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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday 24 February 2016

The Speaker (The Hon. Shelley Elizabeth Hancock) took the chair at 10.00 a.m.

The Speaker read the Prayer and acknowledgement of country.

LIBRARY OPEN DAY

The SPEAKER: I remind members that there is an open day at the Parliamentary Library today. I urge members to avail themselves of all the wonderful demonstrations and resources on the program.

POWER OUTAGE

The SPEAKER: As members would be aware, the parliamentary precinct was affected by a temporary power outage on Tuesday 23 February from 5.00 p.m. until 6.00 p.m. I inform the House that the back-up generator ensured that vital information technology, security systems and emergency lighting systems continued to operate and all protocols were followed to ensure the safety of building occupants. Contractors from Ausgrid worked with Facilities Branch to restore power shortly after 6.00 p.m. The outage was caused by a fault in the Parliament's main electrical switchboard.

Last year the Parliament secured funding for a replacement of core components of the electrical distribution system at Parliament House, including the 33-year-old main switchboards, which are long past their expected service life. Scheduled works have been undertaken during non-sitting periods to replace critical components with minimal disruption to members and staff in the parliamentary precinct. Further works are scheduled for the upcoming April break.

MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION

Report

The Speaker announced the receipt, pursuant to section 17 of the Mental Health Commission Act 2012, of the report of the Mental Health Commission of New South Wales entitled "One year on: Progress Report on the implementation of Living Well: A Strategic Plan for Mental Health in NSW 2014–2024", dated December 2015.

Ordered to be printed.

INFORMATION AND PRIVACY COMMISSION

Report

The Speaker tabled, pursuant to section 39 of the Government Information (Information Commissioner) Act 2009, the report of the Information and Privacy Commission entitled "Report on the Operation of the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009: 2014–2015".

Ordered to be printed.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Notices of Motions

General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) given.

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GOVERNMENT SECTOR EMPLOYMENT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2016

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 23 February 2016.

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Cootamundra—Parliamentary Secretary) [10.15 a.m.]: I resume my contribution on the Government Sector Employment Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. Further to my contribution yesterday, the 2016 bill fulfils the 2013 Government commitment to apply the Government Sector Employment Act to senior executive arrangements for health, police and transport services in order to create a single sector-wide capability focused on an executive structure that is leaner, more responsive and mobile. The amendments will commence on 1 January 2017. It will ensure that all three services make a smooth transition to the new arrangements. Over 2,700 executives across those four services will be subject to the aligned executive employment arrangements. This is no mean feat. Bringing together diverse agencies with separate sets of responsibilities that are quite often on different awards can be challenging. The single award system must meet Government aims, including a simplified agency structure and alignment with other public services.

I recall my own humble experience in the last term of our Liberal-Nationals Government of creating Local Land Services from three agencies on three separate awards. They were very different and separate organisations, including the Department of Agricultural, the Livestock Health and Pest Authority, and the Catchment Management Authority. I can identify with the volume of work that is required to produce this bill, which is obviously larger than anything I dealt with as Minister for Primary Industries. I compliment the Premier, his staff and bureaucrats for the skill that will enable this to go forward. It will be of great benefit to the public service. It is an important step towards creating a highly capable, flexible and focused leadership group to lead the Government's reform agenda for better service delivery to the public across the government sector.

The aligned employment arrangements proposed by the bill allow executives in police, health and transport to share the benefits of the Government Sector Employment Act 2013. The reforms are designed to enable a mobile executive with enhanced career opportunities. That is important. Executives can now be transferred administratively between different agencies, which will lead to much better career opportunities for staff. They will be able to deliver the services the people of New South Wales rightly expect from our public sector. It also means that the government sector will have in place a contemporary employment framework able to attract and retain, in a highly competitive market, the best of executive talent from across Australia and overseas.

That is what people want from their taxpayer dollar: to secure the best for the future of our wonderful public service. The executive of the police force, transport and health service will have a simplified executive structure built on common design principles endorsed by the Government. They will

have roles assigned within band level based on a common set of work level standards and required capabilities. Other than in the case of police officers, they will be able to employ executives within a band level and over time assign and reassign them to roles with the same service priorities and development across services. There will be a model contract with standard inclusions that will simplify the process and lead to greater time and cost efficiencies.

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They will be able to implement performance management and capability development strategies to ensure that the leadership cohort functions effectively and undertakes strategic management. Some customised changes are made to the general model to recognise the specific operational requirements of the separate executive services. Rules will be able to be made by the Public Service Commissioner, after consultation with the secretaries of the transport and health services and the Commissioner of Police, on matters such as assessment of executives' capabilities and model contracts of employment.

The Government Sector Employment (Senior Executive Bands) Determination 2014 was made by Premier O'Farrell under section 35 of the Government Sector Employment Act. It established four public service senior executive bands: band 4, which is the secretary level; band 3, which is the deputy secretary level; band 2, which is the executive director level; and band 1, which is of course the director level. The remuneration ranges for each band are determined independently by the Statutory and Other Offices Remuneration Tribunal. The bill provides that the public service senior executive bands determination made by the Premier under the Government Sector Employment Act 2013 will also apply to the employment of senior executives in the health, police and transport services.

I make it clear that the bill has no adverse effect on frontline staff or services, but it will significantly improve the delivery of those frontline services. The objective of these reforms is to improve leadership and to modernise management of the public sector. Since coming to office in 2011, this Government has increased police authorised strength from 15,806 in 2011 to 16,176 in June 2013, and to 16,665 in August 2015. It has recruited an additional 5,300 nurses and midwives, which represents 4,200 full-time equivalent positions, taking the total nursing and midwifery workforce to more than 49,000 as at June 2015. It has also increased the number of teachers from 61,144 in 2011 to 62,169 in 2014, and as at the end of June 2015 to 63,274.

This bill extends the Government's reforms set out in the Government Sector Employment Act passed by this Parliament in June 2013. These reforms continue the Government's commitment to creating a more professional executive service that can support an innovative and accountable government sector. It is 2016 and it is pleasing to have such progressive reform occurring in the public sector. This is something we never witnessed under the Labor Government. Those 16 years of Labor administration were a regressive period during which the Government resisted all change and progress.

As a result, when the Coalition came to office it inherited a mess. The public sector desperately needed modernisation and progress, and public service officers were ready for that progress. They were itching for change and for career enhancement and development. They wanted a modern and progressive public service in line with other first-world public services. The New South Wales Government is the biggest employer in the country and taxpayers expend more than \$60 billion a year on our public services. We owe it to taxpayers and citizens to ensure that the service is the best it can be, and that it offers to employees a world-class professional working environment in which innovation and merit is rewarded in the services of the people of New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Parliamentary Secretary) [10.23 a.m.], in reply: I am pleased to speak in reply to debate on the Government Sector Employment Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. I thank all members for their contributions to this debate, specifically the members representing the electorates of Keira, Oatley, Fairfield, Ku-ring-gai, Heffron, Davidson and Cootamundra. This bill extends the reforms achieved through the Government Sector Employment Act 2013 that provide the foundation

for a leaner, more responsive and innovative government sector workforce that is focused on frontline service delivery.

The bill implements the Government's commitment made during the passage of the Government Sector Employment Act 2013 that the executive employment reforms in that legislation would be extended to senior executives in the police, transport and health services. The aligned employment arrangements proposed by this bill means that the executives in those services will share the benefits of the Government Sector Employment Act 2013 reforms designed to create a more agile, mobile executive with enhanced career opportunities and able to deliver the services the people of New South Wales rightly expect from the public sector. It also means that the New South Wales government sector will have in place a contemporary employment framework that is able to attract and retain from a highly competitive market the best executive talent from across Australia and overseas.

The bill also continues the longstanding alignment of non-executive administrative employees in the NSW Police Force with the public service by aligning the relevant provisions of the Police Act 1990 with the Government Sector Employment Act 2013. Finally, the bill makes consequential amendments to that Act to refine its operation and to make amendments to other legislation, including the Statutory and Other Offices Remuneration Act 1975, and other minor miscellaneous amendments.

The bill's provisions to extend reformed executive arrangements to the police, health and transport services senior executives and to unsworn police service senior officer positions. They do not affect or apply to sworn non-executive police officers or to the management or control of the NSW Police Force. They apply the executive bands determined by the Premier to the three aligned services, leading to consistency of role classification and remuneration, and facilitate cross-sector mobility of senior executives. The bill provides for executives to be assigned to roles within the bands and for subsequent reassignment in line with service delivery priorities and individual development needs. It should be noted that sworn police executives also retain positions for police operational purposes.

The bill also provides for the creation of new government sector employment rules that will apply to the three services—for example, by the application or modification of the existing rules—while ensuring that critical operational directions can continue to be issued by the Commissioner of Police and the Secretary of the Ministry of Health. The bill also provides for executives in the aligned services to be employed on an ongoing or term basis with standard contracts that are portable when they are reassigned to different roles across the sector. The bill also continues the existing alignment of NSW Police Force non-executive administrative employees with arrangements applying to non-executive employees in the public service by aligning the relevant provisions of the Police Act 1990 with the Government Sector Employment Act 2013.

The bill amends the Government Sector Employment Act 2013 to enable the reinstatement or re-employment of a former public service senior executive where the Public Service Commissioner is satisfied that the executive's termination was substantially in reprisal for making a public interest disclosure and, after consulting with the former executive, the former executive wishes to be reinstated or re-employed. This provision will also apply to senior executives in the police, health and transport services.

This bill extends the Government's reforms set out in the Government Sector Employment Act passed by this Parliament in June 2013. These reforms continue the Government's commitment to creating a more professional executive service and extending the statutory framework supporting an innovative, professional and accountable government sector. The New South Wales Government is the biggest employer in the country, and taxpayers expend more than \$60 billion a year on our public services. We owe it to taxpayers and citizens to ensure that the service is the best that it can be and that it offers employees a world-class professional working environment where innovation and merit are rewarded in the services of the people of New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Motion by Mr Ray Williams agreed to:

That this bill be now read a third time.

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

LIMITATION AMENDMENT (CHILD ABUSE) BILL 2016

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 16 February 2016.

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) [10.29 a.m.]: I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Limitation Amendment (Child Abuse) Bill 2016. The Opposition supports the bill. Of course, that is no surprise given that it introduced a similar bill last year, although the then Attorney General spoke against it and the Government voted it down, albeit by the interestingly narrow margin of 39 to 36.

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The object of this bill is expressed to be to amend the Limitation Act 1969. The amendment is to ensure that there is to be no limitation period for an action for damages that relates to death or personal injury resulting from child abuse. The term "child abuse" is defined to mean abuse perpetrated against a person when the person is under 18 years of age that is sexual abuse, serious physical abuse or other abuse perpetrated in connection with sexual abuse or serious physical abuse.

The arguments in favour of limitation periods are well known to common lawyers. It is desirable to resolve civil actions for damages as near as possible to the time of the claimed incident causing the injury. That is obviously encouraged by the imposition of time limits. That is of benefit not only to defendants but also to the legal system more generally. Cases that are litigated and decided long after the event concerned are more likely to suffer from lack of evidence and the frailties of memory. The effluxion of time makes it harder to get a fair result. Certainly limitation periods provide for a degree of certainty, especially for defendants and insurers.

Whilst the public policy behind these arguments makes sense, it is the case for many people, including myself, that there are other considerations in relation to the types of claims covered in this bill and in my earlier bill. The justification for limitation periods in cases such as these is, in my view, inadequate. The arguments in support of limitation periods seem particularly designed for other types of cases—motor vehicle cases, industrial accidents and so forth. Indeed the redress and civil litigation report from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse memorably quotes one survivor as saying, "The current limitations regime is designed for someone tripping over in Kmart, not for victims of child sexual abuse." That seems to me to be an overwhelmingly powerful argument. The royal commission makes the point that limitation periods result in survivors losing cases, not bringing them at all or settling them on a compromised basis.

From my own time in practice, the application that allows a claim to proceed despite the limitation period was a quite substantial exercise, and there were often reduced settlements because of the bar. I

note in passing that limitation periods were also an issue at one time in the also heart-rending instances of mesothelioma resulting from exposure to asbestos. The truth, of course, is that many survivors of childhood abuse are just not able to disclose until many years later. That is now so widely accepted as to be an entirely uncontroversial statement. For that reason, the imposition of limitation periods in such circumstances is simply unfair. The royal commission report itemises instances where cases could not be pursued because of the limitation period or could only be pursued after lengthy, time-consuming and expensive litigation. They pointed, for example, to cases arising from Bethcar Children's Home and the Parramatta Training School for Girls.

Establishing this principle in legislation is important. When I introduced my bill last year, I noted that the Government's policy has meant government institutions not relying upon the limitation period. Practitioners to whom I have spoken have said non-government institutions are also very unlikely to now rely upon it. However, this should be established in legislation and not left solely to depend upon policy of either government or non-government actors. The genesis of the bill is the royal commission. Its recommendations included the following:

85. State and territory governments should introduce legislation to remove any limitation period that applies to a claim for damages brought by a person where that claim is founded on the personal injury of the person resulting from sexual abuse of the person in an institutional context when the person is or was a child.
86. State and territory governments should ensure that the limitation period is removed with retrospective effect and regardless of whether or not a claim was subject to a limitation period in the past.
87. State and territory governments should expressly preserve the relevant courts' existing jurisdictions and powers so that any jurisdiction or power to stay proceedings is not affected by the removal of the limitation period.
88. State and territory governments should implement these recommendations to remove limitation periods as soon as possible, even if that requires that they be implemented before our recommendations in relation to the duty of institutions and identifying a proper defendant are implemented.

The Victorian Government adopted these reforms expeditiously last year, which is what should have happened in this State. In accordance with the royal commission report, this bill retains the jurisdictions of the courts in relation to stay proceedings. It also has a retrospective application. The larger picture dealt with in the royal commission report includes broader issues of redress. I note that the Attorney General touched on that in her second reading speech.

Both State and Federal Labor have been on the record supporting a national redress scheme. The arguments in favour of that proposition, rather than relying on a State-by-State approach, are, in my opinion, overwhelming. Federal Labor committed \$33 million to fund a national redress scheme. That was done in consultation with the Labor Opposition in this State. The apparent reluctance of the Federal Government to pursue a national scheme is, in my view, entirely regrettable. The interesting issue that will arise for the Government if there is a pursuit of a separate State-by-State scheme is that it is likely to reveal, in light of the quantum amounts proposed by the royal commission report, the highly and completely inadequate nature of the current State victim compensation scheme. That, however, is no doubt a debate for another time and another place. Removing time limitations from these sorts of claims is simply a matter of justice. The Opposition supports the bill.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) [10.34 a.m.]: I speak to the Limitation Amendment (Child Abuse) Bill 2016. Limitation periods have a legitimate purpose. When court proceedings are delayed, memories fade, evidence is destroyed and the quality of justice is diminished, increasing the capacity for

miscarriage. However, under the Limitation Act 1969 it has always been recognised that limitation periods need to be moulded to fit the circumstances of particular cases. That is not always the way in which limitation periods operate—for example, some limitation periods commence to run whether the person who has an action knows about the cause of action or not.

Cases with regard to breach of contract, for example, commence to run from the breach and not from when the plaintiff knows about the breach. But in the case, for example, of disability under section 52 of the Limitation Act, the running of the limitation period is suspended for the duration of the disability. Similarly, in the case of equitable fraud or conversion of trust property under section 47 of the Limitation Act the usual six-year limitation period does not start when the cause of action first accrues, but instead commences from the first discovery of the facts giving rise to the cause of action. The limitation period is 12 years and not six years, as it is for other causes of action. Also, under section 55 of the Limitation Act in cases of concealed fraud or deceit the limitation period is suspended against the fraudster and does not commence until the cause of action is first discovered or may with reasonable diligence have been discovered.

The provisions that I have referred to are significant in the context of this bill because they show that the legislative theory behind the Limitation Act 1969—which, from recollection, was enacted after a detailed Law Reform Commission report on amendments to the limitation law—recognises that in the context of limitation periods special consideration needs to be given to the following circumstances: firstly, disability or vulnerability; secondly, concealment of intentional acts of harm; and, thirdly, circumstances where civil causes of action arise from intentional criminal acts.

This bill importantly modernises the 1969 Act to recognise something that was not well understood or widely recognised by the Parliament in 1969, which is the prevalence of child abuse in our community. The Commonwealth Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse has shone a light on what people who have dealt with the vulnerable in our community have known for some time—namely, that child abuse is regrettably widespread and also that child abuse has a devastating impact on the lives of the victims. As a lawyer I did not practice very much in the areas of tort law other than the law of defamation, but as a young barrister I was frequently confronted with cases involving damaged adult lives as a consequence of prior periods of child abuse in a person's life. I have sat across a table in my chambers as a client explained that his drug dependency was an attempt to dull the ever present pain of the memories of abuse at the hands of a youth club worker when he was a teenager. I have sat across a table with a different client who explained that his mental health issues were a consequence of the abuse he suffered at the hands of those employed to look after him at a boarding school.

I have seen clever lawyers during the time of the former Labor Government fail in actions against the State Government, where they tried unsuccessfully to suggest that breach of fiduciary duties law could be used to try to circumvent common law damages claims prevented by the Limitation Act 1969. I thought at the time as a mere legal technician in legal practice that it was unfair that a Limitation Act could prevent a damages claim by a victim whose life had been so ruined that they were not able to claim damages until a later point in time because of their disability. Now, as a legislator in this place, I am very happy to be able to right that terrible injustice by supporting this bill.

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I am proud to be a member of a Government that has taken a number of initiatives prior to this bill to address limitation periods by the following methods: adopting guiding principles for government agencies responding to claims for child sexual abuse that restrict when an agency can rely on limitation periods to defend a claim; introducing a directive that the Department of Family and Community Services will not generally rely on limitation periods to defend claims for child sexual or physical abuse; releasing a discussion paper on this issue for public consultation in January 2015; and announcing in November 2015 that the Government will introduce legislation this year.

This bill will now do more and take away the ability of the Government or any other institution or person to raise a limitation period. The content of the bill involves the insertion of section 6A into the Limitation Act 1969. The elements of the amendment apply under 6A (1) to an action for damages that relates to the death of or personal injury to a person resulting from an act or omission that constitutes child abuse of the person. Subsection (2) defines "child abuse" as:

... any of the following perpetrated against a person when the person was under 18 years of age:

- (a) sexual abuse,
- (b) serious physical abuse,
- (c) any other abuse (**connected abuse**) perpetrated in connection with sexual abuse or serious physical abuse of the person (whether or not the connected abuse was perpetrated by the person who perpetrated the sexual abuse or serious physical abuse).

Subsection 3 removes any doubt that connected child abuse is child abuse only if both the connected abuse and the sexual abuse or serious physical abuse in connection with it was perpetrated when the person was under the age of 18. Under subsection 4, the section applies regardless of whether the claim for damages is brought in tort, in contract, under statute law or otherwise. Subsection 5 makes it clear that the amendment applies to extend the limitation period with regard to the following causes of action:

- (a) a cause of action that arises under the Compensation to Relatives Act 1897,
- (b) a cause of action that survives on the death of a person for the benefit of the person's estate under section 2 of the *Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1944*.

Generous transition provisions are also enacted by amendments in schedule 5 to the Act. In part 3, clause 9, makes it clear that the amendments under section 6A to the Act will apply whether or not any limitation period previously applying to the cause of action has expired; whether or not an action has been commenced previously on the cause of action; whether or not a judgement on the cause of action has, on the ground that a limitation period applying to the cause of action had expired, been given previously; and whether or not a judgement in respect of legal professional negligence has, on the ground that a limitation period applying to the cause of action had expired, been given previously. Those transition positions are broad, as they must be, to ensure that the bill has the widest possible operation. It is sometimes said by unhappy litigants that there is not much justice in the justice system. I commend the Attorney General for introducing this important and compassionate reform to ensure that vulnerable victims of child abuse can seek justice against their perpetrators. I commend the bill to the House.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) [10.43 a.m.]: I support the Limitation Amendment (Child Abuse) Bill 2016. However, I express my disappointment that a similar bill put forward by the Opposition last year was opposed by the Government. Playing politics with this matter is offensive. It beggars belief that this Government would vote down a similar bill simply because we put it forward. That would have to be the worst thing this Government has done.

Ms Gabrielle Upton: It was similar but different. Read the fine print.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT: I have read the fine print; I know exactly what it says. I have also lived with these matters all my life. Child abuse is one of humanity's greatest crimes and one in which victims are rarely able to find justice. The actions of perpetrators of child abuse, the identification of victims and the resulting effects of child abuse are often not discovered for decades. The current limitation period of only three years is grossly insufficient. The victims of child abuse deserve the same justice that is available to anyone who seeks financial redress for crimes committed against them. Indeed, they deserve more time to seek justice. Victims of child abuse have spent the majority of their lives suffering, and often

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

Recommendation No. 85 of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse states that state and territory governments must remove the limitation period that applies to civil actions founded on personal injury caused by sexual abuse of the victim as a child. Recommendation No. 86 states that the removal of limitations should have retrospective effect, regardless of whether a claim was subject to a limitation period in the past. Recommendation No. 87 states that the courts' existing jurisdictions and powers should be preserved so that their power to stay proceedings is not affected by the removal of the limitation period. Recommendation No. 88 states:

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

In New South Wales sexual abuse of children has been a crime and a civil wrong for more than a century. There is no criminal limitation period for child sexual abuse; the civil limitation period should match the criminal limitation period. However, the current limitation period gives child abuses an unfair advantage. Extending the limitation period for child abuse in civil actions will improve justice in New South Wales.

