroying TAFE is not something members of the Government should come in here and crow about.

**Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN** (Upper Hunter) [3.48 p.m.]: I have great pleasure in supporting the motion of the member for Castle Hill. This is an important motion for all the people of New South Wales, including those in regional areas of New South Wales, which are very dear to my heart. I reiterate that since April 2011 the New South Wales Government has created around 300,500 jobs in New South Wales—more than any other State. Since April 2015, 118,700 jobs were created in New South Wales—the highest number of any State—and to January 2016, 168,800 were created. Our economy is



definitely surging ahead. Compared to the rest of the country we have very strong jobs growth. In January 2016 our unemployment rate was 5.5 per cent—the lowest number of any State in the nation. Our unemployment rate has been at or below the national average now for 26 consecutive months. In the Labor Government's second last term, New South Wales created 16 per cent of the jobs in Australia; in its last term, New South Wales created 26 per cent of the jobs in Australia. To date, this Coalition Government has created more than 51 per cent of the jobs in Australia.

The statistics for the Hunter region are interesting. In the past year 306,200 people were employed in the region—an increase of 19,200 people or 6.7 per cent. Over the same period employment in New South Wales increased by 4.7 per cent. In December 2015 youth unemployment in the Hunter had reduced from 15.6 per cent to 13.3 per cent. I take this opportunity to mention three businesses that have benefited from the policies of the Baird-Grant Government. In 2015, in the electorate of Maitland, assistance was confirmed to support the expansion of CellSera Australia's laboratory at Rutherford to produce animal sera for cell culture. This has created 15 new jobs. In 2015, in the electorate of Newcastle, support was provided to Hoffman Engineering to set up a Newcastle-based operation and employ up to 25 staff. In 2014, in the electorate of Port Stephens, assistance was confirmed to assist Bohemia Interactive relocate to a new facility and employ six more staff. I note that the members for the electorates of Maitland and Port Stephens are not in the Chamber; at least the member for Newcastle is here— *[Time expired.]*

**Ms PRUE CAR** (Londonderry) [3.51 p.m.]: I thank the member for Castle Hill for the opportunity to talk about jobs in this motion accorded priority. We can all agree on the importance of employment to our economy and to the lives of the people of this great State, but the motion glosses over some important figures. One statistic that turns the Government's argument on its head is the number of people who are losing their jobs. Last month 14,500 people lost their jobs. What does the Government have to say about that? The member for Castle Hill crowed about the creation of jobs but did not address the net figures. That is where we are being misled. This is political spin at its best, and is very misleading to the people of New South Wales.

Despite what the Government may have us believe, in South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania unemployment rates recently dropped. What has happened in New South Wales? Unemployment rates have gone up. The Government does not want the good people of this State to know that 33,500 more people are out of work than when it came to office in 2011. In Western Sydney the jobs issue is widely felt. Indeed, the labour market deficit of 200,000 is crippling Western Sydney. This is unacceptable. In a region with a population set to grow to three million by 2031, fewer local jobs will mean more cars on the road, more congestion, a lower quality of life and poorer health outcomes—with diabetes rates five times more than on the North Shore.

Since being elected in 2011 the Government has made lofty promises about creating jobs in Western Sydney but very little has happened. The Ambulance Service of NSW, NSW Sport and Recreation and Service NSW have all failed to move westwards, despite a commitment by former Premier O'Farrell in 2014 to do so. The recently announced plan to move the Department of Education will not be completed until 2020, and whilst we wait the population of Western Sydney will explode. Youth unemployment in the area is also twice the regional average. What is the Government doing about it? As we heard from the member for Swansea, it is cutting TAFE services. Do not believe the spin from this Government; unemployment in this State is rising.