These reforms are long overdue. They will create avenues of justice for the victims of child abuse. However, they are only one of the many reforms that must be implemented to provide justice for victims of child abuse, particularly those who suffer the after-effects of the abuse they incurred under State and institutional care. Members well-know that even after removing the limitation period many victims of child abuse will not litigate. The New South Wales Government must support a national redress scheme as part of these reforms. The five key recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse are: the establishment of a national redress scheme to process compensation claims for child abuse survivors in New South Wales; survivors with a reasonable likelihood of having been abused should receive at least \$10,000, and up to \$100,000 in the most severe cases; the Government should pay New South Wales institutions' shortfalls; religious organisations and residential facilities for children should be liable for child abuse in civil law suits; and there should be a program to provide unlimited counselling and psychological care throughout a survivor's life.

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This approach would allow victims of child abuse, who are already piecing together what is left of their shattered lives, to seek compensation without having to go to court. In conclusion, I commend the thousands of child-abuse victims for their courage. I commend the courage of the most vulnerable members of society who were abused under institutional care. They never had the support of family yet they still faced the world each day. Finally, I commend the courage of those who have spoken out about their pasts and put this issue on the agenda today.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) [10.49 a.m.]: I speak to the Limitation Amendment (Child Abuse) Bill 2016 and praise the Attorney General for her ongoing commitment to respect the rights of victims of child abuse. Everyone knows that terrible, horrendous acts were committed against the most vulnerable people. Their innocence was stripped away; basically, it was a sentence for life.

In recent times survivors of child abuse have spoken out and they have been given a great deal of support. And whilst a lot more needs to be done, we are on the right track. Indeed, we are always moved when we hear the stories of those who have had the courage to come forward. I take this

opportunity to praise Hetty Johnston and Bravehearts. Hetty does an excellent job. She is a fine example of someone who shows commitment and dedication. I note that the member for Kiama is in the Chamber. He is also a great supporter of Hetty Johnston and Bravehearts. That organisation, and many others, is committed to making people's lives better and to ultimately stamping out child abuse. I praise those victims for coming forward.

The object of the bill is to amend the Limitation Act 1969 to retrospectively remove any limitation period—the limitation period determines the time by which a claim must begin—for a damages claim for death or personal injury resulting from the sexual abuse of a child; the serious physical abuse of a child; and other connected abuse of a child, such as psychological abuse and minor physical abuse, provided sexual abuse or serious physical abuse is present. In my role as a local member of Parliament I have met with a number of victims and encouraged them to come forward. I am pleased to say that last year a number of them presented evidence to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Whilst it is very heartrending and upsetting to listen to their stories, it is also pleasing to witness their strength in coming forward and telling their stories so this will not happen again.

Since 2013, the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse has been considering what governments must do to ensure justice—I emphasise the word "justice"—for child abuse victims. The royal commission's report on redress and civil litigation, released in September 2015, contained 99 recommendations, including retrospectively removing limitation periods for claims for child sexual abuse. The royal commission was limited in its terms of reference to child sexual abuse but suggested that governments could enact reforms covering other types of abuse that are just as traumatic. The Baird Government is moving forward with those recommendations and implementing legislation that will greatly enhance the rights of those victims and also greatly enhance their ability to claim redress.

Above all else, we must respect the rights of victims and understand the issues they faced when they were at their most vulnerable. The Government has already taken a number of steps to address the issue of limitation periods for claims. For example, we have adopted guiding principles for those government agencies responding to claims for child sexual abuse. We have introduced a directive that the Department of Family and Community Services will not generally rely on limitation periods to defend claims for child abuse. We have released a discussion paper on this issue for public consultation and in November 2015 the Government announced that it would introduce legislation in this place. I applaud the Government's efforts to date but we need to continue to consult with victims, victim support groups and other not-for-profit organisations. Those organisations show a great deal of compassion and go to a great deal of effort to ensure that the quality of life for victims after recognition is slightly increased. Those organisations need ongoing support, and they have the support of this Government.

I have already mentioned Hetty Johnston and Bravehearts. A number of organisations in my electorate, including Elaine de Vos and On Track Community Programs and The Family Centre, go to great lengths to be compassionate and understanding. Unfortunately, this issue is often related to domestic violence—a terrible disease that stalks the wider community. So there needs to be a lot of awareness, support and encouragement. Bravehearts' "Ditto" character talks about what is a good touch and what is a bad touch. Ditto is a great educational tool for schools. I hope Bravehearts continued to receive support for their great work. I commend this bill to the House.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) [10.56 a.m.]: I support the Limitation Amendment (Child Abuse) Bill 2016, but as a non-lawyer I will talk about a different aspect to those mentioned so far in this debate. After my first degree I undertook postgraduate studies in applied psychology and counselling and not surprisingly, given the prevalence of abuse in our community, this issue was included in those studies. Indeed, I undertook significant research into child abuse. Later, as an officer of the Commonwealth Government who dealt with former child migrants, I saw the absolute devastation that institutionalised child abuse caused to people. Today I will talk about what makes these children grow up as damaged and devastated people; people who struggle to take enjoyment from things that many of us take for granted. No matter what they achieve in life, to some degree these people will always feel tainted

by the criminal actions that another person took against them in childhood. That brings me to the core of this bill.

These victims will suffer life-long damage in all of their personal relationships and they will only overcome it with personal resilience and huge amounts of support. We need to recognise that by its very nature this type of crime stops people from reporting the crime committed against them. Child abuse is not just about the sexual or physical act; mostly importantly, it is about the control that someone in a senior or powerful position exerts upon a child. That person may be a parent, teacher, uncle or aunt, someone in a position of trust or a family friend. Control is at the heart of this issue. This bill will wrest that control, which can have a life-long influence on a victim, from the perpetrator and put it back into the hands of the victim.

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What is the legacy of that control? I wanted to speak about and place on the record in this place young people's emotions, confusion, self-doubt, guilt and shame—the legacy of this kind of abuse. It is difficult for young people to articulate or even to understand this kind of behaviour. Someone in a position of power offers them attention, smiles when they speak, laughs when they make a silly joke, checks on every aspect involving them and makes them feel special. These are the things that we all want in our lives and it is behaviour that we want to see in our relationships from those that we trust. We want people whom we trust and who are role models and mentors to accept us and to give us that love and attention.

Because of the evil nature of this crime, those who give young people attention abuse their trust in a process that is known as grooming. Young people might instinctively know that the kind of attention that they are receiving is not the right kind of attention—it is not love, friendship or mentoring but rather abuse and exploitation, which are significantly different—and it is difficult for children to articulate or even to understand until they are much older. So the behaviour continues because they refuse to complain about the fact that Uncle Joe or Auntie Marg holds their hand a little too tightly, or that someone's hand reaches a bit too far up their leg, or that even though they were really naughty they did not deserve to be hit quite that hard by mummy or daddy, or even hit at all.

It is difficult to obtain evidence for crimes of this nature and they are difficult to prosecute. Children who have been exploited have limited resources to tell their stories to anyone else and they no longer have enough confidence or self-esteem to develop a trusting relationship. There is also the risk that the person to whom they tell their stories might also abuse them. Young people who are trapped by the bonds of family trust are exploited. We must do everything we can to ensure that they are not. In 1973 Stockholm syndrome, or capture bonding, was identified as a psychological phenomenon. Hostages express empathy and sympathy and have positive feelings for their captors, sometimes to the point where they defend and identify with them. In kidnapping cases it is easy to see such control and we know that hostages are under the bondage of their captors. The bonds of family, which are tightened around a victim of abuse, are not as obvious and are far stronger because young people live with the legacy of their captors all their lives. Family members do not jump on a plane and hold these young people as hostages or kidnap them, but they are tied to those family members for the rest of their lives. It is important to understand the significance of family bonds.

I have no truck with people who commit child sexual offences and we need to be strong in the way in which we deal with those who commit such crimes. I have spoken in this place before about the need to ensure that our homes and institutions are safe places, and that anyone in our community who has responsibility for or who cares for a vulnerable member of our community is held to account. They must be monitored to ensure that they observe proper standards of conduct. When we place limitations on the time allowed for the reporting of child sexual abuse cases there is no risk to perpetrators. They know that if they control a young person for long enough they will eventually be free, but unfortunately that is not the case for those whom they have abused.

There are real emotional impacts in cases of child sexual abuse. Research is being undertaken

on the biochemical changes that result from severe psychological trauma—things such as post-traumatic stress disorder [PTSD] where magnetic resonance imaging [MRI] of the brain of someone who has undergone PTSD is looked at—and it is believed that biochemical changes can be seen. It would be naive to think that this has not happened to the many young people in our community who have been subjected to abuse. We need to reopen this discussion in the community and talk about the guilt and the recurring memories that are triggered when many of those who were abused as children have children of their own who have reached the same critical and vulnerable age that they were when they were abused.

Imagine adult survivors of child abuse having children of their own at the same critical age as they were when they were first abused. How would they deal with that? We know about the cycles of abuse and that victims of child sexual abuse do not know how to interact with their own children. It is a critical time in the lives of those who have been abused when they are once again faced with the impact of this heinous crime. I urge all members to support this bill and to lend support to all those in our community who have suffered child sexual abuse.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [11.06 a.m.]: I speak in support of the Limitation Amendment (Child Abuse) Bill 2016 which has as its object to amend the Limitation Act 1969 to provide that there is to be no limitation period for an action for damages that relates to death or personal injury resulting from child abuse. The amendments define "child abuse" to mean abuse perpetrated against a person when the person is under 18, that is sexual abuse, serious physical abuse or other abuse perpetrated in connection with sexual abuse or serious physical abuse.

We all know that there have been royal commission hearings across Australia. Since 2013 the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse has been considering what governments must do to ensure justice for children who are child abuse victims. In September 2015 the royal commission released 99 recommendations on redress and civil litigation including retrospectively removing limitation periods for claims for child sexual abuse. The royal commission was limited in its terms of reference to child sexual abuse but suggested governments could enact reforms covering other types of abuse which are as traumatic.

This bill responds to recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and will remove limitation periods applying to claims for damages resulting from child sexual abuse. The bill is also informed by community consultation on this issue. In January 2015 the NSW Department of Justice released a discussion paper on limitation period reform options and received 48 submissions from a broad range of stakeholders. The royal commission recognised the existing limitation periods are a barrier to claims of survivors of child sexual abuse. Survivors of abuse usually take decades to disclose abuse but limitation periods prevent damages claims after between three and 12 years.

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In this space the Government has already taken a number of steps to address the issue of limitation periods for such claims including: adopting guiding principles for government agencies responding to claims for child sexual abuse, which restrict when an agency can rely on limitation periods to defend a claim; introducing a directive that the Department of Family and Community Services will not generally rely on limitation periods to defend claims for child sexual abuse; releasing a discussion paper on the issue for public consultation; and announcing in November 2015 the Government will introduce legislation in 2016, which we are doing now. The New South Wales Government supports the royal commission's recommendations for a single, national redress scheme for survivors and continues discussions with the Commonwealth and other States and Territories about redress. In the coming months the New South Wales Government will also release a consultation paper seeking public input on the royal commission's other civil litigation recommendations.

As a detective I had the unfortunate task of investigating dozens and dozens of child sexual assault cases. I locked up many perpetrators and I assisted many victims. I will not go into the grossness

of the acts, but there is no limit to the depravity of many of these men. I left the NSW Police Force and went into private practice as a lawyer which is when I represented a number of victims. Where I could I kept note of some of the victims I assisted as a detective. I assisted two brothers, one of whom died in unusual circumstances having fallen from a car near the Pacific Highway. The other brother had problems with anger management and alcohol, and he was constantly in and out of jail. A female victim came to see me when I was a lawyer to find out where she could go for some help. She was married and having tremendous problems with her relationship with her husband.

I highlight those few examples to help members understand that the act of the perpetrator is felt by victims for their entire life. But for the abuse that they suffered victims may have led otherwise normal and healthy lives. It is high time that we make these changes. The royal commission has identified that the extent of the problem is far greater than anyone had thought. In my time as a detective on the mid North Coast the extent was so great that many District Court sittings heard nothing but child sexual assault cases for weeks on end. For a period in the 1980s the Taree District Court heard more child sexual assault cases per capita of population than any other court in New South Wales. It seems, from what the royal commission has highlighted, that there is no end to child sexual abuse. This legislation allows those victims who suffered at the hands of institutions or other perpetrators to have redress against the perpetrators decades later, and why should they not?

Many of the victims I dealt with wanted to put the abuse out of their minds. They were victims when they were children, some as young as three years old. They cannot make a claim until they are 18 years old, so some of them lived for 15 years with constantly trying to put the abuse out of their minds. When they can make a claim at 18 years of age it is probably the last thing they want to turn their mind to, but later they realise that many of the issues they have with relationships and their behavioural and other problems are because of that sexual abuse when they were children. Why should they not have redress and justice? I support this bill and I commend the Attorney General for bringing it before the House.

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) [11.14 a.m.]: I speak in support of the Limitation Amendment (Child Abuse) Bill 2016, which endeavours to deliver essential and overdue reform for victims of what would have to be the most heinous of crimes—child abuse. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child refers to the right of the child to grow in an environment safe and free of abuse. In fact, article 19 states:

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.
2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.

This reform has been delayed by this Government. In November 2015 a very similar private member's bill was brought before the House by the member for Liverpool, the shadow Attorney General. I firmly believe that if the Government were genuine in its wish to support the victims of child abuse, it would not have voted down this private member's bill by 39 votes to 36. Instead, Government members would have worked with the Opposition in a spirit of bipartisanship and amended the bill brought to this place by the Labor Opposition.

The bill responds to recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, which was brought down in September 2015, about removing limitation periods that apply to claims for damages resulting from child sexual abuse. This is one of the changes that once made

will immediately help those victims and survivors of past child sexual abuse. I note that the bill is also informed by community consultation through a discussion paper released last year on limitation period reform options to which 48 submissions were received from a broad range of stakeholders.

The object of this bill remains predominantly the same as the one introduced by Labor in the private member's bill. It is to amend the Limitation Act 1969 to provide that there is to be no limitation period for an action for damages that relates to death or personal injury resulting from child abuse. The amendments define "child abuse" to mean abuse perpetrated against a person when the person is under 18 years of age that is sexual abuse, serious physical abuse or the other abuse perpetrated in connection with sexual abuse or serious physical abuse.

At the moment common law claims for damages must be commenced within a specified time. This is sensible for many claims—for example, a motor vehicle accident. But a time limit is entirely inappropriate in child abuse cases. It is now widely recognised that victims in such cases may take lengthy periods to disclose the abuse. The average time for disclosure of child sexual abuse is approximately 23 years. Therefore, the three-year time limit for civil claims for compensation is a serious and inevitable obstacle to justice. Victims and survivors of abuse have enough challenges in their way. The law and especially our limitations law should not add to the burdens they already have.

Currently, to make a civil claim out of time—that is, beyond the three years after which a child victim of abuse has turned 18—a survivor must seek the leave of the court to allow his or her claim to be brought out of time. The statute of limitations acts as ammunition for the defendants to use to beat down victims and survivors in order to reduce the amount of compensation they have to pay.

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The statute, in its current form, is standing between victims and their access to justice. This Parliament has an obligation to deliver practical assistance and real legal remedies so that victims and survivors of sexual abuse, whenever that occurred, have it within their power to gain access to justice. I became friends with Dave Owen, a witness at the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and a neighbour of mine who is now in his late seventies. Dave was born after his 12-year-old mother was raped. He was offered for adoption in a newspaper advertisement. He was physically, sexually and emotionally assaulted for years at an orphanage run by the Catholic Sisters of Mercy. Dave was interviewed by Joanne McCarthy, an award winning journalist with the *Newcastle Herald*.

Ms McCarthy was the journalist responsible for the announcement by Julia Gillard of the establishment of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Dave refers to the "stain on your brain" of being abused almost from the day that one is born. Dave told Joanne McCarthy, "The reason why people did not believe me when we told them years ago was because it was so outrageous and so inhuman what was done to us. All I can do is tell how it happened." Dave never had a sexual relationship with a woman and he never married because he was worried he would take out the cruelty that was done to him on his wife. Dave said, "The rethinking of it, you have got to relive it. You feel the floggings, you feel the fear and the pain, you go back to that time because it is always there." I am more than happy to support this bill for the survivors of child abuse such as Dave.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Marshall): I acknowledge the presence of Mr Stephen Groves from the Kiama and District Chamber of Commerce, guest of the member for Kiama and Parliamentary Secretary. Welcome to the Parliament this morning.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) [11.21 a.m.]: Since 2003 the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse has recognised existing limitation periods are a barrier to claims by survivors of child sexual abuse. Survivors of abuse usually take decades to disclose abuse but limitation periods prevent damage claims after three to 12 years. It is important to note that this is probably one of the most important bills this Chamber will debate. As a former chair of the Committee on Children and

Young People, and as a father, I support this bill.

The bill will amend the Limitation Act 1969 to permit an action for damages in relation to child abuse to be brought at any time. Child abuse is the abuse of a child or young person under the age of 18. Types of abuse can be sexual abuse, serious physical abuse and other abuse connected to the sexual or serious physical abuse, for example, minor physical abuse or other forms of abuse. Currently, the limitation periods under common law jurisdictions generally enact statutes that restrict the maximum time after an event that legal proceedings may be initiated. The purpose of statutory limitation periods is to protect defendants from having to defend claims when they should not reasonably be required to do so.

A recent High Court hearing in Brisbane—*South Regional Health Authority v Taylor (1996)*—identified four broad rationales for imposing limitation periods: the public interest requires that disputes be settled as quickly as possible; delays are likely to lead to relevant evidence being lost; plaintiffs should not sleep on their rights but pursue claims for reasonable purpose; and limitation periods strike a balance between fairness to defendants and the general right of all people to have breaches of their civil rights determined by the court. That is why this bill is being debated today. A range of statutory provisions will allow for the extension of the limitation period where certain exceptional circumstances apply. For example: where the plaintiff is a child or is under a disability; and where the plaintiff is suffering from latent injury, meaning that he or she is unaware of an injury until many years after the events.

These exceptions were developed to allow survivors with particular characteristics or injuries to make a claim even though they could not reasonably be expected to do so within the limitation period. Limitation periods operate unfairly in civil claims for child abuse. It is well documented that many survivors of child sexual abuse do not disclose their experiences or act on them until decades after the abuse, if ever. As previous speakers have stated, the 2013 royal commission interim report found that the average time of a survivor to disclose abuse was a staggering 22 years, with men on average taking longer than women to disclose. A study of abuse allegations against Anglican clergy in Australia revealed that the average time for males to disclose abuse was 25 years, with an average time for females being 18 years.

In New South Wales the limitation period that would apply to a claim resulting from child abuse is between three to 12 years, depending on when the abuse occurred. As a consequence of the interaction between average times for the survivors to disclose and statutory limitation periods many survivors are statute barred and unable to obtain civil compensation for the harm they suffered. The reasons why survivors of child abuse are unable to commence proceedings are frequently connected to the injuries caused by the abuse. The process for providing that a statutory exception applies can be a traumatic experience that requires survivors to bring evidence of the nature of their injury, which may include obtaining expert evidence and being subject to examination and cross-examination.

This reform bill is important. The New South Wales Government has taken a number of steps to address the period of limitation for such claims, including: adopting guiding principles for government agencies responding to claims for child sexual abuse that restrict when an agency can rely on limitation periods to defend that particular claim; introducing directives to the NSW Department of Family and Community Services which rely on limitation periods to defend claims of child sexual and physical abuse; and releasing a discussion paper on this issue for public consultation followed, in November last year, by an announcement that the Government would introduce such legislation this year. This reform is important.

All survivors of child abuse will be treated fairly and equally regardless of where, when or who perpetrated the abuse. This reform importantly ensures survivors of child abuse are at least able to commence a claim of civil compensation. It will assist in making civil litigation a more viable option for survivors, particularly those who have stronger evidence. It will not remove all the barriers to justice faced by survivors of institutional child abuse. This bill implements all the royal commission's recommendations relating to limitation periods, which include that State and Territory governments across the country legislate to remove any limitation period that applies to a claim for damages resulting from child abuse.

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The amendments are retrospective and expressly preserve the court's existing jurisdictions to stay or dismiss proceedings. The amendments will be implemented before the royal commission's recommendations in relation to the duty of institutions and identifying a proper defendant are tabled. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) [11.29 a.m.]: I support the Limitation Amendment (Child Abuse) Bill 2016. The bill will remove the limitation period for an action for damages that relates to death or personal injury resulting from child abuse. A similar private member's bill was introduced by the Labor Opposition in November last year, but it was opposed by the Attorney General and voted down by the Government. This bill is broadly based on the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The recommendations, which were handed down last year, also stated that changes should be made immediately. I welcome the previous speaker's indication that provisions in this legislation will deliver on those recommendations.

The bill also follows a government discussion paper issued in January 2015 in the run-up to the election. Common law claims for damages must be commenced within a specific period. That is sensible for many claims such as motor vehicle accidents or a slip at Kmart, but it is entirely inappropriate in sexual abuse cases. It is now widely recognised that victims in such cases can take a long time to disclose the abuse. The Victorian Parliament made similar amendments to that State's legislation more than a year ago. This amendment bill deals with people under the age of 18 years who have been subject to sexual abuse, serious physical abuse, or what is termed "connected abuse". The latter category must have been perpetrated in connection with sexual abuse or serious physical abuse. The legislation has retrospective effect and the jurisdiction of courts to hear a stay application remains in place.