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS** (Castle Hill—Parliamentary Secretary) [3.54 p.m.], in reply: I would find it remarkable if Opposition members were to oppose this motion. The creation of jobs in this State is factual—people can check the records of the Australian Bureau of Statistics—and there is much to celebrate. As I said, since coming to office we have invested more than \$4 billion in job creation initiatives across the State and more than \$100 million to assist businesses across regional New South Wales. The Premier recently announced that more than 1,800 public servants are set to move to Western Sydney. This will be a major jobs boost for Western Sydney, including the electorate of the member for

Londonderry. The Premier recognises the importance of Western Sydney as the economic powerhouse of New South Wales and we will do everything possible to further strengthen that dynamic region. The Rebuilding NSW plan will provide a \$20 billion boost to infrastructure and grow the economy by an extra \$300 billion. The Government will build much-needed infrastructure to get New South Wales moving and create even more jobs for this State into the future. Sydney Metro City and Southwest, WestConnex, new hospitals and schools will all be built from Rebuilding NSW funding.

In 2013, on behalf of the Premier, it was my great pleasure to open Sydney Business Park, a private investment by the Wearne and Singh families. Once this 264 hectare site, which is virtually on the corner of the M7 and Richmond Road, is completed it will provide 17,000 jobs. The New South Wales Government has invested record amounts of funding into Richmond Road, which is at the front of the development. The Government has also earmarked the corridor for the extension of the Sydney Metro Northwest to go right to the door of that hub. The Sydney Business Park dovetails into the back of Mount Druitt and no-one was prouder than I, along with the Federal member for Chifley, the Hon. Ed Husic, to open it. We were both aware of the high youth unemployment rate at Mount Druitt. This development will lift the area and provide much-needed jobs. I am proud to be part of a government that is helping to deliver that.

**Question—That the motion be agreed to—put.**

**The House divided.**

**Ayes, 49**

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

**Noes, 30**

Mr Atalla	Ms Harrison	Mr Robertson
Mr Barr	Ms Haylen	Ms K. Smith
Ms Car	Mr Hoenig	Ms T. F. Smith
Ms Catley	Ms Hornery	Ms Washington
Mr Chanthivong	Ms Leong	Ms Watson
Mr Crakanthorp	Mr Lynch	Mr Zangari
Mr Daley	Ms McKay	

Mr Dib  
Ms Doyle  
Ms Finn  
Mr Harris

Mr Mehan  
Ms Mihailuk  
Mr Park  
Mr Parker

*Tellers,*  
Mr Lulich  
Mr Warren

### **Pairs**

Mr Ayres  
Mr Baird  
Mrs Davies  
Mrs Skinner

Mr Foley  
Ms Hay  
Mr Kamper  
Mr Minns

**Question resolved in the affirmative.**

**Motion agreed to.**

**Pursuant to resolution Government business proceeded with.**

## **GOVERNMENT SECTOR EMPLOYMENT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2016**

### **Second Reading**

**Debate resumed from 17 February 2016.**

**Mr RYAN PARK** (Keira) [4.07 p.m.]: On behalf of the Labor Opposition in this place, and representing my good friend and colleague the Hon. Adam Searle who has carriage of the bill in the other place, I state at the outset that Labor will not oppose the Government Sector Employment Amendment Bill 2016 in this place.

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

**Mr RYAN PARK:** However, we reserve the right to move amendments to the bill in the other place. This bill will amend the Government Sector Employment Act, Health Services Act, Police Act and Transport Administration Act to align employment arrangements for senior executives in the NSW Health Service, the NSW Police Force and Transport for NSW with the employment arrangements for senior executives in the public service under the Government Sector Employment Act 2013. It will bring employment arrangements for non-executive employees of the NSW Police Force, those who are not sworn police officers, into line with the employment arrangements for non-executive employees of the public service. It will also facilitate the mobility of senior executives to move between the public service, police, transport and health, which is something that many fine public servants have done over a number of years. They have moved to agencies and used their skills as reforms by governments of all persuasions have been implemented.

The bill makes consequential amendments to the Government Sector Employment Act, including provisions dealing with the transfer and secondment of government sector employees between agencies and the termination of employment and compensation payable to senior executives. As Labor highlighted previously in debate on the Government Sector Employment Act, the absence of substantive rights in the area of termination is an issue in the public service. This issue will be extended into the areas of health, police and transport. The bill will now explicitly exclude Crown law officers from the summary removal provisions of the Government Sector Employment Act, which is a positive move. The Hon. Adam Searle

raised this issue and moved unsuccessful amendments to the Government Sector Employment Act in the other place. I thank the Hon. Adam Searle for his work in this area and congratulate the Government on heeding Labor's warning.

The bill provides for the reinstatement or re-employment of senior executives in circumstances where the Public Service Commissioner believes their employment was terminated in reprisal for a public interest disclosure. The absence of statutory provisions for the reinstatement of senior executives, including circumstances in which the termination was in reprisal for a public interest disclosure, has been raised in the past with the Public Service Commissioner. Clause 84A of the Government Sector Employment Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 addresses this point but there may be issues with the drafting. The explanatory note states it is intended that the new provision will cover the public service and extend also to senior executives in health, transport and police. It is not clear from the drafting that this objective is achieved properly. The Labor Opposition will give this matter further thought and review, and reserves its right to seek to amend the bill in the other place.

The bill will also allow for control over senior health, police and transport employees by the Public Service Commissioner through the Government Sector Employment Rules, which will be extended beyond the public service. These rules are determined by the Public Service Commissioner but are not able to be scrutinised or disallowed by the Parliament, as with other delegated legislation. The Public Service Commissioner will be required to consult the New South Wales Commissioner of Police, the Secretary of NSW Health, and the Secretary of NSW Transport about the content of the proposed rules; they will not have any veto. The Labor Opposition is concerned about the potential for overcentralisation and remains concerned about the Government Sector Employment Rules legislation more generally. This has been articulated clearly in previous debates.

Another area of concern is remuneration, benefits and allowances for senior executives. The bill permits remuneration packages to be awarded to senior executives that are outside the range determined for the position under the Statutory Officers Remuneration Act 1975. This would permit remuneration increases for senior executives well outside government wages policy. Hardworking graded public sector workers will remain under the 2.5 per cent wages policy cap while senior executives will be able to obtain packages outside what regular public sector workers can achieve. It sends the wrong message to hundreds of thousands of working people who are delivering front-line services each and every day to the community.

There are concerns with the termination provisions proposed for senior executives in the police area, particularly those who are sworn officers, and the interaction between holding a police office, the availability of superannuation entitlements and the potential impact of the proposed termination provisions on those entitlements. It is potentially an issue that will require further scrutiny. There may be other areas of concern not mentioned in this contribution. I have had discussions with the Hon. Adam Searle, who has said that he is considering in detail the issues I have raised today. As the shadow Minister with responsibility for the bill, he reserves the right to move amendments to it in the other place. I emphasise that the Opposition will not oppose the bill in this place. However, the Opposition may look to strengthen the legislation through amendments moved in the other place.

**Mr MARK COURE** (Oatley) [4.14 p.m.]: I speak in debate on the Government Sector Employment Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. Since 2011 the Government has been transforming the way it manages people in the public sector: Performance management is mandated by legislation; recruitment is now based on capability rather than technical knowledge; streamlined executive structures provide better accountability and flexibility; attention is focused on talent management, with the establishment of a leadership academy; new legislative settings support people to be mobile across the sector bringing their skills, knowledge and experience to new areas and building their careers; and the Government has promoted enhanced executive mobility, portability of contracts and enhanced executive performance management with a focus on career development to become an employer of choice.

The New South Wales Government is the largest employer in Australia, which opens up unparalleled opportunities, for example, in life experience. Public sector roles focus on transportable capabilities for executives and non-executives. There are more opportunities to learn from experience through reassignment, secondment, transfer to different agencies across the public sector, or temporary assignment to the non-government sector. This bill extends and reinforces the opportunities for senior executives across the government and public sector, and improves the attractiveness of executive employment in New South Wales. We want to attract the best possible people at the right time in the right place to lead the delivery of critical front-line services for the people of New South Wales.

This bill and the Government Sector Employment Act 2013 sustain a contemporary executive employment framework for the whole of the government sector under which executive employment arrangements in health, police and transport will be enshrined in the public service. This bill will bring the total number of executive employees covered by the executive reforms to approximately 2,700, including 2,000 in the public service, 480 executives in the transport senior service, more than 165 executives in the health executive service; and a total of 85 police executives. Each senior executive across the four service areas—public service, health, police and transport—will have a written employment contract containing model terms and conditions.