As I said, this bill is broadly based on recommendations made by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The origins of the royal commission go directly to the Hunter. The *Newcastle Herald* ran a campaign called "Shine the Light". In 2013 Joanne McCarthy, a local journalist, won a Gold Walkley award for her Shine the Light report on child sex abuse in the Catholic Church, which led to a State inquiry and the royal commission. The *Newcastle Herald* team, comprising editor Chad Watson and reporters Ian Kirkwood and Jason Gordon, also won a Walkley award for coverage of community and regional affairs for their Shine the Light series on child sexual abuse. Claims made by Hunter-based Detective Peter Fox that the Catholic Church had covered up evidence of paedophile priests led to the establishment of one of the most important royal commissions to be held in this country.

When then Prime Minister Julia Gillard announced on 12 November 2012 the establishment of a royal commission into institutional responses to instances and allegations of child sexual abuse in Australia there had been already 300 various child abuse inquiries across three decades, but there was nothing like this inquiry. Children were beaten, raped and starved in places run by Catholic and Anglican church bodies, and homes run by the Salvation Army and the New South Wales Government were hellholes. The historical abuse was one thing, but the commission so far has uncovered systemic failures in child safety practices in contemporary institutions like the YMCA, Scouts Australia, and private and public schools. Governments have been more concerned about costs than care, making past inquiries more about damage control than reform. Given that, I welcome and support this legislation.

By the end of 2013, the royal commission had received 8,500 phone calls, 3,000 emails, and 170,000 visits to its website. Those figures increased enormously in 2014 and 2015, and by the end of 2013 the commission had held more than the 917 private sessions throughout Australia. That figure has also increased over the past two years. The private sessions form the basis for case studies that are then examined at public hearings. By the end of 2013, the royal commission had referred 54 matters to authorities, including the police. It had also issued more than 250 notices to produce documents to a range of government and non-government institutions. In August 2015 the royal commission held its

4,000th private hearing in a jail. It has also received 16,361 allegations involving 3,566 institutions since it was established in November 2012 following the *Newcastle Herald* Shine the Light campaign for the establishment of a royal commission into historic child sexual abuse. The suicide of Hunter resident John Pirona was the catalyst for the *Newcastle Herald* campaign for the establishment of a royal commission. Former Prime Minister Julia Gillard also played an integral role. She wrote to Walkley award winning journalist Joanne McCarthy, stating:

Joanne, you are a truly remarkable person.

Thanks in very large measure to your persistence and courage, the NSW Special Commission of Inquiry and the federal Royal Commission will bring truth and healing to the victims of horrendous abuse and betrayal.

Please know that in your remarkable struggle to tell the story about this shameful chapter in our nation's history, you are not alone. Thousands of Australians share your passion for justice - I'm one of them.

On that note, I commend this legislation to the House because it takes one step towards improving the situation in this State with regard to child sexual abuse.

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Cootamundra—Parliamentary Secretary) [10.36 a.m.]: I support the Limitation Amendment (Child Abuse) Bill 2016. In doing so, I note that the object of the bill is to amend the Limitation Act 1969 to provide that there be no limitation period for an action for damages that relates to death or personal injury resulting from child abuse. The amendments define "child abuse" to mean abuse perpetrated against a person when that person is under 18 years of age that is sexual abuse, serious physical abuse, or other abuse perpetrated in connection with sexual abuse or serious physical abuse. No more important bill than this could be presented to Parliament. One child who is subject to any form of serious sexual or physical abuse is one child too many.

The very limited period during which victims can report such abuse is inappropriate and puts them in a difficult position. Many people, including members of this House, have been subject to this type of abuse as children. They may not have felt ready to talk about it; in fact, they may not feel ready to do so until such time as they can face their abuser. When that day comes they may be able to speak about it in public. I am very proud of this Government and what it has done in this space. It has already taken steps to better support survivors of institutional child sexual abuse, which is the worst possible form of abuse. Children were placed in institutions at a very young age and had no opportunity to escape systematic abuse inflicted on them by those in whose care they had been placed. There could be no more dastardly act.

In November 2014 the New South Wales Government announced some interim measures as a first step in responding to the issues raised by the royal commission. Those measures included unlimited access to free and confidential counselling for child victims of physical or sexual assault through Victims Services and Support. That was a wonderful thing for the Government to do, and it was extremely important to the survivors.

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Other interim measures include the introduction of guiding principles that determine the way the New South Wales Government will handle civil claims against State Government agencies involving allegations of child sexual abuse. This will facilitate a more consistent and compassionate approach to civil claims. Another interim measure is the creation of an active place of recognition for victims of child sexual and physical abuse at Parramatta Girls Home to acknowledge past wrongs and give victims the recognition they deserve.

I do not think anybody in this place has not heard of Parramatta Girls Home and the atrocities

associated with that place in days of yore. It has a long and complex history as a welfare institution for children and young people. The wishes of former residents of Parramatta Girls Home have been a central and guiding feature of the recognition project, with several phases of consultation informing the design. The memorial will recognise and pay tribute to survivors who experienced abuse at the home, provide an active place of remembrance for former residents, and be a site of reflection and awareness for the community. Nothing can ever make up for the atrocities that were perpetrated on the girls in that institution, but I hope that this place of recognition goes some way towards helping them heal.

A further interim measure that the New South Wales Government has introduced is an increase in resources to the Department of Family and Community Services [FACS] to clear the backlog of applications from victims who wish to access their care records. That might not be on the front page of every news publication, but giving additional resource to FACS is extremely important. I wish the department godspeed in clearing those applications. The guiding principles behind this legislation are intended to make litigation a less traumatic experience for victims. For example, the guiding principles require training for lawyers who deal with these matters on the effects of child abuse and the use of a trauma-informed framework; they require agencies to communicate regularly with claimants or their legal representatives; they encourage agencies to resolve matters without a formal statement of claim; and they encourage parties to use joint experts where possible. These are all very sensible amendments.

The guiding principles complement the New South Wales Government's Model Litigant Policy, which has a broader application. The principles only impact the way that government agencies respond to civil claims for child sexual abuse. They do not apply to other defendants. Amendments to the Limitation Act 1969 are therefore required to prevent all defendants from relying on a statutory limitation period defence in civil claims for child abuse. In its report on redress and civil litigation released in September 2015, the royal commission recommended that all government and non-government organisations implement policies for responding to claims involving child sexual abuse. The royal commission's report commended the New South Wales Government's guiding principles as an example of the types of issues that such policies should address. The New South Wales Government is amending the guiding principles to add a principle requiring agencies to assist in identifying the proper defendant where possible. This will bring the guiding principles fully into line with the royal commission's recommendations.

The New South Wales Government is also amending the guiding principles to apply to civil claims relating to child abuse so that they apply to the same claims as does this bill, being claims for sexual abuse, serious physical abuse and other abuse connected to sexual or serious physical abuse. The State of New South Wales has previously relied upon limitations defences in civil claims for child abuse. In November 2014 the Government implemented policies that restricted the circumstances in which this could occur. Principle 10 of the guiding principles provides that New South Wales Government agencies should not generally rely on a statutory limitation period defence in child sexual abuse claims. The New South Wales Department of Family and Community Services directive restricts reliance on limitation period defences in claims for sexual and/or physical abuse of a child. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

In January 2015 the New South Wales Government released a discussion paper on possible amendments to the Limitation Act 1969 that would extend the time in which survivors of child sexual abuse can commence a claim for damages against the abuser and/or a responsible institution. That discussion paper sought community feedback on whether legislative change is required to extend or remove limitation periods for civil claims for child sexual abuse; whether the scope of any changes should be broadened to include physical as well as sexual abuse; and whether any changes should be retrospective—that is, apply to both past and future cases of abuse. The consultation period closed on 10 March 2015. The department received almost 50 submissions from a wide range of stakeholders including the Law Society of NSW, New South Wales Bar Association, Care Leavers Australia Network, Barnados, Alliance for Forgotten Australians, plaintiff law firms, community legal centres, academics, the judiciary, NSW Ombudsman, Indigenous advocacy groups, religious organisations and the Insurance Council of Australia.

The royal commission has undertaken extensive consultation on barriers to civil litigation, which includes the operation of limitation periods. This consultation has involved issues papers, roundtables and a consultation paper released by the royal commission in January 2015. In its final report on redress and civil litigation released on 14 September 2015 the royal commission recommended retrospectively removing limitation periods for claims arising from the sexual abuse of a child. The royal commission's recommendations were confined to sexual abuse as it was limited by its terms of reference. The New South Wales Government has carefully considered the recommendations made by the royal commission as well as the submissions to the Government's discussion paper. All the recommendations of the royal commission in relation to limitation periods have been adopted in this bill.

I particularly commend the Minister on introducing this bill into this place and being such a champion of the rights and the protection of children. I also briefly mention Pascale Stendell, Coordinator of the Cowra Support Group for Adult Survivors of Child Abuse, and all the work that she puts into care in her community. I also thank her for her submission to the royal commission. I most particularly thank all those adult survivors who have been brave and strong enough to put their stories forward.

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) [11.46 a.m.]: I dearly wish to contribute to debate on the Limitation Amendment (Child Abuse) Bill 2016. I acknowledge the Government, particularly the Attorney General, for bringing this bill before the House. The bill removes the legal limitation period for damages claims resulting from sexual abuse or serious physical abuse and other forms of abuse, including psychological—such inappropriate and highly damaging treatment of children. The bill recognises that it often takes survivors of childhood abuse many years to reach a point where they are able to speak of their ill treatment and summon the resolve to bring the perpetrators to court. As such, it is legislation that is strongly welcomed and significantly overdue. Hopefully it will provide some comfort to those who suffered abuse at the hands of religious clergy and those within other institutions, while also giving victims who have felt frustrated and let down by existing legislation the confidence to come forward.

This Parliament is acutely aware of the impact that child sexual abuse has had on many people within my electorate of Lake Macquarie and within the wider Hunter region. It was, of course, largely the relentless work of the *Newcastle Herald* and journalist Joanne McCarthy—which has been acknowledged by others in this place today—that gave rise to the current royal commission into cover-ups of abuse within churches and other institutions, as well as the NSW Special Commission of Inquiry presided over by Commissioner Margaret Cunneen. I acknowledge former Premier Barry O'Farrell, who, following questions—I am sure from others but certainly from me—in question time in this House calling on the State Government and the Premier to institute a royal commission, at least triggered the Special Commission of Inquiry. That was a very important part of that process.

It is also important to acknowledge the work of the police officers and other professionals involved in the investigations and prosecutions who were instrumental in bringing much of these matters to light.

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I make particular mention of the contributions from Deputy Premier Troy Grant in his former role as a police detective, former Detective Chief Inspector Peter Fox, and Lake Macquarie Detective Sergeant Kristi Faber, who was a key member of Strike Force Georgiana that investigated child sexual abuse in the Hunter. We must mention the bravery of victims who came forward and told their stories, which brought to light the abhorrent practices that we now know were entrenched in some religious institutions. The fight for victims of these insidious crimes has come a long way and I have great confidence that the bill will provide more steps forward in the healing process for victims and in bringing offenders to justice.

The bill is important because it removes the current limitations on when actions of historic cases of child abuse can proceed, relating not only to sexual abuse but also to all other forms of systemic physical abuse. It is a disturbing yet understandable reality that many victims of child sexual abuse never share the deplorable experiences they suffered as children. Other victims take many years, sometimes decades, to find the courage to release the burden of the secret scars of their childhood or adolescence

in a court or public forum. We must have legislation that allows their voices to be heard at a time they need it to be heard. We cannot close the door and say, "Sorry, you are too late."

I come from the Hunter where there is much concern about these issues. I attended St Pius X High School, which was the epicentre of much of the sexual abuse in the Hunter. I was not a victim of that abuse but, on reflection, I know I was there at the time when many of my fellow students were being abused—and one was one too many. However, I stand here defiantly and proudly say that I suffered the psychopathic physical abuse of the teachers who were part of the regime at St Pius. The abject cruelty that was dished out by way of corporal punishment confirms in my mind that there were victims of sexual abuse also. I am pleased to see the light being shone on those incidents so that those victims are able to seek redress.

Almost four years ago I drew the attention of the House to a man named John Pirona. He was a Lake Macquarie resident, a wonderful husband and father of two young children. John was a popular member of Fire and Rescue NSW. He lived on the other side of the lake, in the electorate of Swansea. I was then mayor of Lake Macquarie and knew John, as many people did. He disappeared and people went looking for him. Unfortunately, when he was discovered it was found he had taken his own life. He was no longer able to bear the pain that he carried from being abused as a child by a Catholic priest. Those offences occurred in the 1970s, almost 40 years before John wrote a note to his family and ended his private life of pain. He was not able to talk about what happened to him, let alone seek justice or compensation.

Many victims carry the knowledge of their abuse to their graves. There are many who have suffered that we do not know about. The more doors that are opened to those who have suffered, the better chance we have of providing them with appropriate responses, opportunities and outcomes on a personal level and in a legal sense. This bill opens a door to those victims, and I commend it to the House. I am aware that concerns have been raised about the qualification of serious physical abuse and the lack of definition around the term "serious". This concern was raised yesterday by The Greens MLC the Hon. David Shoebridge during a crossbench briefing. I know the Government is aware of that concern, and I trust it will consider any questions that might be raised or explain any amendments that are needed to address it. I appreciate the courts have a role to determine what falls within the ambit of offences that are listed in the legislation. However, it is important that we provide the utmost clarity in those cases where people have been exposed to long-term suffering.

It is ironic that at present there is an ongoing national debate about the call for Cardinal George Pell to return to Australia to appear in person before his accusers and give evidence about what he knew of child sexual abuse in his domain. Although much of that occurred in Melbourne, Cardinal Pell has a significant history in New South Wales. I will not canvass the matter too much, but the feeling in the community is palpable that this issue must be addressed. I am offended and, while I apologise for my sentiments, I do not care about the feelings and sensitivities of the Catholic Church. I want it to address the sins of its fathers who committed crimes of abuse against members of the community. In November 2012 I thanked Government and Opposition members for the respectful and bipartisan debate that allowed the Special Commission of Inquiry to proceed. I trust this bill receives the same level of consideration and support. Once again, I thank members of the Opposition and the Government, and particularly the Attorney General for introducing the bill to the House.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) [11.56 a.m.]: I support the Limitation Amendment (Child Abuse) Bill 2016. The bill amends the Limitation Act 1969 to assist and support the victims of child abuse by retrospectively removing any limitation period for a damages claim for death or personal injury caused by the sexual abuse of a child, serious physical abuse of a child, or any other connected abuse. As the Attorney General stated in her second reading speech, legislation is not enough to take the pain away but by removing the limitation periods for damages claims, the bill will lift one barrier to justice for survivors of child abuse. Child abuse victims suffer long-term effects. The impacts of child abuse are far-reaching, even after the abuse has stopped. A study in 2007 by Draper et al found that child abuse survivors are

almost 2½ times more likely to have poor mental health outcomes compared with those who have suffered no child abuse. They are four times more likely to be unhappy, even later in their lives, and they are likely to have poor physical health.

The study also found that being subjected to physical and sexual abuse in childhood increases the risk of having three or more medical diseases. Child abuse is also linked to a higher rate of suicidal behaviour and increases the likelihood of smoking, substance abuse and physical inactivity. A high rate of broken relationships and lower rates of marriages are seen, and it even causes social disconnection and isolation, with the risk of living alone also increasing. These are not the only impacts that are experienced by survivors of child abuse. Other studies have found that there is an increased risk of intergenerational abuse or neglect compared with those who were not maltreated as children. It is also noted that there is an increased risk of re-victimisation later in life. The International Violence Against Women survey indicated that 72 per cent of Australian women who experienced physical or sexual abuse as a child also experience violence in adulthood.

In 2013 Supreme Court Judge McClelland was appointed as chair of the newly established Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Since the royal commission was established more than three years ago it has been able to shine a light on the abuse of many children and young people across Australia. The strength and courage shown by the survivors of institutional child sexual abuse and their families through this process should be acknowledged and commended. Throughout its course the royal commission has handled more than 28,402 phone calls, 15,676 emails and letters. It has held more than 4,707 private sessions, referred more than 933 matters to the authorities and police, and conducted public hearings on 36 case studies.

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The work completed as part of the royal commission has revealed a dark and disappointing period in our nation's past, but it has also been important in making sure that we do not make the same mistakes in the future. The royal commission has given many survivors and their families the opportunity to share their stories—some for the first time.

Through the statistics mentioned at the royal commission hearings we were able to gain an insight into the nature and extent of the abhorrent abuse that is prevalent in the community. In November 2015, at the opening address of the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abuse seventh biennial International Research, Theory and Practice Conference, the Hon. Justice Peter McClellan, chair of the royal commission, shared the most recent analysis of the private sessions held to date. Of those who took part in these private sessions, about 20 per cent were aged between 40 and 49, 30 per cent of survivors were aged between 50 and 59, and almost 25 per cent were aged between 60 and 69. The most common type of institution in which abuse occurred, about 45 per cent, was out-of-home care, including orphanages, children's homes or fosters care, and 89 per cent of offenders were male. On average children were abused over a period of 2.8 years. It is also interesting to note that about 62 per cent of survivors were male and 37 per cent were female.

Men do not usually talk openly about feelings or experiences, it is pleasing that in addition to this bill the Government has recently announced funding of an additional \$517,000 for the Survivors and Mates Support Network [SAMSN]. This will mean that SAMSN can continue to provide support and assistance to male victims of sexual abuse, who are overrepresented in those statistics. I thank Shane McNamara and Craig Hughes-Cashmore from SAMSN, whom I have had a lot to do with over the past couple of years. They do incredibly powerful work and help to save people's lives. Those gentlemen look after people who find it hard to open up about their experiences. I wish a friend of mine had found SAMSN earlier; it may have made a huge difference to him. Craig and Shane have shared with me that many of these men do not recall being physically and sexually abused as children until they have children themselves. It must be heartbreaking to experience those memories at what should be a wonderful time in one's life. It is great that SAMSN, Shane and Craig are looking after these men.

Statutes are generally enacted by common law jurisdictions to restrict the time after an event that legal proceedings may be initiated. The main purpose of statutory limitation periods is to protect defendants from having to defend claims when they should not reasonably be required to do so. In 1996 the High Court of Australia identified four broad rationales for imposing limitations—namely, the public interest requires that disputes be settled as quickly as possible; delays are likely to lead to relevant evidence being lost; people should be able to arrange their affairs and use their resources on the basis that claims can no longer be made against them—this applies particularly to insurers, public institutions and businesses as "it may be unfair to make the shareholders, ratepayers or taxpayers of today ultimately liable for a wrong of the distant past"; and it may be "oppressive" or "cruel" to a defendant to have to answer a claim long after the circumstances that gave rise to it have passed. Statutory limitation periods should strike a balance between fairness to defendants and the general right of all people to have breaches of their civil rights determined by a court.

New South Wales currently allows for extensions to limitation periods where exceptional circumstances apply such as where the plaintiff is a child or suffers from a disability, or where the plaintiff suffers from an injury but is not aware of it until many years after the event that caused it. These exceptions were developed to allow survivors with particular characteristics or injuries to make a claim even though they could not reasonably be expected to do so within the limitation period. Many survivors of child sexual abuse do not act on their experiences or disclose them to any party until decades after their abuse, if at all. In the royal commission it was found that the average time taken by survivors to disclose their abuse was 22 years, with men on average taking longer than women. Currently the limitation period that applies to a claim resulting from child abuse in New South Wales is between three and 12 years, depending on when the abuse occurred. This time frame is not effective for survivors because it is at least 10 years less than the average period for disclosure of abuse. As a consequence, many survivors are barred by statute limitations and unable to obtain civil compensation for the harm they have endured.

There are many reasons why survivors of child abuse are not able to commence civil proceedings connected to the injuries they have sustained. Injuries may fit within the statutory exceptions for disability and latent injuries such as post-traumatic stress disorder or another mental illness resulting from the abuse. However, some injuries may not fit within the exceptions within the statutory exceptions such as intense feelings of shame or embarrassment. This reform is important to allow all survivors of child abuse to be treated in a fair and equal way, regardless of when or where the abuse occurred and who perpetrated it. This bill will ensure that all survivors of childhood abuse are able to instigate a claim for civil compensation from either their abuser or the organisation of abuse. It will also assist in making civil litigation a more easily accessible option for those who have suffered child abuse, especially those who have strong evidence in their favour.

This bill also implements all of the royal commission's recommendations about limitation periods. This will mean that in New South Wales we will remove the limitation period that applies to a claim for damages resulting from child abuse. The amendments will be retrospective—this is one time I am in favour of retrospective legislation—to ensure that all previous survivors of child abuse can utilise this provision. The amendments will preserve the courts' right to stay or dismiss proceedings and will be implemented as soon as possible. As the chair of the Committee for Children and Young People and a former member of the Joint Select Committee on Sentencing of Child Sexual Assault Offenders, I understand the impact that child abuse can have on youth and its implications for people as they grow up with the memories of that abuse. I thank the Attorney General and her staff for their work in bringing this bill before the House. It will go a long way towards breaking down some of the barriers that exist in our legal system that prevent survivors gaining some justice. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) [12.06 p.m.]: On behalf of the Greens I speak to the Limitation Amendment (Child Abuse) Bill 2016. The Greens support this bill, which seeks to remove the statute of limitations for civil claims for damages relating to child sexual abuse. It is encouraging that this bill and the improvement it will provide to those seeking justice has support across this Chamber. I take this

opportunity to acknowledge the work of David Shoebridge, my Greens colleague in the other place. He has long been working with victims and survivors of child abuse to highlight the need for reform. As members have acknowledged, it was a positive step to see the recommendation come from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and we have subsequently seen action in support of that reform, which The Greens have long been committed to. Indeed, the introduction of a similar bill last year by the Opposition and the introduction of this bill by the Baird Government, demonstrates that we are all united in our desire to act in a way that will provide a measure of immediate justice for victims by improving their access to the courts.