The Public Service Commissioner may, in consultation with transport, police and health services, develop Government Sector Employment Rules that provide model contracts of employment for these agencies. The contracts will include terms and conditions of employment, such as the nature of the engagement, whether ongoing or time limited; the band in which the executive is employed; remuneration with other conditions; and provision for compensation upon termination. Most importantly, executive contracts will be portable. They will facilitate executive mobility within and across four services without the need to terminate the contract or provide for compensation. It makes common sense. Senior executives will make their contract with them when they move senior executive bands to another service or agency.

Performance management is now mandated by the Government Sector Employment Act 2013 and is the key government reform for the sector. The reform agenda for senior executives includes having the required skill, knowledge and abilities to deliver against agreed results. The head of a government sector agency is responsible for developing and implementing a performance management system under the Government Sector Employment Act 2013. That Act lists the core requirements of performance management systems for government sector agencies. This applies to health, police and transport agencies. The New South Wales Public Sector Performance Development Framework sets the approach for managing all aspects of employee performance.

Model contracts for executives now employed in the public service include performance obligations. Similarly, the bill provides that health, police or transport senior executive contracts may deal with: performance obligations, reviews of performance of the executive, and progression in remuneration based on performance. The Government Sector Employment Act 2013 promotes mobility in the public service by supporting the deployment of workforce resources where they are most needed to meet service delivery priorities. The bill will extend this to health, transport and police executives. The bill will allow flexible assignment of executives to priority service delivery areas. It will also allow executives to be mobile across not only their own service but also the public service in general and the other aligned services. It is also an opportunity for executives to broaden their experience and improve their career prospects.

Each executive will be employed in a band and assigned to a role within that band. They may be reassigned to different roles in the same band in response to changing priorities and to develop capabilities. Executives, other than sworn police executives, may be transferred to roles across the public service and the three aligned services to meet emerging priorities and to develop capabilities. For reasons of appointment and the exercise of policing duties, sworn police officer executives will not be included in the cross-service transfer provisions, but can continue to be seconded on a short-term basis to other government agencies. The bill provides an aligned employment framework in legislation that will

deliver a more capable, flexible and focused leadership group to lead the Government's reform agenda for better service delivery to the public. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr GUY ZANGARI** (Fairfield) [4.22 p.m.]: I make a brief contribution to debate on the Government Sector Employment Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. The Opposition will not oppose this legislation. The purpose of the bill is to amend the Government Sector Employment Act, also known as the GSE Act, and to enact changes to the legislation that govern NSW Health, NSW Police Force and Transport for NSW employees to make similar changes as were made to the public service in the Government Sector Employment Act 2013.

The first thing worth noting about this legislation is that it aims to align employment arrangements for senior executives in NSW Health, the NSW Police Force and Transport for NSW with the new employment arrangements for public service senior executives under the Government Sector Employment Act. Further, it attempts to align employment arrangements for employees of the NSW Police Force who are not police officers, such as administrative employees, with the new employment arrangements for non-executive employees of the public service under the Government Sector Employment Act. Included in this overhaul is the ability to reinstate formerly terminated senior executives in the public service, health, police and transport if they were terminated from their duties due to making a public interest disclosure. Should the reinstatement to their former role be impracticable, they are to be re-employed in another government sector agency.

Amendments proposed in this bill will also enable the transfer and assignment of public sector senior executives to NSW Health, the NSW Police Force, other than as police officers, and Transport for NSW. It is also worth noting that other amendments in the bill provide for the transfer of senior executives from those other services to the public service as well. This bill makes a number of consequential amendments to the Government Sector Employment Act by extending the misconduct provisions of the Act to findings of guilt for offences in addition to convictions, and also to interstate offences. Further, this expressly excludes statutory Crown law officers from provisions of the Government Sector Employment Act that enable the summary removal of those statutory officers from office. This legislation also enables the Public Service Commissioner or the Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet to appoint a person or persons to act on behalf of the commissioner or the secretary for the purposes of conducting inquiries into the administration or management of a government sector agency.

In line with the Government Sector Employment Act, the Health Services Act 1997, Police Act 1990 and the Transportation Act 1988 will be amended to reflect the numerous changes regarding senior executive, non-senior executive and new employee arrangements to be enacted under this legislation. The proposed amendments also include provisions for transitional arrangements to be made where necessary to ensure that there are no major disruptions as a result of this legislative change. As I said, the Opposition does not oppose the bill.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS** (Ku-ring-gai) [4.26 p.m.]: I am happy to support the Government Sector Employment Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. Through the bill this Government again demonstrates its commitment to transforming New South Wales for the better. The importance of this reform is highlighted by the context of this legislation. The New South Wales Government employs many more people than any of the largest private employers in Australia. It employs more people than Woolworths, Coles, Telstra, the National Australia Bank, the Commonwealth Bank, Australia Post or Qantas. It also employs more people than the Commonwealth Government. It is the biggest employer in the country, spending more than \$60 billion on New South Wales public services. It is therefore essential not only to the citizens of New South Wales but also to the national economy that the New South Wales public sector operates as efficiently as it can and that it is the best it can be.

I will make some observations about management and leadership in the New South Wales public sector. Under the guidance of the Premier this Government has provided innovation to the public sector with initiatives such as the Leadership Academy established by the Premier. It recognises that leadership

and management are important because we need to modernise the management of our public sector. This bill is another step forward in recognising the importance of leadership in the public sector following on from the 2013 Government Sector Employment Act. The bill recognises that management is an important skill and specialisation in itself. While the context, both technical and physical, in which management might operate can change, the skills of good management and leadership are universal. Management skills can be applied in different business environments and, critically—as this bill recognises—in different government departments. The ability of the upper echelons of the public sector to be mobile within different government agencies under the bill is highly desirable.

The bill will help to break down silos within the New South Wales public sector. It will allow pockets of innovation to spread outside the bed in which they have germinated. Broader thinking will be encouraged as the cross-pollination within public sector management is further promoted and dispersed. Internal competition will promote excellence and flow down through the public sector. Incentive is incredibly important for humans to excel in whatever they do. It is as important to the leadership in the public sector as it is to their subordinates. Opportunity for managers to progress should not be limited to those in the private sector whose management can go from enterprise to enterprise. The dynamic forces of risk and incentive should not be confined to the private sector. The importance of incentive in any career path is that it stops stagnation and atrophy, and promotes innovation, hard work and achievement.

It is important to remember who the beneficiaries of this reform are. Unlike in private enterprises, the beneficiaries of management reform of this kind are not the investors and shareholders but the community as a whole. Better public sector leadership will ultimately trickle down to better service delivery. This Government, through innovations like Service NSW, is committed to the better delivery of government services. In overview, I will make some observations on the content of the bill. The Government sector employment legislation will now apply to health, police and transport services in order to create a single, sector-wide capability. It will mean that the executive structure is leaner, more responsible and more mobile. Appropriate transition means that the reform will not commence until 1 January 2017 to ensure a smooth transition to the new arrangements.

On 1 January 2017 more than 2,700 executives across the four services will be subject to aligned executive employment arrangements. New executive bands will be aligned across those services. Consistent and transparent remuneration will be created, but with flexibility. The Public Service Commissioner will be able to make rules that apply to senior executives in the aligned services. There will be standardisation of executive contracts across the aligned executive services. There will be staged implementation of the reforms, with fairness introduced through the grandfathering of arrangements for existing police, transport and health executives. In the transport services there will be three kinds of employment established: senior executives, senior managers and non-executives. Adjustments will be made to the general executive employment model to recognise the specific operational requirements of health, police and transport.

These reforms are designed to create a more agile, mobile executive with enhanced career opportunities, able to deliver services that the people of New South Wales rightly expect from the public sector. It will mean that the New South Wales government sector will have in place a contemporary employment framework able to attract and retain the best executive talent across Australia and overseas from a highly competitive market. There will be created a simplified executive structure built on common design principles endorsed by the Government. It will enable the implementation of performance management and capability development strategies to ensure that the leadership cohort functions effectively.