The object of this bill is to amend the Limitation Act 1969 to remove any limitation period applying under that Act on a cause of action for damages that relates to death or personal injury from child abuse. The change operates retrospectively to all historical child abuse claims. This is crucial as the average time for a survivor to disclose sexual abuse is 23 years, which means the current three-year time limit for civil claims for compensation is a serious and inevitable obstacle to justice. For victims of child abuse the three-year time limit runs from when a victim turns 18 years of age. Victims and survivors of abuse have enough challenges in coping with the effects of the abuse and wherever possible the law, especially our limitations laws, should not add to their burdens. Currently a person must seek the leave of the court to make a civil claim after the three years from when a child victim has turned 18. This limitation is often used by the defendants' lawyers to reduce the amount of compensation offered in settlement conferences. That is unacceptable.

On 14 September 2015, the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse issued its final report on redress. It found that the statute of limitations is an inappropriate and unfair obstacle to victims of child sexual abuse seeking civil redress.

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Recommendation Nos 85 and 86 in the report refer to the changes this bill proposes. Such changes were implemented in Victoria when the Limitation of Actions Amendment (Child Abuse) Act 2015 came into operation on 1 July 2015 but with one difference as the use of the qualifier "serious", which I will address in a moment.

The royal commission found that civil compensation is an important part of the healing process for many survivors of abuse and provides an incentive for institutions to improve the protection of children in their care. For this reason it is crucial that artificial barriers that prevent victims from accessing justice are removed as soon as possible, and that is what this bill seeks to do. The changes that will be realised as a result of the successful passage of this bill have the support of a wide range of stakeholders, community groups and support organisations across this State and nation, including the Indigenous Social Justice Association, Bravehearts, Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests, Women's Legal Services NSW, Survivors and Mates Support Network and Adults Surviving Child Abuse, as well as the many victims, survivors and family and friends of those impacted by child abuse.

I foreshadow that The Greens will seeking to amend the bill in the other place to make it consistent with the recently enacted Victorian legislation that removed the statute of limitations in that State. The amendment relates to our concern about the inclusion of the word "serious" as a qualifier of the physical abuse required to satisfy the definition of child abuse in new section 6A. The Greens are concerned that this qualifier will increase legal confusion and challenges, which will present a possible additional obstacle for victims and survivors of child abuse. When Mr David Shoebridge moves the amendment in the other place he will address our concerns about this qualifier and outline the reasons for the proposed amendment. I again express The Greens support for this bill and commend Government and Opposition members for their unified support of this important reform, which will improve and aid victims and survivors of child abuse to access justice. We have a significant role in this place to ensure that we introduce laws to protect the most vulnerable in our community. Indeed, it is our responsibility to ensure that they are treated with dignity and respect and have access to justice. This bill will make a contribution to that responsibility.

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) [12.11 p.m.]: I commend the Limitation Amendment (Child Abuse) Bill 2016 to the House. This bill will amend the Limitation Act 1969 to retrospectively remove any limitation period for a damages claim for death or personal injury resulting from child abuse. Child abuse is a stain on our society. The abuse of a person under the age of 18, whether sexual abuse, serious physical abuse or any other abuse connected to the sexual or serious physical abuse is totally unacceptable and abhorrent. It is the responsibility of this Parliament to take the necessary action to ensure that the victims of crime are supported and encouraged to come forward.

In my inaugural speech I spoke about my career as a police prosecutor and how the support of victims of crime was one of the primary things I hoped to achieve in my time in this place. I am heartened by this Government's resolve to deliver for the most vulnerable in our community. We are meeting the expectations of our community on how we must respond to the travesty of child abuse. Children are our greatest asset and our greatest commodity in the future of our society. Every day we are investing in the children of this State and reaping the rewards of this investment. In fact, our record investment in schools and right across the education sector both in pre-school and in primary years is helping us reach that goal. As a government we are rightfully focussed on ensuring that children get the best possible start in our society, but what can we do for those children who are victims of abuse and whose lives have been forever changed for the worse? We must take action to ensure that their transition from the shadows of abuse into mainstream society is as easy as possible. After such scarring experiences we must help them in any way possible and removing the limitation period for damages arising from child abuse is a core step to achieving that.

I turn now to highlight some of the statistics from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, which was established in 2013. As of 1 February 2016 the royal commission had handled more than 28,402 calls; received more than 15,676 emails and letters; held more than 4,707 private sessions; referred more than 933 matters to the authorities and police; and held public hearings on 36 case studies. Let us not mince words, that royal commission has done a great service to those victims of crime. It has shone a light on the abuse of many children and young people across this nation. I acknowledge the strength and courage shown by the survivors of institutional child sexual abuse and their families in telling their stories. Indeed, a strong correlation exists between the level of support a victim of crime receives and how willing they are to undergo the very raw process of confronting a personally dark and painful chapter in their life.

The royal commission has given many survivors an opportunity to come forward and share their stories, often for the first time, and it is through support networks like this that we can best help the victims of this terrible abuse. On behalf of this Government I commend those men and women for sharing their heartbreaking and terrifying testimony. We stand by them and support them. The royal commission revealed several important things about child abuse in our society. Whilst the statistics referred to at the royal commission might not be wholly representative, they give an insight into the nature and extent of this terrible abuse. Above all else, we must acknowledge that victims of abuse do not fit into certain stereotypes. Abuse is indiscriminate; anyone can fall into the category of most vulnerable when it comes to this crime.

Statistics show that more than 60 per cent of survivors are male, around 30 per cent are aged between 50 and 59, almost 25 per cent are aged between 60 and 69, and around 20 per cent are aged between 40 and 49. The average abuse was at just over 10 years of age for males and just under 10 years of age for females.

The 1960s was the most common decade in which abuse was reported to have first occurred, followed by the 1970s. The most common type of institution in which abuse occurred, around 45 per cent, was out-of-home-care, in places such as orphanages, children's homes and foster care, and around 60 per cent of those institutions were faith-based organisations, followed by 23 per cent managed by government. Most offenders were male, around 89 per cent, and on average children were abused for an ongoing period of 2.8 years. These statistics are helpful in analysing the demographics of these victims of

crime. By understanding them we can better understand those who have been exploited by these criminals and how we can help them in the aftermath of this terrible abuse.

We should make no mistake and be very clear that limitation periods are a barrier to justice for child abuse survivors. Indeed, the royal commission recognised and endorsed this. Survivors of abuse usually take decades to disclose abuse but limitation periods prevent damages claims for between three and 12 years. This bill will rectify that. It is absolutely fundamental to the Government's commitment to deliver support for the victims of crime. The Government has not come to the party today because it is fashionable to do so. We have a strong record in looking after the most vulnerable members of our society—namely, those subjected to abuse. We have already taken a number of steps to address the issue of limitation periods such as adopting the guiding principles for government agencies responding to claims for child sexual abuse; introducing a directive to the Department of Family and Community Services that it will not generally rely on limitation periods to defend claims for child sexual or physical abuse; releasing a discussion paper on the issue for public consultation in January 2015, and announcing in November 2015 that the Government would be introducing legislation in 2016.

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The Government supports the royal commission's recommendation for a single, national redress scheme for survivors, and it continues discussions with the Commonwealth and other States and Territories about that redress. We must work with all other governments to ensure that a uniform approach is adopted. Members will agree that this issue transcends the political divide. There is no wedge on this issue. It is very simple: We must follow the recommendations set out by the royal commission, and it is this Government's intention to do just that. In the coming months, the Government will also release a consultation paper seeking public input on the royal commission's other civil litigation recommendations.

In my time in this place I have been inundated with feedback from everyday residents in my electorate. The people of the Seven Hills electorate are diverse and have many stories, but a central factor that unites them is a passion for justice and a fair outcome. Time and again I am visited by men and women, young and old, pleading with me to stand up for the victims of crime. They want the Government to ensure that perpetrators of heinous crimes are not only brought to justice but that after they are brought to justice we help those who have been harmed. Of course we must be tough on crime and deter and dis-incentivise those who wish to bring harm to their fellow members of society, but we must also acknowledge that crime cannot ever be totally eradicated. Once we acknowledge this, the obvious question then is: How can we best support and accommodate those who fall victim to injustice? This bill goes a long way to ensuring that we are being compassionate and making a measured response to this issue. Amending the Limitation Act 1969 to retrospectively remove any limitation period for a damages claim for death and personal injury is an absolutely critical to the support of victims of abuse. I am passionate about these matters, which fundamentally go to justice. I made a commitment to the people of my electorate that I would stand constantly uphold the rights and needs of victims of crime. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) [12.21 p.m.]: I speak in support of the Limitation Amendment (Child Abuse) Bill 2016. This bill enjoys the support of both sides of this place. The purpose of the bill is to amend the Limitation Act 1969 to retrospectively remove any limitation period for a damages claim for death or personal injury resulting from child abuse. In this bill the term "child abuse" is defined as the abuse of a person under 18 years of age—that is, either sexual abuse or serious physical abuse and/or other abuse connected with sexual or serious physical abuse. The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse was established in 2013. In 2014 the royal commission issued its interim report. At the commencement of volume 2 of the report, which primarily deals with the personal stories of those persons who have been the subject of abuse, the commissioners make a number of observations as to the common themes that emerged from the personal stories the commission had heard. Amongst those observations the commissioners formed a view as to the major barriers that survivors of sexual abuse reported in relation to disclosures. They said:

Survivors reported that when the abuse occurred, they feared that they would not be believed or would be seen as weak for letting the abuse happen. They worried that disclosure would hurt and distress others. As children, often they:

- did not understand that what was happening was sexual abuse
- were not spoken to in private or asked by a trusted, known and sensitive person
- were threatened
- may have had a complex relationship with the perpetrator.

Adult survivors also told us that current barriers to disclosure include them:

- feeling shame, embarrassment, self-blame and self-doubt
- deciding that the abuse was not as serious as other forms of abuse happening to other children.

The commissioners also identified various barriers to the identification and reporting of abuse:

Many factors undermine the identification and reporting of child sexual abuse, including:

- lack of training on child sexual abuse
- failure to recognise indirect disclosures of abuse
- delayed disclosure by victims
- adults not recognising concerning or abusive behaviour or rationalising such behaviour because it does not fit their stereotypical view of perpetrators.

Some survivors reported that the health and other professionals they had seen had not asked them whether they were abused despite them showing signs of abuse. Survivors said that as a result they often did not disclose the abuse when seeking assistance. Survivors said that as a result, they often did not disclose the abuse when seeking assistance.

The report includes many very appalling personal stories of victims of abuse. As at 31 May 2014 the commission had held 1,677 private sessions. In each session the commission heard a deeply personal story from a person who had suffered sexual abuse as a child. The commission also received 1,632 written accounts from people who have preferred to tell their story in writing. These stories must be addressed and recognised. Every government, not only the Government of New South Wales, has a responsibility to provide an answer to those persons who have suffered sexual abuse. This legislation goes part of the way to doing that.

The Government has already taken some steps—for example, it has provided unlimited access to free and confidential counselling for child victims of physical or sexual assault through the Victims Support Scheme; and the introduction of guiding principles that determine how the Government will handle civil claims against New South Wales government agencies involving allegations of child sexual abuse. These will facilitate a more consistent and compassionate approach to civil claims. We have provided an active place of recognition for victims of child sexual abuse at Parramatta Girls Home to acknowledge past wrongs and give victims the recognition they deserve. The Parramatta Girls Home site has a long and complex history as a welfare institution for children and young people. Indeed, the wishes of former residents of Parramatta Girls Home have been central to guiding the features of the project, with

several phases of consultations informing the design. The memorial will recognise and pay tribute to survivors who experienced abuse at the home, provide an active place of remembrance for former residents and be a site of reflection and awareness for the community.

The Government has also provided increased resources to the Department of Family and Community Services to clear the backlog of applications from victims to access their care records. The guiding principles will assist victims of child sexual abuse and providers of counselling services. They are intended to make litigation a less traumatic experience for victims—for example, the guiding principles require training for lawyers who deal with these matters on the effects of child abuse and the use of a trauma-informed framework, require agencies to communicate regularly with claimants or their legal representatives, encourage agencies to resolve matters without a formal statement of claim, and encourage parties to use joint experts where possible. We need to ensure that the litigation experience does not compound the trauma for persons who have suffered child sexual abuse. The guiding principles complement the New South Wales Government's model litigant policy, which has a broader application. The principles only impact the way that government agencies respond to civil claims for child sexual abuse. They do not apply to other defendants, but that needs to happen. Amendments to the Limitation Act 1969 are therefore required to prevent all defendants from relying on a statutory limitation period as a defence in civil claims for child abuse.

In its report on redress and civil litigation released in September 2015, the royal commission recommended that all governments and non-government organisations implement policies for responding to claims involving child sexual abuse. The royal commission's report commended the New South Wales Government's guiding principles as an example of the types of issues that such policies should address

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The New South Wales Government is amending the guiding principles to add a principle requiring agencies to assist in identifying the proper defendant where possible. This will bring the guiding principles fully into line with the royal commission's recommendations. The guiding principles will apply to a civil claim relating to child abuse so that they apply to the same claims as this bill, being claims for sexual abuse, serious physical abuse and other abuse connected to sexual or serious physical abuse. New South Wales has previously relied upon limitation defences in civil claims for child abuse, which is a shame. In November 2014 this Government implemented policies that restricted the circumstances in which this could occur. It needed to happen.

Guiding principle 10 provides that New South Wales government agencies should not generally rely on a statutory limitation period defence in child sexual abuse claims. The NSW Department of Family and Community Services directive restricts reliance on limitation period defences in claims for sexual and/or physical abuse of a child. In January 2015 the New South Wales Government released a discussion paper on possible amendments to the Limitation Act 1969 that would extend the time during which survivors of child sexual abuse can commence a claim for damages against the abuser and/or the responsible institution.

The discussion paper sought community feedback on: whether legislative changes were required to extend or remove the limitation period for civil claims for child sexual abuse, a question that has been answered today; whether the scope of any changes should be broadened to include physical as well as sexual abuse, a question that has been answered today; and whether any change should be retrospective, in other words, apply to past and future cases of abuse, a question that has been answered today. The consultation period closed on 10 March 2015. The department received over 50 submissions from a wide range of stakeholders. In conclusion, in my inaugural speech I addressed child sexual abuse and the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

I stated that one of the things I wanted to achieve while in this place was the implementation of a scheme for proper compensation for survivors of sexual abuse. This bill is a start but we need to do more.

A redress scheme must be implemented by this Government to establish a fund, contributed to by institutions and Government, which will enable survivors of sexual abuse to make claims. In addition, the manner in which evidence is taken from survivors of child sexual abuse must be addressed, which is no easy matter. Victims who suffered abuse 40 years ago must have their claims properly and sensitively dealt without calling into doubt their assertions. To call into doubt their assertions and to suggest that they are making up allegations or lying about child sexual abuse will only perpetuate the abuse that has been inflicted on them.

One of the tangential issues relates to abuse disclosed by members of the Catholic Church. Members would know that I have significant allegiance to the Catholic Church. The allegations that have been made against Catholic priests have caused me deep shame. Most Catholics are appalled by the crimes that have been perpetrated by persons who purportedly represent them in the administration of their faith. This bill goes a long way towards ensuring that the community must compensate survivors of sexual abuse, but those Catholics who are involved in institutions must acknowledge the betrayal, which must be expressed in law.

Institutions such as the Catholic Church must improve the procedures that are used to decide who is sent into the community so that priests do not betray those who attend their churches. I commend this bill to the House; it is high time these reforms were introduced. Limitation periods relating to this type of claim should never have been instituted or relied upon by any organisation. It gives me great pleasure to support this bill and I compliment the Attorney General for introducing it. The Labor Party and those opposite have introduced similar bills and the support of both sides of Parliament is a credit to all members.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) [12.35 p.m.]: I congratulate the Attorney General and her staff on introducing this bill and acknowledge the contributions from both Labor members and The Greens. I commend the members representing the electorates of Ku-ring-gai, Tweed, Myall Lakes, Oatley, Cootamundra, Holsworthy, Seven Hills and Epping for their contributions to this debate. It was made clear today that members on both sides of the House support the proposed amendments. Nothing is more abhorrent in our society than child sexual abuse. As local members we have the support of our communities to act to prevent this crime from being perpetrated on the young and vulnerable in our society without serious consequences.

The bill will amend the Limitation Act 1969 to permit an action for damages in relation to child abuse to be brought at any time. Child abuse is the abuse of a child or young person under the age of 18 years of age. The meaning of the term "abuse" includes sexual abuse, serious physical abuse, and other abuse connected to serious sexual and serious physical abuse, such as minor physical abuse or psychological abuse. What are the long-term impacts of child abuse? It is widely accepted that child abuse can and does have long-term and far reaching impacts on victims. Child abuse has an impact long after that abuse has ceased. A study conducted in 2007 by Draper found that child abuse survivors are: almost 2½ times more likely to have poor mental health outcomes; four times more likely to be unhappy, even much later in their lives; and are more likely to have poor physical health.

That study found that being subjected to physical and sexual abuse in childhood increased the risk of having three or more medical diseases; caused a high prevalence of broken relationships and lower rates of marriage; caused social disconnection and isolation and increased the risk of living alone; was associated with suicidal behaviour; and increased the likelihood of smoking, substance abuse and physical inactivity. Those studies have found that survivors of childhood abuse are often at an increased risk of intergenerational abuse or neglect compared to those not maltreated as children and at a risk of re-victimisation later in life.

The International Violence Against Women survey indicated that a staggering 72 per cent of Australian women who experienced either physical or sexual abuse as children also experienced violence in adulthood. They are more likely to experience physical health problems such as diabetes,

gastrointestinal problems, arthritis, gynaecological problems, hepatitis, stroke and heart disease. Some studies suggest poor health outcomes in survivors could be due to the direct effects of the physical abuse they suffered, the impact of stress on the immune system and the greater propensity for survivors to engage in high-risk behaviours such as drug and alcohol abuse. They are more likely to experience homelessness in adulthood and to commit crimes as juveniles and adults.

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What factors affect the consequences for a child abuse survivor? They are the age and developmental stage at which the abuse occurred; the severity of the abuse; the types of abuse and whether there are multiple forms of abuse; the survivor's perception of the abuse, such as feelings of guilt, shame or stigmatisation; the relationship between the survivor and the abuser, with increased negative effects when the perpetrator is someone with whom the child has an emotional relationship; whether the abuse was detected and child protection authorities intervened to assure the safety of the child; whether the survivor received therapeutic services to assist in recovery; and whether there were positive factors that may have mitigated the effects of the abuse, such as all-important family support.

Since 2013, the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse has been considering what governments must do to ensure justice for these child abuse victims. In September 2015, the royal commission released 99 recommendations dealing with redress and civil litigation, including retrospectively removing limitation periods for claims of child sexual abuse. Obviously, the commission hearings exposed heart-rending evidence. I have listened to the contributions of my colleagues who have had firsthand experience of this type of abuse as police officers.

As an ordinary member of the public, I cannot even begin to fathom the destructive and abhorrent nature of these crimes and how difficult it must have been for the victims to give evidence to the royal commission. They should be commended for their bravery. It takes an extremely stoic person to be able to describe what was done by people whom they often saw as protectors and carers. The royal commission's terms of reference were limited with regard to child sexual abuse. However, it suggested that governments could enact reforms covering other types of abuse that are equally traumatic. The commission's interim report stated:

An institution's failure to respond appropriately may exacerbate the trauma of the abuse itself. Trusted with the care of our children, too many institutions have betrayed our children and our community's trust, and then failed to respond with compassion or care.

I note the passionate contribution of the member for Epping to the debate with regard to the way in which the Catholic Church dealt with this issue. I commend that contribution and acknowledge that it must have been difficult to make. As one survivor told the commission:

There was a lot of self-harm and suicidal ideations in the past couple of years and I think a lot of that was more around not being believed or validated through that initial disclosure period.

The use of limitation period defences has in some cases contributed to the re-traumatisation of survivors. We have seen the cowardly response of some of the institutions involved in this abuse in dragging out hearings in the hope that they exceed the limitation period. That is as cowardly an act as the original abuse. The final report on redress and civil litigation refers to Case Study 11, which looks at the response of the Christian Brothers in Western Australia. The report quotes the testimony of abuse survivor Mr Clifford Walsh:

What I couldn't understand is how the Christian Brothers could raise a limitation defence. We were kids. It seemed to me that we couldn't do anything about the abuse when it was happening, and by the time we were able as a group to do something about it, in particular being in the right mental state to do so, we were told it was too late. We were just being abused all over again.

Again, I am proud to be a member of a government that has introduced this amending legislation. This Government has already taken a number of steps to address the limitation period for child abuse claims, for example, by adopting guideline principles for government agencies responding to claims of child sexual abuse that restrict any agency that relies on limitation periods to defend such a claim, and issuing a directive that the Department of Family and Community Services should not generally rely on limitation periods to defend claims of child sexual and physical abuse.