Today I have addressed the context of the bill; the importance of management and leadership in any organisation to the organisation as a whole; how broad thinking rather than a narrow focus in management makes for better management; and the importance of incentive as a motivator to any worker, including upper management. I have also provided a short overview of the bill. But the most important thing I have addressed is the beneficiaries of this bill, who are the citizens of New South Wales.

The public sector is incredibly important to the lives of people in our State. Measures to improve the leadership of the public sector will filter down to make for better schools, better hospitals, better public transport, better roads and better government services in general.

I wish to make it clear that the bill has no adverse effect on frontline staff or services and will significantly improve the delivery of front-line services. Since coming to office in 2011 the Government has increased police authorised strength from 15,806 in 2011 to 16,665 in August 2015. It has recruited an additional 5,300 nurses and midwives, taking the total nursing and midwifery workforce to more than 49,000 as at June 2015. It has increased the number of teachers from 61,144 in 2011 to 63,274 at the end of June 2015. This legislation is another example of the transformative effect that this Government seeks to have for the benefit of the people of New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr RON HOENIG** (Heffron) [4.34 p.m.]: I make a contribution to debate on the Government Sector Employment Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. I have listened with close attention to the member for Ku-ring-gai because he always makes significant and important contributions in the House. But when he speaks in such effusive terms about the overall performance of the public sector, as much as I value his input, he needs to be careful because he gives himself ownership of its performance—something I am sure he was not seeking to do. I contribute to this debate not because the Opposition opposes any of the specific legislative requirements but to make some observations about the second reading speech that was delivered on behalf of the Premier by the member for Castle Hill, as Parliamentary Secretary. He described effectively the professionalism and the performance of the public sector—both executive and non-executive—referred to the Premier's Garran Oration in October 2015 about public administration and talked about the observations made by Dr Kerry Schott as part of the Commission of Audit.

Whilst I do not take issue with any of that—people in the public sector are immensely talented and dedicated—I want to make this observation: Can anybody suggest that over the past 30 years there has been an effective improvement in the civil service of this State in the way in which it has provided advice to government or protected the citizens from errors made by the government of the day? Since 1986, because of decisions of the Greiner Government, the public sector has been increasingly politicised for several reasons. One reason is that governments often get frustrated with the advice given to them by civil servants. Secondly, when the Hon. Nick Greiner came to government he had the view—and he will tell you, on reflection, that he was wrong—that the private sector was more efficient in the provision of public sector administration.

Nick Greiner effected substantial changes to the public sector administration in this State, believing private sector managers would be more effective. If one speaks to him privately he is likely to tell one, in a candid moment, that one of the things he understands from his term in office is that public administration is an art unto itself and the two do not necessarily equate. I say that not in relation to a public enterprise but with regard to the public or civil service, which for decades has been much maligned. When one has been around for a long time, one has seen the transition and knows the history. Many of those who are elected to Parliament are here for only a short time. People are not supposed to be in public office for the length of time that I have served. So I am not supposed to have witnessed the history and the changes.

I ask: Does anybody think the New South Wales Department of Planning operates as intelligently and effectively as it did when either Dick Smyth or Gabrielle Kibble was the director? Does it provide adequate advice to government? The answer is no. I have often said in this place that the Department of Planning is the greatest obstruction to economic investment in New South Wales. It never used to be, because it was able to ensure that the objectives of the Government—irrespective of who was in power—were implemented professionally. Does anyone really believe the Attorney General's Department has operated as efficiently and as effectively and provided the right advice to government since the retirement of Trevor Haines as secretary of the department? We all know that the answer is no. We have only to look at the way in which the Government is proceeding with council amalgamations. If Garry Payne were still the director general of the Department of Local Government, those amalgamations would



have been completed properly rather than us witnessing protests all over the State. I can give examples of most departments.