The Government released a discussion paper on the issue of public consultation in January 2015. It also announced in November 2015 that it would introduce this legislation. The Government obviously wholeheartedly supports the royal commission's recommendation that a single national redress scheme for survivors be established, and it is involved in continuing discussions with the Commonwealth Government and other State and Territory governments about redress. It will also release a consultation paper in the coming months seeking input on the royal commission's recommendations and other civil litigation recommendations. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) [12.45 p.m.]: The Opposition supports the Limitation Amendment (Child Abuse) Bill 2016. I have often observed in this House that when the New South Wales Parliament intrudes in respect of the common law it always leads either to intended or unintended consequences. Those who have suffered sexual abuse at the hands of others have been impacted by such an intrusion. At the behest of insurance companies and in an effort to reduce premiums, the Carr Government legislated to reduce the limitation period for claims. That obviously had a significant impact on the victims of child sexual abuse. This legislation not only rectifies what I believe is a legislative error but also extends the limitation period to give victims of these heinous crimes an avenue of redress.

Those of us who have been in the criminal justice system as I have as a public defender or an acting Crown prosecutorial have been involved in hundreds if not thousands of these cases. Unfortunately, they are rife not only in this State and this country but also throughout the world, and probably have been for thousands of years. Whenever I have read briefs for the first time in these cases and seen the nature of the allegations my stomach has always turned before I did what I was obliged to do as a barrister in being objective and dispassionate in bringing the alleged perpetrators to justice. No-one, whether it be a judge, a prosecutor or a defender, likes to be involved in these cases, but the cab rank rules give us no choice, and there are so many of them. Those who are not involved in the criminal justice system rightfully express their revulsion in response to this type of conduct, and it can sometimes be frightening to see the impact it has on the lives of the victims.

I will provide the House with an example of a case that brought that impact home to me—and there are thousands of similar examples. Many years ago a 16-year-old choirboy from Waterloo was sexually assaulted. I was counsel assisting in an inquest 18 years later and it was necessary to call that former choirboy, who was then 34 years old, to give evidence.

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The evidence he gave in relation to his background since being sexually assaulted was horrifying. At 16 he was not just a choirboy; he was a very successful student living in the public housing area of Waterloo, with not only good marks at school but also highly rated by his teachers. In the years following his sexual assault he began engaging in drug taking in an effort to hide the scarring that had been occasioned on him. He became a drug addict and then committed offences to sustain his habit. From recollection, he also had some periods of incarceration. Some 18 years later to see this man in the witness box and to see the impact of the actions by a heinous fiend particularly moved me. Lawyers have to be objective and dispassionate—when one defends hundreds and hundreds of these cases that is how one must embark upon one's exercise—but I could not help but be moved in this instance. It brought the impact of this type of behaviour front on to what should have been my objective analysis.

This legislation provides that people can have an opportunity for redress, which is important

because there will be an ongoing impact on them for the rest of their lives. People are frightened to come forward, through shame and embarrassment. Only a fraction of the victims of abuse come forward. Having seen those who have come forward and having heard about the damage that had been done to them after they detailed the most despicable acts has given me an understanding of the need to provide some mechanism to assist them for the rest of their lives. The impact of this abuse continues for every victim for the rest of their lives. They never get over it. If they wish to come forward the very least we can do is to provide them with a mechanism of redress.

The royal commission made some recommendations about a national redress scheme to give people an opportunity to seek redress. It is one thing to bring proceedings against institutions that may well be liable for the conduct of those they should have been supervising. They have the capacity to pay and no doubt have insurance policies to be able to pay. But I regret to say that is only a small proportion of the people affected by this heinous behaviour, which is far more widespread than any of us would expect. A number of years ago I was told by police officers who investigate these matters that they believe one in five people have been sexually abused at some time in their lives. On those statistics, the fact that there are 93 members of Parliament might give us an indication of how many of them have been affected by that type of behaviour. In the three years that I have been a member in this place I am aware of only one member reporting abuse of that nature.

The national redress scheme is important because people are entitled to some assistance and compensation in respect of the heinous abuse they have suffered. It will give victims an opportunity to access either the common law or a national redress scheme. Many economic rationalists believe that the national redress scheme might be underfunded and cost a considerable amount. I say to them: A national redress scheme could recover an amount of money from those who are capable of paying. It is the least that we as a society can do for those vulnerable people who have been treated in that way. Many victims of child sexual abuse may have been the victims of the behaviour of individuals, but invariably the instances of abuse involve institutionalised failure somewhere. Somebody must have noticed something on many occasions but did not become involved or report those suspicions. *[Extension of time agreed to.]*

Over the past 30 years or more I have been involved in many cases in which somebody should have observed that something was wrong somewhere. Whether it was in the education system, whether it was a relative, whether it was the church, somewhere the signs should have been there. We all know how government works these days; it is all about money and expense. The most important thing about a national redress system funded by the Government is this: If the cost of a national redress scheme is such that it looks like becoming unfunded, that might motivate governments to establish a mechanism to provide early intervention. It is always good to talk about it but it is not effective or efficient in practice.

As it undertakes its work, the royal commission is identifying the inadequacies of those who should have seen the signs. As a result, there will be an education process, but there must be a financial incentive for governments to implement strategies in order to intervene. If the police officer who told me that one in five people are sexually abused at some time in their lifetime is correct, we are talking about a horrendous number of people. There are not enough police to prosecute every conceivable offence that has been committed because it is too widespread.

There are those who might think that these evil fiends are sickos who prey upon young children—that there must be something wrong with them. Those people may not have had detailed experience in this area. I have had many people who have pleaded guilty, who have been convicted of these offences, or who have admitted to them, examined by psychiatrists and psychologists. A minority of them may have been sexually abused themselves as children, but a majority do not have a mental illness or a psychological deficit. It relates simply to their sexual preference and their choice. "Grooming" of children relates to the inability of children to withstand the persuasion that might often take place between various parties who have a particular sexual preference. We are dealing with people who have a preference rather than "sickos". If that preference relates to adults, normally adults can negotiate themselves, but children cannot. Consequently, because grooming is often involved, there are plenty of

signs, or there should be signs that are evident if strategies are implemented to put a stop to that and to protect the vulnerable.

This sort of behaviour has permeated society for thousands of years, probably since the inception of the human race. We know more about it now only because people are coming forward. We are only at the tip of the iceberg with the royal commission. This bill, together with a national redress scheme, will go some way towards having society say, "We care about you. We are sorry about what happened to you and we want to do something for you. We cannot reverse what has happened to you, but we care about you."

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Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) [12.59 p.m.]: I will make a short contribution to debate on the Limitation Amendment (Child Abuse) Bill 2016. As we all know, people who have been abused as children often take many years to come to terms with the abuse let alone be able to summon the courage and wherewithal to make it clear to authorities, which then takes it to the next step where some form of redress is possible. It is a common scenario. Many of the high-profile prosecutions of child abusers that we have seen in the media in recent years date back decades. In many cases, we see old men before the dock answering for events that happened in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. It is a common scenario because it takes victims time to disclose their abuse. It is appropriate that that reality is reflected in this amending bill. Victims should be allowed as much time as is necessary to disclose their abuse and to take steps to seek redress.

Many speakers have addressed the fundamentals of the bill and the sad truth with which we are dealing. The inquiry that is the focus of so much of this work is the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. It is true that much of what has been uncovered in recent years relates to religious, government and non-government institutions and organisations. There are far too many of them. Much of the abuse occurred in institutional settings and the removal of the limitation will allow more cases to be disclosed and acted on in the future. It is my submission that in future decades this amendment will apply not only to institutional settings but also to domestic situations. Many of the problems that occurred in institutions that have been required to clean up their act and put in place protocols, procedures, screening processes and so on to address the sad reality also occur in domestic settings.

It is fundamentally important for Parliaments, governments and leaders of the community across the nation to understand that there is a real risk to children in domestic settings. It is incumbent upon the leaders of this country to do whatever we can to keep children safe as much as we can. We should focus a large degree of our attention in future on how children are raised in domestic settings and what start in life they are being given so this sad story is not repeated. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse—Attorney General) [1.03 p.m.], in reply: I thank members for their contributions to debate on the Limitation Amendment (Child Abuse) Bill 2016: the member for Ku-ring-gai, the member for Tweed, the member for Myall Lakes, the member for Cootamundra, the member for Oatley, the member for Holsworthy, the member for Seven Hills, the member for Epping, the member for Terrigal and the member for Riverstone, who is in the Chamber. I also acknowledge Opposition members for their contributions to the debate: the member for Liverpool, and shadow Attorney General, the member for Prospect, the member for Maitland, the member for Charlestown and the member for Newcastle. I thank the Independent member for Lake Macquarie for his ongoing support of the bill and his comments in the House. I also thank the member for Newtown and the member for Heffron. I thank those members for their contributions to this important debate. It will be remembered by the victims, their families and the community for the just measures that we will pass into law today.

I note that the shadow Attorney General has given his full support to the bill before the House. As he said, this bill is just a matter of justice for victims, for families and for the community. However, I will comment on some matters that were raised by Opposition members in their contributions. Although I note

the shadow Attorney General strongly supports the bill, he was critical of the time that it took the Government to introduce this reform. He noted that Victoria removed the limitations period last year. Members must recognise the shadow Attorney General failed to mention that the reforms in Victoria were not a response to the royal commission's recommendations, which were published in September last year. They were in response to a parliamentary inquiry, which had run from 2013. Two years later Victoria legislated on this issue.

We are, and should be, proud of being the first jurisdiction to respond directly to the royal commission's recommendations on the limitation periods. These are significant reforms that address serious past issues within our community and they show how we are trying to address a matter of justice. The Government is committed to getting it right—I believe we owe that much to survivors of child abuse. The member for Prospect alleged that the Government had opposed the Opposition's bill for political reasons. I was in the House when the bill was introduced. That is simply not the case. I made the point several times when listening to the member's contribution that this bill is similar but different. It is different in critical aspects that will benefit survivors, and that goes to the pivotal part of the bill: the definition of "child abuse" for which we are lifting limitations. We believe we have got that definition right. I will explain why we have got it right, and indeed what that definition is.

I am proud to introduce a bill that is broader than the royal commission's findings. The royal commission was limited by its terms of reference to child sexual abuse. In developing these reforms the Government has carefully considered the definition of child abuse. The bill before the House defines "child abuse" as sexual abuse and serious physical abuse of a child under the age of 18 and any abuse of a child under the age of 18 years that is connected. This definition goes beyond the royal commission's recommendation, which focuses on sexual abuse. Once the threshold of sexual abuse or serious physical abuse as a child has been established, any connected abuse can be considered by a court in considering the claim before it. Connected abuse could, for example, include psychological abuse and minor physical abuse. Government members believe this definition ensures that the whole of a survivor's experience can be considered by the court when it is considering a claim. The definition of "child abuse" in the bill recognises that many children have been maltreated in many ways by multiple forms of abuse. Therefore, the definition of sexual abuse and serious physical abuse frames the limitations that will be lifted by this bill.

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I note that the member for Newtown foreshadowed an amendment, to be moved in the other place, to remove the qualifier "serious" from "physical abuse". The definition is restricted to serious physical abuse so that minor assaults and accidental injuries are not captured in the threshold for abuse claims. I believe it is appropriate to limit that threshold in this way as this reform is not intended to cover trivial, accidental or other conduct, which on its own is unlikely to cause trauma. The definition of "child abuse" that this bill brings before the House recognises that serious physical abuse has the potential to cause the same severity of harm as sexual abuse. Having made those preliminary comments, I will return to the overwhelming support for the bill on both sides of the Chamber today. I welcome that. There should be no expiry date on justice for survivors of child abuse.

As the Attorney General, I have had the privilege—I consider it a privilege—to introduce this bill, which will remove a significant barrier to justice. This Government has been strongly committed to reform in this area since the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse was formed three years ago, and began exposing a dark—and until that point, an often unspoken of—chapter in our nation's history. The Government's commitment to change was first reflected in the interim measures that the Government has already introduced to give the survivors of institutional sexual abuse the compassion and care they need and deserve. As I reminded members in my second reading speech, the interim measures introduced by the Government in November 2014 included 18 guiding principles to guide New South Wales government agencies on how to respond to civil claims for child sexual abuse when they were brought against those agencies.

The guiding principles complement the New South Wales Government's model litigant policy, and are designed to ensure a more compassionate approach by government to litigation. Those guiding principles have meant that, since November 2014, New South Wales government agencies have not generally raised the passage of time as a defence to a claim for child sexual abuse. The Department of Family and Community Services [FACS] determined, at the same time, not generally to rely on limitation period defences in civil claims for the sexual and physical abuse of a child. Of course, those measures can only apply to claims against the State.

In January 2015 the New South Wales Department of Justice released a discussion paper on potential legislative changes to limitation periods in all civil claims for child sexual abuse and serious physical abuse. In response to that discussion paper, the Government received 48 submissions from a wide variety of stakeholders. The Government wanted to ensure that it got it right and that we take the right actions and make the best decisions to address the real issues faced by survivors. The bill is a culmination of a thorough review by the Government of the submissions to the Department of Justice discussion paper and the consultations and recommendations of the royal commission. This bill implements all the recommendations of the royal commission in relation to limitation periods. As I said previously, the bill goes even further to deliver justice to a broad range of survivors.

Importantly, the bill does not conclude the Government's work to deliver justice to past and future survivors of child abuse. We know there is more to be done. This month I announced that the Government had provided a \$517,000 funding boost for the Survivors & Mates Support Network [SAMSN], a charity that does important work to support adult male survivors of child sexual abuse. The Government is proud to support those brave men and their families—it is a story that is not often told—and is committed to providing holistic, ongoing support for survivors. Since the royal commission delivered its report last September the New South Wales Government has been considering all 99 of the commission's recommendations. This has allowed the Government to consider the complex interplay of the various avenues for delivering justice that were identified by the commission.

When the shadow Attorney General introduced the Limitation Bill (Child Abuse Civil Actions) Bill 2015, I commended the aim of that bill in this House in its attempts to deliver on one of the royal commission's recommendations. The Government is now in a position to act not only on this one recommendation of the royal commission but also on its other extensive recommendations. For those survivors who do not want to, or cannot, commence civil litigation, the Government strongly supports the royal commission's recommendations for a single, national redress scheme. A redress scheme will provide a less traumatic and practical alternative to civil litigation for survivors. For those survivors who are experiencing a barrier to justice because of the structure of the institution responsible for the abuse, the Government will be consulting with the public on the royal commission's recommendations to ensure institutions are structured appropriately so that there are always defendants to respond to claims for compensation made against them.

At the same time, the Government will consult the public on the royal commission's recommendations to expand the future legal responsibility of institutions for child abuse. This bill relates to the royal commission's emphasis on consistency across Australia in the removal of limitation periods for survivors of child sexual abuse. The bill is broadly consistent with the Limitation of Actions Amendment (Child Abuse) Bill 2015 passed by the Victorian Government last year. New South Wales and Victoria have now both acted to remove limitation periods. However, New South Wales is the first government to introduce these reforms following the commission's recommendations. I call on all the other States and Territories across Australia to follow suit and enact the recommendations of the royal commission. The royal commission has issued a clarion call to all of us—communities, governments and institutions—to redouble our efforts to better protect our children and young people.

I acknowledge again the strength and courage shown by the survivors of child abuse and their families in telling their stories to me and to others many times over. Having personally heard evidence at

public hearings and having sat with survivors, I have had a small window through which to see how child abuse cruelly deprives people of the lives they deserved. The impacts of abuse can be devastating. They are long term and they can reach beyond the survivors to their families and the broader community. The bill does not remove those impacts of abuse, but it does remove one significant barrier to justice for survivors. The bill is just; I commend it to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Motion by Ms Gabrielle Upton agreed to:

That this bill be now read a third time.

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

Pursuant to sessional order community recognition statements proceeded with.

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION STATEMENTS

LOCAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR KAREN ANSTISS

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—The Speaker) [1.18 p.m.]: I rise today to congratulate Karen Anstiss, who earlier this month was announced as the South Coast 2016 Local Woman of the Year. I was joined by the Minister for Women, Pru Goward, in my electorate to recognise Karen's outstanding contributions to our community. Karen is a remarkable female community leader, nominated for her hard work and dedication in providing people with disabilities with employment opportunities, skills and training.

In 2006 Karen founded the not-for-profit organisation Slice of Life Australia, operating a cafe with three casual employees and three volunteers. Today the charity has grown to include a sustainable living garden project at Terara—I had the privilege of attending the opening of that garden—and a farm that supplies the charity's general store, catering operations and training kitchen. Slice of Life Australia under Karen's guidance has also branched out into retail, opening recycled clothing store The Collared Box in Nowra. Its employees now number in excess of 30, more than half of whom have a disability. In 2011 Karen was also the recipient of the Shoalhaven Citizen of the Year Award. I congratulate Karen on all her remarkable achievements.

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CANTERBURY-BANKSTOWN TENNIS CENTRE

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) [1.19 p.m.]: Last Sunday along with my family I had the pleasure of attending the opening of the Canterbury-Bankstown Tennis Association's enhanced facilities at Rose Park, Sefton. The Canterbury-Bankstown Tennis Association was happy to launch its facilities after receiving a \$6,000 grant from the Community Building Partnership program. I acknowledge the former member for Auburn, the Hon. Barbara Perry, and the current member, the Leader of the Opposition, for helping to organise that grant. The staff and volunteers at the Canterbury-Bankstown Tennis Association should be commended for their efforts in ensuring that tennis continues to grow as a

successful sport in Bankstown. I thank President Roger Pitt, Senior Vice President Paul Burgess, General Secretary Adele English, Junior Vice President Noel Baker and the local pro coach, Tyson Flannery, for organising this wonderful event.

GREAT LAKES COMMUNITY WOMEN'S SHELTER

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [1.19 p.m.]: This House congratulates Julie Brady, President of the Great Lakes Community Women's Shelter, on the opening of the shelter, the appointment of the manager, their work in caring for women who are victims of domestic violence and providing emergency accommodation. The shelter is a three-way partnership between the community, local business and the Government to assist women in need. I also congratulate July Brady on being named Great Lakes Citizen of the Year in the Australia Day Awards.

HUNTER SPORTS CENTRE TRACK CLASSIC

Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend) [1.20 p.m.]: Yet again, the Glendale Sports Centre Hunter Track Classic 2016 impressed. On 30 January the centre was packed with Australia's best athletes. Morgan Mitchell smashed her women's 400 metres time with a personal best to stake a claim for selection in the Australian Olympic team. Joshua Clarke was unrivalled in the men's 100 metres. In middle distance events Australian 1500 metres record holder Ryan Gregson shone, as did Jenny Blundell and Luke Mathews. Highlights of the men's pole vault were Hamish Peacock and Angus Armstrong. I offer my big thanks to Hunter Sports Centre manager Colin Southworth, staff and volunteers who continue to provide a showcase event for our athletes.

PORT MACQUARIE LIFESAVING ACHIEVEMENTS

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie—Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education) [1.21 p.m.]: I take this opportunity to congratulate Lake Cathie youngster Grace Kuhnell, who was named the Mid North Coast Newcastle Permanent Junior Lifesaver of the Year at the Junior Age Championships held at Bonny Hills recently. Grace's success is a fitting tribute to a young person who demonstrates great qualities of leadership, initiative, and community service. She is an outstanding young lifesaver. Grace and Isacc Plunkett from Port Macquarie Lifesaving Club will now represent the region at the New South Wales State finals in Sydney next month. This is an exciting opportunity for these young lifesavers, who have demonstrated leadership qualities and a commitment to their clubs over a significant period. I wish Grace and Isacc all the best at the New South Wales State lifesaving finals.

I also congratulate the Wauchope Bonny Hills Surf Life Saving Club on its stellar performance at the NSW Country Surf Life Saving Championships recently. The local club ended up placing ninth overall in the State and was only six points short of being in seventh place. The team of 95 competitors did the club proud not only with their medal-winning performances but also with their sportsmanship and the club spirit they displayed. Members backed up on numerous occasions, ensuring maximum points for the club's overall result.

TRIBUTE TO PETER NOBLE

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) [1.22 p.m.]: I would like to recognise a legend in my region Peter Noble, the man behind the Byron Bay Bluesfest, who recently received an Order of Australia Medal for his service to live and recorded music, tourism and the community. Whilst Bluesfest has won countless awards over its many years of existence, this award is significant because it recognises Peter, the man and visionary. Peter has been a champion of musicians and artists from all over the world as well as a passionate advocate of Aboriginal culture and people. He believes in culture as the heart of society and music as the universal language that unites us. Peter, with equally legendary local Rhoda Roberts, started the Boomerang Aboriginal Festival in 2014, which showcases the incredible talent of Aboriginal

artists from across Australia and will feature this year within the larger Bluesfest experience. Peter has supported countless charities within my electorate and as a musician myself—and even as a past semi-finalist in the Bluesfest busking competition—I salute the man, his work, and the music and culture he brings to my community.

NORTHMEAD BOWLING CLUB

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) [1.23 p.m.]: I recently had the pleasure of visiting Northmead Bowling Club. Every time I visit the club I am constantly reminded of just how much it matters to local residents. The club is ingrained in the fabric of our community. It was fantastic to see the new shade sails that the State Government was able to fund partially through the Community Building Partnership program. The completion of this project is of enormous benefit to the many locals in our community who make use of the sports club.