Despite what anyone said about Peter Cox when he was transport Minister, he could tell members in this House which bus was late and which train was late. The current Minister for Transport does not even have the authority to direct his own department. I make no reflection on anyone in the Premier's department, but the Premier's department does not operate as efficiently and effectively as it did when Gerry Gleeson was head of that department. This Government—and previous Labor governments—broke down the civil service structure, which dates back to English and Chinese times, and it has broken down the structure of permits. Governments, influenced by Treasury, have made cuts in particular areas. Roads and Maritime Services staff cannot design the WestConnex. It used to have people with the expertise to produce designs, models, costings and options. However, we now have to rely on the private sector to provide options for the location of a train line, light rail, or a metro line. Governments of the day have run down the expertise of civil service staff.

It is okay to use the words of the Parliamentary Secretary, but governments come and go, and governments change. This Government does not have public service staff with the expertise to supply costings and options. They used to be involved in developing long-term strategies but now they are not. When the former Minister for Transport announced the light rail project, it was not part of a long-term strategy that the Government had worked on. The public service did not prepare the plans; it no longer has the staff with the expertise to do that. A call for tenders was made to the private sector to come up with options. That is one of our failings. Governments must plan for the long term. They need public sector staff with expertise to give advice and costings, but that structure has broken down.

Governments react instantly to the 24-hour media cycle. We must have an intelligent and informed public service to provide balance and advice to government staff so they are aware of the consequences. In the old days Ministers would read the *Sunday Mirror*, which would criticise them and the government. They would react straightaway to avoid criticism, but the head of the department was in a position to say, "If that is done it will have these consequences and this will be the cost." If the Minister said to do it anyway, the department would implement measures in an efficient and loyal way so as to minimise the fallout. In reality we have continued on a long-term path. We have talented people but we have devalued their abilities and outsourced their function, and the people of New South Wales are poorer as a result.

Treasury is winning. It is cutting recurrent costs on a yearly basis because for decades Ministers have been told to offer up positions, but they are offering up government employees with expertise. Those people who have been trained since they were teenagers have lost their expertise. Today staff at the RMS cannot tell us which road should be widened without having to outsource the project so that a consultant's report can be obtained. The Government should conduct an accounting exercise to ascertain the cost of outsourcing compared to retaining its own experts. The bill must be cleaned up to fix the legislative provisions to provide for the movement of staff, but let us go back to the basics to see where the public service has gone over the past 30 years and establish whether its decisions have been right.

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA** (Davidson—Parliamentary Secretary) [4.44 p.m.]: The Government Sector Employment Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 aims to develop a high-performing government sector that is efficient and effective in serving the Government and the people of New South Wales. The amendment bill continues that trajectory, aspiring to reform employment legislation to NSW Health, the NSW Police Force, transport and public services. Passing this legislation would consolidate and further the positive gains we have made in modernising the New South Wales public sector. I concur with the Premier's view that we must have a public sector filled with people who have a passion for their work and who are prepared to take risks, but they should be supported when taking those risks. New South Wales will continue to flourish under responsive, innovative solutions to the challenges that we face. It is crucial that we empower the men and women who work in our public sector to be at the forefront of relevant issues and that we support them with appropriate employment structures and protections.

The amendment bill proposes major legislative amendments to the Government Sector Employment Act 2013, the Health Services Act 1997, the Police Act 1990 and the Transport Administration Act 1988. Under the bill, executive positions in the health, police and transport departments would align with existing arrangements for public service senior executives. This alignment will improve transparency and efficiency in the public service senior executive group. Public service and police non-executive administrative roles would also parallel each other. Rather than going into further detail on most of the provisions of the bill, I will focus on the senior executive whistleblowing initiative.

The Government Sector Employment Legislation Amendment Bill will support the reinstatement or re-employment of former senior executives who had their employment terminated substantially in reprisal for making public interest disclosures. It is vital that senior executives in the public sector make disclosures in the public interest without fear of retaliation. Section 8 of the Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994 stipulates that if public officials reasonably believe that wrongdoing has occurred, they are required to disclose that information and are subsequently protected by the Act. Wrongdoing may include corrupt conduct, maladministration, serious and substantial waste of public money, government information contravention or local government pecuniary interest contravention.

That same Act provides protections to a person who has made a public interest disclosure, including protections against detrimental actions motivated by reprisals and disciplinary action resulting from the disclosure. That law echoes the sentiments of 81 per cent of respondents to a 2012 Newspan survey. Those respondents indicated that whistleblowers should receive protection and not punitive action. Additionally, 56 per cent believed that reporting wrongdoing to those in authority through official means is the most effective method of ending and remedying the wrongdoing.

Currently senior executives who are dismissed substantially in response to making a public interest disclosure cannot seek remedies for termination under the Government Sector Employment Act. The consequent potential for injustice is illustrated well by the 2013 Independent Commission Against Corruption report into the conduct of Murray Kear, Commissioner of the NSW State Emergency Service. Mr Kear was found to have taken detrimental action against a person who made a public interest disclosure, namely, Deputy Commissioner Tara McCarthy.

Ms McCarthy had reported NSW State Emergency Service [SES] Deputy Commissioner Steven Pearce to the commissioner on the basis of corrupt conduct. Among other things, it was alleged that Mr Pearce had used SES funds to acquire roof racks and electric brakes for his car, and misused an SES credit card. Commissioner Kear did not investigate those claims; rather, he terminated Deputy Commissioner McCarthy's employment in reprisal for those public interest disclosures. In finding Commissioner Kear liable for corrupt conduct, the Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC] recommended that the Minister for Police and Emergency Services should take disciplinary action against Commissioner Kear with a view to his dismissal.

However, under the legislation existing at that time, the question remained as to the measure and form of appropriate recompense to the former SES Deputy Commissioner, Ms McCarthy. This bill indicates that reinstatement or re-employment are viable and equitable reparations for executives whose employment is substantially terminated due to making public interest disclosures. This provision would improve long-term outcomes and bolster public confidence. For example, in NSW Health it would encourage the exposure of malpractices compromising safety and patient outcomes.

I am also aware of an example in New South Wales Maritime where, during the term of the previous Government—this is a problem that has been around for a long time—a senior manager was dismissed. This matter is still unresolved. I have brought it to the attention of the current Minister responsible for the Roads and Maritime Services area. I do not want to go into details of this matter, but in my opinion that was also a clear example of somebody being dismissed, substantially as a reprisal for a declaration about corruption to the ICAC. This happened under the administration of the previous

Government. There have been various findings of ICAC that NSW Maritime was run in a less than acceptable way under the previous Government administration.

In more general terms, we cannot ignore the significant deterrents that have existed in the past to the reporting by witnesses of wrongdoing. Disincentives have included cultures of silence, sometimes vague structural reporting processes, and the high emotional toll exacted upon whistleblowers before, during and after the public interest disclosure process, as well as the genuine fear of reprisal from employers or other organisations involved. Various initiatives have been taken in recent years to strengthen the public interest disclosure regime and to make it more acceptable. This is another such measure. It is prudent to provide executives with appropriate protections and make them known throughout the public sector. This can help pierce the veil of silence that sometimes surrounds matters that are whispered about behind closed doors and that are vital to the public interest.

The Government Sector Employment Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 should facilitate an atmosphere of cooperative knowledge-sharing and transparency in the public sector, harnessing the potential of a passionate workforce which is willing to take risks for the public good. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON** (Cootamundra—Parliamentary Secretary) [4.53 p.m.]: I support the Government Sector Employment Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 and compliment the Premier on devising this particularly effective amendment bill. I note that this bill has some history. In 2013 an amendment bill was passed by the Legislative Assembly but did not proceed through the other place. Technical amendments to the 2013 bill were made by statute law amendments. The 2016 bill fulfils the 2013 government commitment to apply Government Sector Employment Act senior executive arrangements to health, police and transport services to create a single, broad-ranging, sector-wide, capability-focused executive structure that can be—

**Business interrupted and set down as an order of the day for a future day.**

*[The Deputy-Speaker (Mr Thomas George) left the chair at 4.54 p.m. due to a power failure.]*

*[Due to the continued power failure at Parliament House the Assistant-Speaker (Mr Andrew Fraser) took the chair at 5.22 p.m.]*

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion by Mr RAY WILLIAMS, by leave, agreed to:**

That this House do now adjourn.

**The House adjourned at 5.23 p.m. until Wednesday 24 February 2016 at 10.00 a.m.**

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