The board of directors does a fantastic job, and I acknowledge the great work of President Norm Muir, Vice President Trevor Oldfield, Treasurer James Brown, Assets Director Ross Mills, Human Resources Director Livia Janovics, Communications Director Peter Kindleysides and Bowls Director Stephen Rochester. I also acknowledge the great work of General Manager Keith Smith, Operations Manager Rod Gordon, Membership Director Lenore McDermid and Bowls Coordinator Brett Hughes. I look forward to visiting Northmead Bowling Club again. It hosts many of the community functions that I attend and I anticipate it will be a mainstay of the Seven Hills electorate for many years to come.

SMITHFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOL

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) [1.24 p.m.]: Smithfield Public School is a wonderful school in the electorate of Prospect. It is one of New South Wales' oldest schools, having opened in 1850. On 5 February I was pleased to have attended Smithfield Public School's leadership presentation ceremony. Smithfield's dedication to learning and encouraging leadership is truly commendable, and I congratulate the new leaders on their positions. I also commend the staff of Smithfield Public School, whose tireless efforts make it not only a good school but also a focal point of the community. In particular, I commend the principal, Cheryl McBride, OAM. Ms McBride has been a teacher for 37 years and has gone above the call of duty to speak out against the impact of drugs, domestic violence and abuse. She has even rescued some of her most vulnerable students by taking them to hospital when their parents were drug affected. Her work has been a positive influence on thousands of young lives. Both Smithfield Public School and the Smithfield community are lucky to have Ms McBride and her teaching staff.

GOSFORD HOSPITAL MEDICAL INTERNS

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) [1.25 p.m.]: Last month I had the pleasure to meet and greet our latest intake of medical graduates who commenced their internship at Gosford Hospital. Our 61 interns are part of New South Wales' 983 medical interns who commenced work this year in hospitals around the State. It was a privilege to visit Gosford Hospital last month to meet them at the beginning of their journey. The first day is a key milestone in the life of every young doctor, and I can only imagine how excited they must have felt. Our 61 interns are working at Gosford and Wyong hospitals on the Central Coast. It is important to recognise that New South Wales is the only State to offer two-year employment contracts to medical graduates commencing their internship. This can ensure stability for these outstanding young doctors. I wish them well at the beginning of their journey and hope they will call the Central Coast home. When I asked the doctors what was the most important part of their achievement, they told me that to actually be called "doctor" is the highlight.

MACQUARIE FIELDS ELECTORATE COMMUNITY ACHIEVEMENTS

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) [1.26 p.m.]: I am delighted to speak today about three wonderful women, all of whom are fine examples of community service and generosity of

spirit in my electorate of Macquarie Fields. Mal Fruean, as chair of the NSW Council for Pacific Communities, has done, and continues to do, a tremendous job promoting understanding and cultural awareness of Pacific communities. Through Mal's leadership, a meeting of fewer than 10 people at Minto library has developed into a recognised and respected State community body. She has been the recipient of many awards in wonderful recognition of her efforts.

Despite her busy professional career in the health system, Selima Begum still finds time to organise a number of community events to promote the growing Bengali community in Macquarie Fields, Bangla Mela, Bengali language school, cultural events, Eid and International Mother Language Day. At times she has even hosted community events in her home. Astrid Graham, a 10-year-old from Minto Public School, on her own initiative started a toy drive for other kids who do not have much. She is only 10 years old yet displays generosity beyond her years. She is also a top athlete and a talented dancer. I wish them all the very best.

CLARENCE ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence—Parliamentary Secretary) [1.27 p.m.]: I offer my congratulations to the recipients of the Australia Day Awards in the Clarence electorate. Mrs Marea Buist was named Clarence Valley Australia Day Local Hero of the Year, Mr Brendan Wren was named the Young Citizen of the Year and Mrs Leone Roberts was named the Citizen of the Year. The Lower Clarence Scottish Association and the Grafton Jacaranda Festival Committee were dual recipients of the Community Achievement Award. Mr Bill Donsworth was named the Iluka Citizen of the Year. Bill is 92 years of age and has given many years of dedicated service to his local community.

In the Richmond Valley local government area I offer my congratulations to Mr Stuart George and Mr John Wright, who were named dual Citizens of the Year. Mr Macarthur Amey was named Young Citizen of the Year, Mrs Deidre Coe was named the Sportsperson of the Year, Mr Kevin Mason was Volunteer of the Year and Mr Aidan Yurell was named the Young Volunteer of the Year. I thank all those amazing recipients for their wonderful commitment and dedication to their local community.

FAIRFIELD SCHOOL AWARD RECIPIENTS

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [1.28 p.m.]: On 22 January 2016 I had the pleasure of attending the Fairfield City Council Australia Day Community Awards. The 2016 award recipients were: Citizen of the Year, Ted Wale; Young Citizen of the Year, Anna Tang; Sports Achiever of the Year, Nicola Bolger and Volunteer of the Year, Susan Fedorychy. George Edward Wale—otherwise known as "Ted"—at 105 years of age continues giving back to the community, with no signs of slowing down. Anna is a 14-year-old Canley Vale student who has made an outstanding effort to contribute to a variety of community, school and charitable projects. Susan became the foundation member of the Deer Bush Dog Club more than 40 years ago and has been on the club's committee for the past 20 years. Without her efforts the local club would not run. Nicola is a midfielder for the Matildas national squad and Sydney FC in the W-League. She spent her spare time visiting local schools to talk with students, giving back to her local community. Congratulations to each award recipient. I thank them so much for their outstanding contributions. They make Fairfield a better place to live.

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AUSTRALIA DAY AWARD RECIPIENTS

Mr ANDREW GEE (Orange—Parliamentary Secretary) [1.28 p.m.]: I draw the attention of the House to the fact that Denise Wilson recently received the 2016 Citizen of the Year Award on Australia Day. Denise makes up her full-time volunteer hours by dedicating time and her cooking skills to the Forest Reefs Uniting Church Women's Fellowship. She has been integral in organising fundraising events for the Orange Men's Fellowship, Camp Quality Tractor Trek. She supports the Mustard Tree Cafe, which provides low-cost meals for those in need. She cooks thousands of preserves to sell and donates the

proceeds to Cancer Care Western NSW.

The 2016 Young Citizen of the Year was Ashley Morrow. Ashley was recognised for his commitment to his fellow students, his contribution to his school's dramatic arts in his role as a stage manager for his school productions, his dedication to coordinating the drum corps and his volunteer work towards the maintenance of the school buildings. He is also a member of the Rural Fire Service and regularly trains junior members. The 2016 Community Group of the Year was the Wayfinders which does a wonderful job directing people around Orange's stellar and landmark hospital. The 2016 Community Event of the Year was the Australian National Field Days. Congratulations to the Australian National Field Days Committee and to all Australia Day award recipients.

ANNE DENHAM LONDONDERRY WOMAN OF THE YEAR

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) [1.29 p.m.]: I congratulate the 2016 Londonderry Woman of the Year, Anne Denham, Principal of Willmot Public School. Anne is a tireless advocate for public education and also for Western Sydney. She began her career at Whalan Public School. Anne is acutely aware of the power of education to transform the lives of young children, particularly in Sydney's west. She has worked for decades in public schools in Western Sydney and has also worked as a specialist adviser to the Department of Education in the areas of special needs education. Willmot Public School plays an important role in the community, often acting as a hub for community services and acting as a first point of call for families in tough situations. Everyone in the Willmot community knows that Willmot Public School under Anne's leadership is a place they can always come to whenever they need help. As an ambassador for public education and for her work in the Willmot community, I am delighted to have nominated Anne for this award and I look forward to working with her and the Willmot Public School community in the future.

TRIBUTE TO BILL AITKEN

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Parliamentary Secretary) [1.30 p.m.]: Today I acknowledge a great man, Bill Aitkin, who recently won the New South Wales Community Service Award for Hornsby. Bill has been arguably the longest serving local journalist in the Hornsby shire area. He has previously worked for the ABC and established the *2120 Monthly Newspaper* in April 1989. The *Monthly Chronicle*, as it would later become known, grew from a distribution area of 14,000 editions in five suburbs to 43,800 editions per week in over 15 suburbs. Bill is well respected by all sides of politics and local action groups alike for his honesty, hard work, balance and dedication to reporting on all community issues, whether they were big infrastructure projects or local scouting awards. Bill recently sold the *Monthly Chronicle* publication after 26 years as the editor in chief. He has been a huge part of our shire's history and continues to be involved in the local community through a number of organisations, including the local Catholic church, Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Church, working with his beautiful wife, Carmel, to support the homeless. We wish Bill all the best in retirement and thank him for his enormous contribution to our community.

RANDWICK TREE PRESERVATION CAMPAIGN

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) [1.31 p.m.]: I recognise the hard work of the Randwick Treekeepers who fought to preserve the countless century old heritage trees along Alison Road, Wansey Road and Anzac Parade in my community. Even though ultimately they were unsuccessful, the Randwick Treekeepers ran a positive and passionate preservation campaign. Their positive campaign featured tea in the park, walking tours and decorating trees scheduled to be cleared with bright orange bows to raise awareness in the community. This wonderful campaign had the positive effect of preserving much of High Cross Park from clearing. I particularly single out Rickie-Lee Muir, who built a vibrant and colourful movement that mobilised community members in support of these historical trees. It is a shame we did not win this time but the community is richer for her passion and advocacy.

LAKE ILLAWARRA LOCAL AREA COMMAND AWARD PRESENTATION

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Parliamentary Secretary) [1.32 p.m.]: On Thursday 3 December 2015 I was pleased to represent the Minister for Police at the Lake Illawarra Local Area Command Medal and Awards Ceremony at the Kiama Pavilion with Assistant Commissioner of Police Gary Worboys, APM. I thank Superintendent Wayne Starling, who is moving north to pursue a new role in Tweed Heads. Wayne has served our region with great distinction and professionalism and I wish him and his family all the very best for the future. I take this opportunity to congratulate all our police, who do a magnificent job. They put their lives in danger to protect the community and I commend each and every one of them for their distinguished service to New South Wales.

TRIBUTE TO KURT FEARNLEY

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) [1.33 p.m.]: Today I speak of a constituent who is a veteran of four Paralympic Games, has sailed the Sydney to Hobart yacht race and has crawled the Kokoda Track for 11 days. I speak, of course, of Kurt Fearnley. I celebrate this Novocastrian and congratulate him on the recent unveiling ceremony announcing that the official name for the visitor hub in Centennial Park would be Fearnley Grounds. The hub was chosen in Mr Fearnley's honour because of his connection with the park when training and competing but also because of his ability to inspire others. Mr Fearnley is a constant inspiration to the people of Newcastle and Australia, having been given the honour of Australia's Paralympic team co-captain for Rio later this year. I have no doubt he will make us proud again when he competes in the 2016 Rio Paralympic Games in September.

ST IVES LIONS CLUB YOUTH OF THE YEAR QUEST

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson—Parliamentary Secretary) [1.34 p.m.]: The Lions Club of St Ives held its annual Youth of the Year Quest event and dinner on Monday 22 February 2016 at Pymble with club president Peter Harding acting as master of ceremonies. The candidates who answered impromptu questions and spoke on a prepared topic were Jacob Greenberg of Masada College, Alexandra Bradley of Brigidine College, Elijah Del Nido of St Ives High School, Tobias Teh of Killara High School, Rachel Parsons of Loreto Normanhurst and Kenya Walker of Roseville College. I congratulate all the event organisers and judges on their contributions. All the candidates were outstanding, including the overall winner, Rachel Parsons, who will compete in the area final at Belrose on 16 March 2016.

TRIBUTE TO RODERICK "ROD" LEONARDER

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) [1.34 p.m.]: I acknowledge Mr Roderick "Rod" Leonarder for his 36 years of service to the New South Wales public education system. Rod has delivered public education at all levels, including working as a teacher, head teacher, leading teacher, principal, district superintendent, school education director and director, public schools New South Wales for the Canterbury network. As the principal of Punchbowl Boys High School, I had the honour of working with Rod in his most recent capacity. Rod is a champion of diversity, equity and ethical practice, mentoring and growing future leaders, and for the sharing of expertise. Oft stated though is recognition of Rod's exceptional ability to create and maintain relationships.

I saw first-hand the dedication, self-belief and trust Rod gave our educational community and the focus he placed on quality education. His leadership is a highlight reel of integrity, passion, thoughtfulness and trust. A believer in lifelong learning, Rod walks the talk and will continue with his work on ethical decision-making and capacity building in schools. I offer Rod all my very best. I thank him for his servant leadership and I look forward to the day that his thesis is published and he stands proudly as Dr Roderick Leonarder.

PARKES AUSTRALIA DAY AWARD RECIPIENTS

Mr ANDREW GEE (Orange—Parliamentary Secretary) [1.35 p.m.]: I draw the attention of the

House to the fact that the 2016 Parkes Citizen of the Year was David Knights; the 2016 Young Citizen of the Year was Gracie Jones; the 2016 Community Event of the Year was the Northparkes Open Day; the Academic Achievement Award went to Adam Nicholson; the Student Cultural Award went to Gordon Richter; the Adult Cultural Award went to Helen Standen; the Group Cultural Award went to Parkes Shire Concert Band; the inaugural special Lifetime Achievement Award went to Lindsay Morehouse; the Sports Awards Sportsperson of the Year was Mariah Williams; the Junior Sportsperson of the Year was Billy Burns; the Team of the Year was the Parkes First XI Cricket Team; the Senior Sportsperson or team was Parkes Masters Women's No. 1 Hockey Team; the Referee, Umpire or Official of the Year was Beau Newell; the Coach, Trainer or Manager of the Year was Kerry Hodges; the Administrator of the Year went to Scott Lowe; and the Long Service and Dedication award went to Fred King. Congratulations to all nominees and recipients at the Parkes Australia Day awards. The community salutes you.

TRIBUTE TO DENG ADUT

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON (Blacktown) [1.36 p.m.]: I congratulate and commend Blacktown local and nationwide inspiration, Mr Deng Adut. At the age of six, Deng was snatched from his mother and forced to fight in the war that eventually split his country. He made it to Australia through the United Nations and against all odds created a life for himself, showing a passion and perseverance that many refugees show on a daily basis. Deng came to national prominence recently through the University of Western Sydney advertisement that has been viewed over 500,000 times on Facebook. Deng gave an incredible Australia Day address, which once again shows the strength of a welcoming Australia—the strength of a diverse Australia and the strength of the migrant experience to galvanise the hopes and aspirations of all Australians to be the best they can be. Deng is an inspiration to many young Africans in our community I congratulate and commend Deng Adut to this House, and hope he continues the great work he is doing in this area.

TRIBUTE TO TONY SHARPE

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) [1.37 p.m.]: Today I recognise the life of Tony Sharpe, long-time member of the Blue Mountains community. I note his passing on 18 February 2016. He went too soon. Tony was a highly valued member of the Blue Mountains Refugee Support Group [BMRSG]. He used his practical skills as a cook, writer and manager to raise funds to assist asylum seekers. He was an organiser of many BMRSG fundraisers. A man of many talents, he was exceptional—full of life, warmth and energy. It was impossible not to like him. He gave his time generously to those in need. Tony was a frequent visitor to Villawood Detention Centre; he was a friend to many detainees. I first met Tony at the much-loved Lizards Pre-school in Hawkesbury Heights on the edge of our beautiful Blue Mountains. Tony's smile, playfulness and fabulous meals were a highlight of this wonderful place. He will be missed by all who had the good fortune to cross his path. I pay my deepest respects to Tony's wife, Judy, his family, colleagues and many friends.

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UNITED GRAND CHAPTER OF AUSTRALIA

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Parliamentary Secretary) [1.39 p.m.]: On Saturday 24 October 2015 I was pleased to attend the installation of Sister Susan Chan, Brother Ray Kearns and office bearers for 2015-16 at the Nowra Electa Chapter No. 181 at the Masonic Centre in Moss Street, Nowra, under the United Grand Chapter of Australia. I acknowledge and thank secretary Joy Swatridge and all members of the masonic order that presided over the occasion. I thank the Masons for the charitable work that they do. I acknowledge in particular their work through the Council of Care and Hands Across NSW, providing support to rural and regional New South Wales. The Masons quietly undertake great work in our community, often without recognition. The order has ancient underpinnings. It is a great organisation that does much for our community. I congratulate and thank its members on their dedication and service.

Community recognition statements concluded.

JUDICIAL COMMISSION OF NEW SOUTH WALES CONDUCT DIVISION

Appointment of Community Representatives

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Melanie Gibbons): I report the following message from the Legislative Council:

Madam SPEAKER

The Legislative Council desires to inform the Legislative Assembly that, having considered the Legislative Assembly's message of 23 February 2016, it has agreed to the following resolution:

That, according to clause 4 of Schedule 2A of the Judicial Officers Act 1986, this House concurs with the nomination of Ken Moroney, AO, APM, and Professor Nailini Joshi as community representatives for appointment to a panel of the Conduct Division of the Judicial Commission of New South Wales.

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[The Temporary Speaker (Ms Melanie Gibbons) left the chair at 1.41 p.m. The House resumed at 2.15 p.m.]

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OVARIAN CANCER

The SPEAKER: I thank members for wearing ribbons in support of Teal Ribbon Day in order to raise awareness of ovarian cancer and the "Know Ovarian Cancer" initiative. Ovarian cancer has the lowest survival rate of any women's cancer and there is no early detection test. Each day in Australia four women are diagnosed with ovarian cancer, and three will not survive the disease. If diagnosed in the early stages women have an 80 per cent survival rate. However, unfortunately 75 per cent are diagnosed too late. Teal Ribbon Day calls on us to know ovarian cancer—know the signs and symptoms, know our family history and know how to help. I encourage all members to continue to raise awareness of ovarian cancer and thank them for their support today.

MEMBER FOR WYONG BIRTHDAY

The SPEAKER: I wish the member for Wyong a happy birthday. He is celebrating a big birthday today—the big 50.

DANNY HELDAL BIRTHDAY

The SPEAKER: Danny Heldal is also celebrating a significant birthday today.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I warmly welcome to the gallery the former Northern Territory Deputy Chief Minister and Treasurer, member for Araluen, Robyn Lambley, guest of the Deputy Premier, Minister for

Justice and Police, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Racing, and member for Dubbo.

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I welcome to the gallery Robyn Young, John Emmett, Barbara Emmett, John Lang and Jan Gowe, guests of Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Social Housing, and member for Wakehurst. I acknowledge members of the Drummoyne Probus Club, whom I met earlier today. I hope they have enjoyed their day in the New South Wales Parliament. They are guests of the member for Camden and the member for Drummoyne. I welcome to the gallery Vivienne Al-Malah, a student at the Banksia Road Primary School and guest of the member for Lakemba.

REPRESENTATION OF MINISTERS ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I inform the House that the Minister for Finance, Services and Property will answer questions today and tomorrow in the absence of the Minister for Trade, Tourism and Major Events, and Minister for Sport.

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QUESTION TIME

[Question time commenced at 2.26 p.m.]

PAUL AND CHRIS BURTON

Mr LUKE FOLEY: I direct my question to the Premier. Will the Premier confirm that the Government has awarded \$150 million worth of road contracts to Burton Contractors whose directors, Paul and Chris Burton, were also directors of Keystone Projects Group, which went into liquidation and left a string of subcontractors unpaid?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The Leader of the Opposition is asking about directors and subcontractors. He knows that I am not going to have that information to hand. I am happy to look at whatever details and allegations might come up. I make the point that the member for Prospect has had a cracking start to his parliamentary career—I am joking! He gives notice of a motion and is told this will be good. He is told, "Just foreshadow moving a motion about building roads"—which is what the question is about—"but by the way we have no idea how we are going to fundraise." That is the Labor way.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: Standing Order 129, relevance. I would not think that leaving a string of contractors—

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

Ms Jodi McKay: This is a serious matter because there are about 100 contractors—

The SPEAKER: Order! If the member for Strathfield had been listening to the Premier's answer she would know that he has answered the question.

Ms Jodi McKay: He was talking about the member for Prospect. That has nothing to do with the issue before the House.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: It is quite a day for the member for Strathfield to be taking a point of order. All of a sudden the deputy leadership is available. What was the dream team yesterday has fallen

apart—they are now fighting for the same job. Dream and team—where do you go? I do not know who will get it.

Mr Luke Foley: Point of order: Standing Order 73. It is a serious question about a string of subcontractors being left in the lurch.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier has answered the question. There is no point of order.

Mr Luke Foley: If the Premier wants to comment on other members he should do so under the standing orders by way of substantive motion.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order regarding relevance. There is no point of order under Standing Order 73.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I have addressed those concerns and I am happy to see the details as they appear. The member for Prospect had a great start. Members opposite need to understand that when one builds roads one has to pay for them—one has to be able to fund them. That is a memo for the Opposition.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Strathfield will cease shouting. The member for Shellharbour will cease interjecting. The member for Strathfield will cease interjecting.

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Mr MIKE BAIRD: I am trying to explain it to them.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: I refer to Standing Order 129.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier has answered the question and I have ruled on the matter of relevance. The member for Maroubra will resume his seat. I call the member for Maroubra to order for the first time.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I was going to finish my answer, but I will keep going because I would hate the shadow Treasurer to embarrass himself publicly, despite the fact that he does it every day. He has done it again. He does not understand the difference—

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Campbelltown that if his point of order relates to relevance, I will rule it out of order.

Mr Greg Warren: Madam Speaker, I respect your previous rulings, but Standing Order 73 is clear about personal reflections. The Premier is reflecting on the members representing the electorates of Prospect, Strathfield and Maroubra.

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

Mr Greg Warren: It was a serious reflection.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Campbelltown will cease yelling. He is mistaken if he believes he can shout at the Premier and argue with him. I call the member for Campbelltown to order for the first time.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Talk about parliamentary careers that have got off to a cracking start!

Apparently the member for Campbelltown is doing the numbers for the member for Keira. I do not know about other members, but if the member for Campbelltown were doing my numbers I would not be feeling good. I will finish my response about the roads that this Government is building because the shadow Treasurer obviously does not understand the difference between projects in today's dollars and projects in out-turn dollars.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra will cease interjecting and resume his seat. It is not an argument.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: It is embarrassing that the shadow Treasurer does not know the difference. I am happy to see the details that the Leader of the Opposition has put forward, but I make no apology for the roads that this Government is building across the State. The people of New South Wales waited for action on the M4 and the M5, and members opposite thought about it and spoke about it. The important difference between members opposite and members on this side of the Chamber is that we have funded that work and done it. Unlike the former Labor Government, this Government is funding and delivering infrastructure.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS: I address my question to the Premier. What is the Government doing to achieve the Premier's priority to reduce the rate of domestic violence reoffending and to shift the focus onto the perpetrators?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I thank the member for her question and her strong interest in this subject. I will start by acknowledging that the Whip's mother is in the gallery. It is great to have Mrs Patterson here. She should be proud of her son, who is doing a fantastic job. If he is not the best Whip we have ever had, he is certainly in the top few.

The SPEAKER: Order! He is up there with the member for Wagga Wagga.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I was proud to stand beside the Minister for Justice, the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, and the Commissioner of Police earlier today to announce an important initiative. Last year when considering its priorities, this Government made an important decision to reduce the list to those areas in which it thought it could make a real difference over the next four years. Making a difference in respect of domestic violence was at the top of the list. How can we make a real difference?

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The Government's priority is reducing the incidence of domestic violence offending by 5 per cent by 2019. That is a statistic, but I encourage members to think about the many thousands of people who could benefit from this strategy. That is what is driving this Government every day—reducing the impact of domestic violence on families, children and communities. Domestic violence must and will be stopped, and strategies such as this will achieve that. I thank in particular the people who work in the domestic violence field. A range of non-government organisations work in this field day in and day out, and have done so for many years—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Wollongong will come to order. She will be placed on a call to order if she interjects during the Premier's answer.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: —without any acknowledgement of the work they do. They pick up the pieces for victims of domestic violence. They have argued for more support and direction, and this Government is providing it to make their job of supporting victims of domestic violence easier. If we have an old

problem and provide old solutions, we get the same results. The question is: What new things can we do in this area? What the Minister has announced seeks to achieve that goal. A key strategy will be suspect target management plans focusing on high-risk, repeat domestic violence offenders. The Government is no longer simply supporting victims—which is obviously incredibly important—it is also now going after the perpetrators. We are telling them that enough is enough. We know who they are and we will be tracking them down; we are after them. This is all about preventing domestic violence.

The Minister will probably talk later about some of the examples we have seen in the trial conducted in the St George area that resulted in nine out of 13 high-risk offenders being charged. By targeting high-risk offenders we know when they are breaching court orders and are approaching victims even though they have been told they are being targeted and watched. They have been caught in the act and as a result they are no longer on the streets and therefore are not in a position to engage in domestic violence. That trial was a key part of last year's \$60 million strategy that has now been rolled out across the State. People should know that if they are contemplating engaging in domestic violence the police will be targeting them. I should acknowledge what police officers do day after day in this area. We are extremely thankful for the work they do in combating domestic violence, which is a big part of their daily activity, and the Government is providing them with additional resources and support.

The Government has a zero-tolerance approach to domestic violence reoffending, but we must ensure that the community also plays a role. It is our role as community leaders to remind everyone that domestic violence is not acceptable. The Commissioner of Police announced what I believe will be a successful program designed to engage members of the community in supporting our police officers. It is a statewide, multifaceted approach that includes changed management programs targeting the perpetrator and working with the community. If we do that we will have every chance of being successful. Domestic violence must and will stop, and the Government will do everything possible to ensure that happens.

PAUL AND CHRIS BURTON

Ms JODI McKAY: I direct my question to the Premier. Will the Premier confirm that Paul and Chris Burton, current directors of Burton Contractors and former directors of Keystone Projects, are donors to the Liberal Party and have attended a private dinner with him?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: These people may have been at a dinner I attended. I am happy to get the details. If the member is making an allegation, what is it?

The SPEAKER: Order! It sounds like an allegation. I remind the member for Keira that questions should not include imputations or allegations. I suggest that he read the standing orders.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I am not the Federal Leader of the Opposition's biggest fan.

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

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order—

Mr Brad Hazzard: He said only 11 words. How can you object to that?

The SPEAKER: Order! Let us hear what the member for Maitland has to say.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: I refer to Standing Order 128. Questions cannot be debated. The Premier—

The SPEAKER: Order! Questions should not include imputations. The question clearly did so and therefore should have been ruled out of order. The member for Keira should not question the Chair. I call

the member for Keira to order for the second time.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I am not the Federal Leader of the Opposition's biggest fan; in fact, I must admit that I do not like him. However, last year he said he wanted to have a year of ideas. Members opposite also laughed. At least he was happy to say that he wanted to contribute to policy development. However, this year members of the Labor Party have decided to have a year of smear. They want to throw it around.

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Labor are good at two things. They are good at tearing themselves apart and the deputy leadership is a great opportunity for them to tear themselves apart. I know the member for Keira is giving it a crack, member for Strathfield, but we are backing in the member for Maroubra. He deserves his chance, don't you think? He deserves his chance, for goodness sake. The member for Campbelltown should stop backing Keira and get on the Daley Express for goodness sake.

Mr Luke Foley: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. Here is an idea: Get your shonky mates to pay their subbies.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat. There is no point of order. The next member who takes a point of order under Standing Order 73 will be called to order.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: That is the best you have got. You have had three months and that is what you come up with. If that is what you want to do, knock yourselves out. You can come out and do your smear, you can also come out and try to attack things like the WestConnex, but do you know what? We are going to get on and build them. We are going to do what matters to the people of this State because they are sick and tired of the sort of politics that you are trying to run. They are sick and tired of it. They would be saying how about you took an interest in them. How about you actually took an interest? How about you come and ask the education Minister how the NAPLAN results are going?

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. Will you get some of the contractors to work on WestConnex? They are out of pocket big time—hundreds of them.

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

Mr Michael Daley: Why don't you give them some work on the WestConnex?

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Maroubra to order for the second time. The Minister for Corrections, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Veterans Affairs will come to order. I call the Minister to order for the first time.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I can see where this is going to go, and it is disappointing that the Opposition are going to do this. Are those who are part of the Caucus enjoying this? Was it this sort of approach that you signed up to or did you sign up to make a difference for your communities?

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Did you sign up to make a difference in health and education or did you sign up for this? If I were you I would be questioning it; just as I would be questioning your leader who is doing it.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier. Given the Deputy Premier's experience on the frontline, how do the Government's measures to tackle domestic violence

stack up?

Mr TROY GRANT: As the Premier just referred, everyone in this Chamber, it does not matter which party you are from, comes into this place to actually make a difference in our community. From my own experience of having spent 22 years in the police force—and a lot of that time spent regionally in the far north-west of New South Wales—there is no doubt that one of the scourges of our community is domestic violence. It exists within the communities represented by every member of this Parliament. I am sure all members will join with me in the approach taken by this Government, under the wonderful leadership of the Premier and led by the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault in partnership with Assistant Commissioner Fuller, to make sexual violence a priority. They have done an extraordinary job in adding the Government's response to those wraparound services to support domestic violence victims. The Attorney General, who will talk about this later, has also done a fabulous job to provide support for domestic violence victims within the court space. But there is one clear distinction in the policy that I am very confident will make a sizable change to our communities and sufferers of domestic violence—for the first time in the history of this State and this country, we are going after the perpetrator.

Too often I used to go to call after call, like Groundhog Day, to the same premises, to the same victims of domestic violence who were screaming out for help and yet were trapped in their circumstance. They were trapped where the domestic violence they were exposed to and the outrageous conditions they were meant to live in became the normality of their life. This Government has said domestic violence is unacceptable. That sort of behaviour is not normal and will not be tolerated and I can recite story after story of victims who we went to look after as police officers, and our Indigenous population is far too represented in this hideous crime. One particular memory strikes me when I am asked about this subject matter. In 1992 I went to a residence in Brewarrina in far north-west New South Wales. The victim had called us—as she had done day after day, week after week—to take care of her partner who had assaulted her. She opened the door and turned around to indicate the presence of the offender. She had a steak knife stuck in her back; to her that was normal. How can we ever accept that as normal in any community? This Government says we cannot and we will not, and we are now going after the perpetrator.

I went to numerous incidents where the victim called for help yet when we took hold of the offender to take them away, battered, bruised, tormented and terrorised, the victim would then turn on us. I have got scars on my body from victims who have bitten me as I have tried to arrest the offender. In their eyes, whilst we were there as their saviours to take care of the crisis at the time, they knew nothing other than to portray to the offender that they were not to blame for the arrest, so they acted out against the police. Too many times police have been assaulted when they were simply trying to look after victims who felt trapped and had no other opportunity to support or protect themselves and their families. Those days are over. A new dawn has arisen and I congratulate the Minister for outstanding leadership on this issue.

Today perpetrators of domestic violence in New South Wales will be put on notice that we are coming after them. The good thing about the plan the Minister will shortly outline is that victims will now know that we are supporting them because they will know who we are targeting. Under the Suspect Target Management Plan they will understand where, how and why we are targeting these offenders. The clear and simple message is that we will not stop here. We will work with everyone in this Parliament and across all our communities to make sure that we stamp out domestic violence once and for all. That is a priority of this Government and it will not be changing.

PAUL AND CHRIS BURTON AND LIBERAL PARTY DONATIONS

Mr LUKE FOLEY: My question directed is to the Premier. Will the Premier return the political donations from Paul and Chris Burton so that unpaid subcontractors like Laurie and Luke Refalo, who are in the public gallery today, can receive some of what they are owed for the work they have completed?

The SPEAKER: Order! The used of the term "political donation" is a definite imputation. I rule the question out of order.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I was about to refute it.

The SPEAKER: Order! I absolutely rule the question out of order.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Mr MARK TAYLOR: My question is addressed to the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. How are the Government's strong and ongoing reforms changing the way we target and respond to domestic and family violence in New South Wales?

Ms PRU GOWARD: I thank the member for Seven Hills for the question and his commitment to the Government's response to domestic and family violence. He knows too well as a former police prosecutor that domestic violence destroys families. This Government leads the nation in tackling domestic violence. We are responding in an unprecedented way and it is a remarkable turnaround from the mess of five years ago.

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The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order.

Ms PRU GOWARD: For decades action in domestic violence has been focused on supporting victims, and long may this continue. As well as supporting victims, this Government is putting the perpetrator in the centre of the frame in a way never before seen in New South Wales. I was proud to stand by side with the Premier and Deputy Premier this morning to announce the statewide rollout of suspect target management plans to target repeat domestic violence offenders, as they have been for armed robbery and other serious offences. The St George command, which was the pilot, has shown remarkable results. The program will now be rolled out across the State. This measure was announced last year as part of the Government's \$60 million domestic and family violence package. This Government makes no apology for its hardline targeting of repeat domestic violence offenders. Whether it is a breach of a domestic violence order or even walking a dog off a leash, if someone is on the local suspect target list they will be pulled up. To achieve reductions in domestic violence these criminals must be targeted and dealt with. These people will have harassed their victims for years. As Assistant Commissioner Mick Fuller said, it is time offenders felt that police were harassing them. The tables have been turned.

As part of the package announced last year, almost \$20 million will be invested in mandated perpetrated behaviour change programs to provide treatment to perpetrators to ensure that they face up to their actions, attitudes and behaviours. We have consulted widely about how to engage with perpetrators in the most effective way to reduce re-offending. This initiative again targets and focuses on the perpetrator. The Government has also announced \$1.4 million to advance the rollout of 24 new domestic violence liaison officers [DVLOs]. DVLOs work closely with other government agencies and non-government organisations to provide crucial support to the victims of domestic violence not only at the time of the incident but, more importantly, as they progress through the criminal justice system. The real game changer in the criminal justice system is that domestic violence victims are now able to give their main evidence via a pre-recorded video statement for use in criminal proceedings of a domestic violence offence.

When I met with police and other domestic violence specialist workers I was told about the impact that domestic violence evidence-in-chief is having in ensuring that more victims pursue justice and more perpetrators are held to account. But it does not stop there. Soon we will rollout Australia's first Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, which will be piloted in four police local area commands—Oxley, Shoalhaven, Sutherland and St George. We will invest \$2.3 million over two years for police and non-government organisation partnerships to provide NGO-led early intervention support and crisis

response for applicants in the domestic violence scheme. An open tender to engage NGOs to work with police in the four pilot locations is now open and will close on 11 March.

The New South Wales Government is also improving our service system to support victims through the It Stops Here Safer Pathway, which is an innovative approach to victim safety assessment referral and service coordination. We now have safety action meetings at six sites—Waverley, Orange, Tweed Heads, Parramatta, Bankstown and Broken Hill. I visited Waverley and Orange and was impressed by the collaborative efforts of everyone around the table to better help those in need of support. Shared knowledge is a powerful thing. In a recent case before a safety action meeting a young mother, hiding in fear of her life with her baby who was in need of medical attention, was rescued. Until the safety action meeting, several agencies were unaware of other agency involvement with the family.

Pursuant to standing order additional information provided.

Ms PRU GOWARD: The baby's life was saved as a result of the integration and coordination of information sharing of the agencies at that safety action meeting. We have listened to the community and recognise that we must educate our young people about domestic violence. I was proud to announce last year that with changes to the school's syllabus young people will be empowered with the knowledge, understanding and skills to help recognise and prevent domestic and family violence. The mandatory New South Wales 7 to 10 personal development, health and physical education [PDHPE] syllabus now explicitly includes domestic and family violence prevention. Whether it is the rollout of the Suspect Target Management Plan, the mandated behaviour change programs, the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, evidence-in-chief, education in our schools, the It Stops Here Safer Pathway, additional and new DVLOs, police-NGO partnerships and the increased support for victims, this Government is leading the nation in attacking the scourge of domestic violence. We will continue to target and hunt perpetrators down and support domestic violence victims. Indeed, this Government will be the champion of social policy reform in this country.

PAUL AND CHRIS BURTON AND LIBERAL PARTY DONATIONS

Mr LUKE FOLEY: My question is directed to the Premier. What will the Premier do to ensure that unpaid subcontractors like Laurie and Luke Refalo, who are in the public gallery, can receive from Paul and Chris Burton some of the moneys they are owed?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: First, those gentlemen are in a difficult position and I sympathise. It is never easy to be in that sort of position. But let's look at what the Leader of the Opposition has done here. Rather than say, "We have a challenge in terms of some subcontractors who have not been paid. Is there something we can do to help them?" he has decided to create a stunt. Not only has the Leader of the Opposition brought them in here—

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Those opposite should listen to this because they have all signed up to it.

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

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

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will cease shouting and interjecting. The Minister for Family and Community Services will come to order.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: My encouragement to those opposite is that they can do better than this. If they

are genuinely concerned about these gentlemen then there are many avenues. They can pick up the phone or they can knock on the door and say, "We have a problem, can you help?"

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I can tell those opposite that this Government would help.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: We have done a lot of things to help our subcontractors.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order—

Mr MIKE BAIRD: We introduced legislation to help them. In terms of this specific case, if those opposite want to pull a stunt like this then why on earth do it by inviting people who are obviously in difficult circumstances into the public gallery and then try to create some form of smear around it?

Ms Jenny Aitchison: My point of order is under Standing Order 128. This question is being debated and the Premier has no right to say that this is a stunt.

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

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Members have every right to ask a question in this place on any topic and to represent their community.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: And they do but I encourage those opposite to do much better. The community of the member for Maitland and the people of this State expect much better. If there is a genuine problem those opposite should come and talk to the Government to see if we can help, rather than trying to create a smear campaign and a political opportunity for the day.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The people of New South Wales deserve much better than that and they deserve much better from the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Luke Foley: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the Minister for Corrections, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Veterans Affairs to order for the second time.

Mr Luke Foley: They have written to your Government and got nowhere. That is why they are here today.

The SPEAKER: Order! What is the member's point of order? There is no point of order.

Mr Luke Foley: It is under Standing Order 73.

The SPEAKER: Order! There was nothing relevant to Standing Order 73 in the Premier's answer. However, Opposition questions have crossed that line.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I am happy to look at the circumstances of this case.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I say to those opposite that if this is what they are going to do, then good luck.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Bankstown will cease interjecting. The member for Wyong will cease interjecting. Opposition members who continue to interject will be removed from the Chamber. Members who have been called to order are deemed to be on three calls to order.

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Mr MIKE BAIRD: I would question your leader in relation to this strategy because perhaps you could have asked something in the past few months about the GST. You could have asked questions about tax reform. You could have asked about local council amalgamations. But I have not heard a thing.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order:—

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

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 129.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: We are backing you in, mate.

Mr Michael Daley: Don't. That would be the kiss of death. I do not want any help from on anything. You can't even help the subcontractors.

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

Mr Michael Daley: You cannot even help the subcontractors so do not big-note yourself, mate.

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

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

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

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: My question is addressed to the Attorney General. How is the New South Wales Government making the justice system work better for victims of domestic violence?

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order. Some members may be unaware that they are on three calls to order, including the Minister for Corrections, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Veterans Affairs.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: I thank the member for Tweed for his question. This is a very good question. The member for Tweed and those on this side of the House are concerned about helping domestic violence victims. I have visited the electorate of the member for Tweed and seen the wonderful work of his local community does in providing safe places and coordinating services to help domestic violence victims on the ground every day. The issue of domestic violence is deeply troubling. It is an insidious and indiscriminate crime. There is simply no excuse, no single solution and definitely no stunt when it comes to domestic violence. That is why those on this side of the House and the members of the Justice Cluster are working together to make sure that we have a package of responses to domestic

violence in our community. We are working in a coordinated and collaborative way to bring those parts of government together so we can have timelines and funding to back them so we can deliver the programs in our communities. As Attorney General it is about enforcement of better laws, better services—which the member for Tweed knows about—and a better experience for victims. That is what the Ministers have been talking to today.

While I have a little bit of time in this House, I will remind those opposite of some of the outcomes we already have in our community. Senior police can now issue apprehended domestic violence orders on the spot. What does that do? It gives the rules within which the defendant and the victims can relate to one another—practical tools on the ground. We are also making our apprehended domestic violence orders [ADVOs] easier to understand. They are now in plain English—there is no legalese in them. This will make victims safer and will make perpetrators better aware of the things they can do and cannot do. As the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence mentioned earlier, we now have video and audio recordings outside court rooms for victims to use. No longer do they have to go to court and face the perpetrator; they can do it before the court proceedings. They can be beamed in remotely from safe rooms and not re-traumatized by the experience that previously was cruelly visited upon them.

The Government is rolling out more audio and audio visual services to 99 locations across the State. This will make it possible for victims to give evidence off site or in the court house in a remote location. I am particularly proud because just last week I visited the Hunter, along with the member for Lake Macquarie and the member for Newcastle, to open the state-of-the-art flagship courthouse in New South Wales for regional communities.

Ms Jodi McKay: Which I announced and actually lobbied for.

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

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: That occasion showcased to our community that we are making our courthouses a better experience for victims who come before the court. When they take the important step of going before the courts we need to make them feel safe and welcome. We will invite the member for Strathfield next time. We would love her to join us. She did not join us on the day—

Ms Jodi McKay: I did not get an invite.

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

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: The member for Lake Macquarie and the member for Newcastle were very happy to open that courthouse because it was all about a better experience for victims when they are at court. Two weeks prior to that, the member for Wollongong joined me at the opening of the Wollongong Court upgrade. It has similar safe facilities for victims when they come to court. These are only some of the initiatives that we are delivering to make the experience of justice in our community a better one for victims. These are a key priority for this Government. It is about stamping out domestic violence and delivering outcomes in our community. We will continue to deliver for the victims of this State.

SAFE SCHOOLS PROGRAM

Ms TRISH DOYLE: My question is directed to the Premier. Given that the Prime Minister has announced a review into the Safe Schools program, which is run at 113 schools in New South Wales, does the Premier support the continuation of this successful program?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I thank the member for her question. We have welcomed that program across our schools. Importantly, we have said that our local schools have the capacity to look at whatever programs or partnerships they want to have, particularly those about anti-bullying and inclusion. We

will continue to support that. We provide the authority to our local schools for making decisions as part of the overall strategy. The Federal Government has announced they it is reviewing elements—

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

Mr John Robertson: The same way you did with *Gayby Baby*?

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

Mr John Robertson: Well he gets up there and pontificates; he shut down *Gayby Baby*—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Blacktown is very vocal today. This is not a debate. I call the member for Blacktown to order for the first time.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I thank the member for her question. The Federal Government is looking at it, which it has the right to do, but that is our position.

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

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Mr ANDREW GEE: My question is addressed to the Minister for Family and Community Services and Minister for Social Housing. How is the New South Wales Government providing more crisis accommodation for women and young people who are fleeing domestic violence?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I thank the member for Orange for this very important question and thank him for the efforts he has been making on behalf of his electorate. I had the very great pleasure to be with him and with some incredible local service workers at Orange. They were very committed to the work of the member for Orange and to the women and children they are trying to assist. Domestic violence is a crime. It is not something once can do behind a closed door and think it is okay. It is not okay.

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It is a crime and it demonstrates that these people are cowards. As the Premier said earlier, this Government is committed to making sure that those cowards are brought to account. While we are doing that we will make sure that the people who are trying to get away from what are often horrific circumstances will be supported by this Government.

I consider myself lucky over many years to have been given the benefit of wisdom from Barbara Kilpatrick who would be known to almost every domestic violence worker in this State. Unfortunately, Barbara passed away three years ago. She taught me much about this terrible crime—a scourge on Australia at present. The Liberal-Nationals Government is committed to making a difference for those who unfortunately have cowards in their lives who are prepared to resort to violence. The Government is proud to have 64 government-owned women's refuges across the State, as well as another 12 refuges owned by the non-government sector which work together extremely well. Last year the Government announced that it has committed \$20 million to provide more support for those refuges—more beds and more around-the-clock support.

Ms Noreen Hay: You cut the funding in the Illawarra.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Wollongong will remain silent.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: This Government is particularly focused on providing 24/7 support that has never been available before. We are now ensuring that those important 76 refuges across the State are able to provide that additional support. I am concerned about a scare campaign being run by the Labor

Party that is directed towards women who must know that there is support for them. In the past few months the member for Seven Hills and I visited his electorate and spoke with women at a refuge. I listened to what they had to say about the support they received from the women working in that refuge—those providing support who are funded by the taxpayers of New South Wales. In the electorate of Coogee I visited a refuge named Killara—I will not say what suburb it is in—which Labor had told me on at least a dozen occasions had been closed. It was not closed; it was open and able to support women.

I spoke with a woman who had been there for nearly a year who had been living in the most horrific of circumstances. As I recollect, she had married when she was about 16—she is now 25—and she had three children. She told me that she had lived in difficult circumstances and she needed to learn to live by herself. That refuge was doing its job. The refuge in my electorate is doing a great job. On behalf of the Parliament I thank all those who are working in refuges across the State. I thank each and every one of them for working with the Government and for making a difference in the lives of women who, unfortunately, have been exposed to the criminal activities of these cowards. Anyone experiencing domestic violence can ring 1800 656 463 or they can ring Link2Home on 1800 152 152. This Government will ensure that services are available to support them.

The SPEAKER: I welcome to the Parliament former Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms Greg Kelly. He obviously has nothing better to do. Nothing ever changes, does it Greg? For the benefit of new members, for 27 years Greg Kelly sat in the chair where Cheryl Samuels now sits.

TRANSPORT ACCESS PROGRAM

Mr GREG PIPER: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. Will the Government undertake to fix the significant and dangerous accessibility issues at train stations in western Lake Macquarie, particularly at Dora Creek and the increasingly busy Wyee stations, through the Transport Access Program?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Is that not how it should be done? Members should come into this Chamber, represent their communities well, not resort to smearing anyone in question time, and they will receive responsible and good answers. I wish that those opposite would learn from the member for Lake Macquarie who continues to represent his electorate incredibly well.

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Campbelltown that he is on three calls to order. Opposition members will come to order. There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I know that he has gone to Ministers with problems on a number of occasions, he has knocked on their doors and he has seen those Ministers. He did not resort to antics in this place and he made the right decision to advocate properly for his community. I am pleased to confirm for the benefit of the member for Lake Macquarie that Transport NSW is assessing both Dora Creek and Wyee. I will not refer to specifics in that regard but I have been advised by the agency that it is looking at that. I say to Labor members: That is how they should do it. They should come into the Chamber, ask sensible questions and they will receive the respect that they deserve.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I note that a number of members are advocating for the Transport Access Program [TAP]—an important program across the network. This Government has committed \$890 million towards that program. When we assess a project we look at current and future patronage and we look also at the proximity of services such as hospitals, schools and the like in regard to stations and bus interchanges. This program is being rolled out across all electorates and it is something on which this Government is delivering. Fifty-one projects in the Hunter and on the Central Coast either are underway or are being delivered, some of which have been delivered fairly close to the member's

electorate. We will continue to work hard. There is much work to be done in relation to this program, given the legacy issues. Members opposite no longer appear to be interested in my response. Many projects have to be built across a big network and many legacy issues affect people with disabilities, our seniors and also mums and dads with prams and the like—issues of which we are very mindful. I give the member an undertaking that we will continue to work on this project. I will not commit to a timetable today but it is being assessed. I congratulate the member on his advocacy.

Question time concluded at 3.18 p.m.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Order of Business

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy) [3.18 p.m.]:
I move:

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

Permit the determination of the motion accorded priority after 4.00 p.m. and then provide for the following routine of business:

- (1) Government business.
- (2) Private members' statements.
- (3) Matter of public importance submitted by the member for Epping on 23 February 2016, Sydney Metro Northwest.
- (4) Matter of public importance.
- (5) The House to adjourn without motion moved at the conclusion of the matter of public importance.

Let me explain briefly to members why I am seeking to suspend standing and sessional orders. Yesterday the Legislative Assembly ground to a halt due to a power outage.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: Some members interjected to ask, "What about the upper House?" I do not think anyone noticed. A number of rumours have been circulating as to why there was a power outage. I understand that a full investigation is being undertaken. Either the solar power scheme of the member for Balmain did not kick in—something on which we will work—or the coal was not delivered to the power stations.

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As a result of the power outage that affected Parliament yesterday evening, the first motion will enable two matters of public importance to be considered tonight, those being the matters of the member for Epping and the member for Swansea. This evening an additional five private members' statements will be taken. Members will note that the second of my motions to suspend standing orders for tomorrow, Thursday 25 February, will enable the motion moved by the member for Coogee to be debated at 10.30 a.m. Other general business times for the introduction and debate of private member's bills will be honoured.

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

Motion agreed to.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Order of Business

Motion by Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS agreed to:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended on Thursday 25 February 2016 to provide:

- (1) For the following routine of business prior to 1.00 p.m.:
 - (a) at 10.00 a.m., Speaker takes the Chair;
 - (b) giving of General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices);
 - (c) consideration of General Business Notices of Motions (for Bills);
 - (d) at 10.30 a.m., consideration of General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices); and
 - (e) at 12.00 noon, consideration of General Business Orders of the Day (for Bills).
- (2) That should the House conclude the consideration of General Business Orders of the Day (for Bills) before 1.00 p.m., the House may resume consideration of General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) until 1.00 p.m.

ASSOCIATIONS INCORPORATED AMENDMENT REVIEW BILL 2016

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

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

PETITIONS

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

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**.

Mental Health Services

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

Pet Shops

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

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**.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Reordering of General Business

Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH (Coogee) [3.22 p.m.]: I move:

That the General Business Notice of Motion given by me this day [Mardi Gras 1978—Apology] have precedence on Thursday 25 February 2016.

In 10 days we will once again witness the spectacle that is the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras. This will be the thirty-eighth year that it will take place. The first time it took place, on 24 June 1978, nobody could have imagined that the parade would become what we will see in just over a week. I believe my motion should be accorded precedence tomorrow as it will recognise those people who were essentially the founders of the Mardi Gras. Ten days out from the Mardi Gras we should recognise those people for their contribution to our community and to this State.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will resume their seats.

Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH: The first street parade ended in a violent riot that was unintended and in which many people were arrested and then publicly shamed. For 38 years we have not sought to offer an apology. I believe the time is right to recognise the contribution of these people to our State. Last year \$30 million was injected into the State's economy because of the Mardi Gras and 35,000 visitors came from overseas. The initial participants, known as the 78ers, were the standard-bearers for a civil rights movement that still exists today. They sought equal treatment under and respect in the law of this State. Tomorrow is a timely day on which to consider my motion for an apology for the 78ers.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON (Blacktown) [3.24 p.m.]: I support this matter being given precedence tomorrow. What happened in 1978 warrants our acknowledgement. Those events led to what would be seen today as unacceptable behaviour in dealing with a march that was undertaken lawfully. The treatment of the participants was appalling, to say the least. We owe those people an apology. This Parliament has apologised for many things in recent history. This apology is warranted because in 1978

those people were standing up against discrimination. The treatment dished out on that evening and a week later was shameful. Some might argue that treatment was normal for that time, but I believe that is no excuse.

Those people have transformed our notions on the rights of individuals. They stood up and said that it was completely unacceptable that because some people chose to love someone of the same sex they should be vilified or treated differently. Whilst we have made a lot of progress in the treatment of people in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and questioning [LGBTIQ] community, there is still much to do and the 78ers ought to receive an apology, which is long overdue. They also ought to be acknowledged for their preparedness to stand up for their beliefs in 1978. There is nothing stronger or more powerful than people standing up for what they believe is right.

It is only when people are prepared to stand up and question what are seen as societal norms of the day that progress is made. The community has benefited from the actions of that small group in 1978. But there is still much more to do and one big issue is ongoing. I am sure many of the 78ers would like that issue to be resolved. While we will celebrate Mardi Gras shortly, with our city celebrating this diversity yet again, the Parliament should debate this issue and apologise to these individuals and to anyone else who was treated so poorly. One of the worst aspects of that march in 1978 was that the media publicly outed participants, with their names and addresses printed on the front pages of newspapers. People lost their jobs, people lost friendships and people's families disowned them simply because the media of the day thought that was the right thing to do. We cannot apologise for what the media did but we can apologise for the way they were treated by government agencies because of the way in which the laws were structured at the time. Tomorrow should be the day that this issue is debated, which is why I support this matter being given precedence.

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

Motion agreed to.

CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO BE ACCORDED PRIORITY

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CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO BE ACCORDED PRIORITY

Registered Clubs Funding

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) [3.29 p.m.]: My motion deserves to be accorded priority as it affects what happens in our communities during times of need. It is important for the Government and for all organisations to swing into action in times of emergency. Club emergency upgrades funding will help the State to improve its emergency readiness and responsiveness. We must be able to provide sanctuary to members of our community in times of need. The allocation of more than \$2.5 million in grants will ensure that clubs are able to meet the needs of locals in distress due to unforeseen and natural disasters.

Clubs are a vibrant hub of our community and during times of natural disaster can offer safety and shelter to affected residents. Regulation changes will ensure that registered clubs will become centres of shelter and safety during emergencies for any resident living within a five-kilometre radius. The \$2.5 million in emergency funding for more than 20 projects across the State will benefit local communities. Bundeena RSL Club chief executive officer Sarah Watkins said the funding will ensure that the club will be able to fulfil its duty as an emergency evacuation point for the local community. Unfortunately last year the Bundeena RSL Club, which is located within the Royal National Park, burnt down. The \$300,000 grant will ensure that the facilities are upgraded to a level that can deal with any emergencies. The member for Kiama and the Shoalhaven community are thankful for the grant.

Western Sydney Toll Roads

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) [3.33 p.m.]: Once again the Baird Government is attacking people in Western Sydney, but this time it is using tolls. The Carr Government removed the tolls but within a period of five years this Government brought them back. A raft of new tolls will be imposed on the mums, dads, tradies and people travelling to work. It was all settled and decided without public consultation or transparency. The Baird Government has done another backdoor deal that will adversely affect the people of Western Sydney. The M4 is currently free of tolls. Those of us who live in Western Sydney will remember the days of expensive tolls taking so much of our salaries and wages. Each time a tradesman used the M4 on the way to a job he was charged. The Carr Government removed those tolls. I note that the member for Oxley is awake.

Mr Gareth Ward: We build roads.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT: The blowhole from Kiama is talking. The toll on the M4 will be introduced at some time between 2016 and 2017, when the current road widening is finished. The toll will cover Parramatta to Homebush, an area currently free from tolls. Private contractors will receive a toll for 43 years, expiring in 2060. An entire generation will be paying tolls—something for which I am sure my children will be thankful. The toll will be \$4.41 each way between Parramatta and Homebush, amounting to almost \$10. At the time Labor abolished the toll in 2010 it was \$2.75. It has almost doubled in price. The cost to a commuter travelling on the M4 on the way to work will be \$2,000 per year, which is appalling for hardworking Western Sydney families and tradesmen. It will increase by 4 per cent or the consumer price index each year, whichever is greater. It could increase by more than the rate of inflation, making it more and more expensive for Western Sydney families. A toll will be placed on the M4 and M5 and NorthConnex. Time and again this Government has betrayed the people of Western Sydney and it is occurring with the use of tolls on this occasion. It is a disgrace.

Question—That the motion moved by the member for Heathcote be accorded priority—put.

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The House divided.

Ayes, 48

Mr Anderson	Mr Grant	Mr Provest
Mr Aplin	Mr Gulaptis	Mr Roberts
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

Ms Aitchison
Mr Atalla
Mr Barr
Ms Catley
Mr Chanthivong
Mr Crakanthorp
Mr Dib
Ms Doyle
Ms Finn
Mr Greenwich
Mr Harris
Ms Harrison

Ms Hay
Ms Haylen
Mr Hoenig
Ms Hornery
Mr Kamper
Mr Lynch
Dr McDermott
Ms McKay
Mr Mehan
Ms Mihailuk
Mr Minns
Mr Parker

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

Tellers,
Mr Lulich
Mr Warren

Pairs

Mr Ayres
Mrs Skinner

Ms Burney
Mr Foley

Question resolved in the affirmative.

REGISTERED CLUBS FUNDING

Motion Accorded Priority

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) [3.45 p.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes the Government recently changed regulations to assist registered clubs to more easily become shelters of safety when Mother Nature strikes.
- (2) Thanks registered clubs and other community groups for their work in times of emergency, disaster relief and recovery activities.
- (3) Welcomes \$2.5 million in government funding invested in 20 projects across Sydney and regional New South Wales to ensure clubs are properly equipped to help take care of the community.
- (4) Supports the Government's ongoing partnership with the clubs community that provides help to people when they are most in need.

I note the members who opposed priority being given to this motion. Those opposite who have emergency services in their electorates should be ashamed.

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

Mr LEE EVANS: Clubs are important community resources in times of need. The State Emergency Service received 232 calls as a result of the January storms in Mount Druitt that left 1,500

homes without power for several hours because falling trees had taken out the powerlines. Those affected decamped to their local club, which gave them sanctuary. Sara Watkins, the chief executive officer of the Bundeena RSL Memorial Club, which is in my electorate, said the ClubGRANTS funding the club has received will ensure that it fulfils its duty as an emergency evacuation point for the local community. The temperature at the fire fronts during firestorms in 1994 and 2001 was 2000 degrees Celsius, so it is amazing that more lives were not lost. Because Bundeena RSL was the local evacuation point, people were able to cool their heels there while emergency services personnel were fighting to save their homes. I note that the member for Shoalhaven is in the Chamber.

Mr Gareth Ward: I am listening intently.

Mr LEE EVANS: I thank the member. Shoalhaven Heads Bowling and Recreation Club General Manager Michael Bowen thanked the Government for providing funds through the ClubGRANTS scheme to upgrade the club's kitchen facilities. Goulburn Soldiers Club General Manager Toni Mitchell also thanked the Government for providing funding to upgrade the club's kitchen facilities. These upgrades attract people from further afield. Club Central Menai, which is also in my electorate, opened its doors to evacuees during the 1994 fires despite the fact that it was still a building site. Picton Bowling Club Honorary Secretary Bob Lang said that the ClubGRANTS funding that the club has received will mean it is better prepared to act as a refuge in times of need. Tumut Bowling and Recreation Club Chief Executive Officer Jarrad Rossiter said that it is important for the club to provide shelter, food and protection for the local community, and a new power generator purchased with ClubGRANTS funding means that it will be better prepared to provide that help in times of need.

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In recent days a cyclonic storm came through Kurnell, ripping off roofs and making people homeless in less than 15 minutes. Those people are still suffering the effects of that storm. They went to their local evacuation point and received more information. The insurance companies came to the evacuation point and helped people to restart their lives. They made sure there was plenty of help so that residents can have some normality in the weeks and months ahead. I commend the fantastic work that the new regulation change will ensure. Obviously \$2.5 million in funding will help projects across New South Wales not only now but into the future.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [3.50 p.m.]: I speak today on behalf of the New South Wales Labor Opposition and I put on record that we will support the motion moved by the member for Heathcote. I am also here to assist the member for Heathcote. The member referred to the five-kilometre regulation. The waiver of that during a time of crisis is important. I am sure that the member for Maitland will talk about this also. During a storm event when people are being evacuated and suffering extreme stress, tension and anxiety, probably the last thing they will remember is the card for their local club. Some people might not be members of their local club. It would be most unfortunate if such people could not enter a club because of that rule, so this is a sensible approach. I put on record—it is well known anyway—that on 11 December the Leader of the Opposition welcomed this change. He said:

While generally you want to be visiting your local club to meet up with friends for dinner or a drink, clubs are often the first to open their doors and provide help in the event of an emergency.

That is very true: Our local clubs, no matter where they are—whether in metropolitan Sydney or rural and regional areas—are the first to open their doors and spend a lot of their own money serving the community during times of crisis. They open up their auditoriums or offer change-room facilities—if they have them—so that people can freshen up.

As I pointed out earlier in my address, it is a stressful time. I had the opportunity to speak to residents in the Maitland and Port Stephens electorates last year following the April superstorms. They raised issues such as communication breakdown during crisis events. We need to take those comments on board. Whilst it is a step in the right direction for the Government to put up \$2.5 million for 20 projects

across Sydney and rural and regional New South Wales, it must listen to community comments about people's experiences in April last year and in January this year. We know that primary producers did not have access to category C funding and it was extremely difficult for them to re-crop, fix fences or undertake maintenance work.

The Opposition takes a bipartisan approach to matters such as this and will support the Government. We want to make sure that people get back on their feet and are not left behind in the wake of storms. We know that local councils face other issues—this is probably a subject for another parliamentary debate at a later time—such as funding and resources needed to clean up and get council facilities up and running again. There are also issues with fees—tip fees, for example, whether for general or green waste. As I said, there is a plethora of issues to consider.

The Government has adopted the sensible approach of waiving the five-kilometre sign-in rule. We applaud that move. Indeed, the Opposition leader said in December that we would support it. It is an approach that makes sense. We also put on record our thanks to local clubs, which are the focal points of our communities. Whether in metropolitan Sydney or in rural and regional communities, clubs are the first to open their doors, provide shelter, distribute food and blankets and so on. We need our clubs. They are so much more than just the venue for a social get-together or a sporting facility. Clubs are the heart and soul of our communities—they make them tick. During times of crisis clubs are there for the entire community, and we thank and applaud them for that.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) [3.55 p.m.]: It gives me great pleasure to support the motion moved by the member for Heathcote, which was also supported by the member for Fairfield. It is wonderful that the motion will not be opposed and that Parliament recognises that clubs play an integral role in the very social fabric of our communities. Clubs are important in city, metropolitan, regional and small country areas. We all agree on that. There have been some well-publicised natural disasters in my electorate of Upper Hunter, including the April superstorm last year. At that time the clubs stepped up, opened their doors and did everything they could to help anyone in the community who was in dire need. The clubs also offered assistance after recent weather events.

Not that long ago the Deputy Premier and I travelled to Dungog and made two announcements: first, that Dungog RSL will receive \$52,000 to increase the capacity of the kitchen facilities and purchase 50 inflatable mattresses for emergency sleeping arrangements; and, secondly, that Dungog Memorial Bowls, Sport and Recreation Club will receive \$55,000 for a generator to provide emergency power for the club during a natural disaster. Although the amounts are relatively small, the grants will play a huge role in giving those clubs the capacity to support their community.

Last year when I was a mere party candidate I joined my predecessor, the Hon. George Souris, and the then Deputy Premier to announce that the Singleton Diggers in Singleton Heights would receive ClubGRANTS funding of \$838,000 for the purchase and installation of a power generator—in this case, a fairly weighty individual item. The club serves not just Singleton but also the surrounding regions and is relatively easy for people to get to during weather events—whether fire, floods or whatever. I cannot stress more forcefully how important clubs are to our communities, particularly in regional areas. I strongly support the motion.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) [3.58 p.m.]: I join my colleagues in giving accolades to our clubs for the fantastic work they do in our communities. When Maitland and other areas in the Hunter, including Port Stephens, suffered significant damage during the April superstorms, the clubs played a vital role. They were hampered by the inability to provide full recovery centre services because they did not have showers and in some cases did not have generators, but at least food and bathroom facilities were available. It is good to see that there is some funding to address this need but we would like to see more money for our local clubs. I note that the Karuah and District RSL Club is seeking funding and it would be good to see the program extended to that area.

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A siren has been installed at the Karuah and District RSL Club because during the recent storms extreme difficulties were experienced when alerting the community of a safe place to go. The club has extended its premises to include showers and more funds are being sought for generators.

In my electorate of Maitland the only recovery centre available was a community hall. The bathrooms were down a hill near the oval. People would have to walk for 10 minutes in the rain to reach them. That is not acceptable when all people want to do after a flood experience is to have a hot shower and clean up. Some clubs are ready and willing to ask for help and it would be great if they received it. It would be good to formalise the role of registered clubs so that the five kilometres sign-in rule can be waived.

The Opposition acknowledges that clubs in the Hunter helped out during the recent floods. In 1989 the Workers Club in Newcastle suffered significant damage. Clubs are an important part of our community fabric. They suffer with us, celebrate with us and support our communities. ClubGRANTS is a fantastic initiative, which I am pleased to support in my electorate. It would be great to see funding extended to other areas such as Port Stephens, Maitland and the wider Hunter, which throughout the past nine months has suffered from flooding. The clubs play an important role in our communities and it is time to reward them.

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) [4.01 p.m.], in reply: I thank the member for Fairfield, the member for Upper Hunter and the member for Maitland for their contributions to the debate. I acknowledge the member for Oatley, who is in the Chamber. He is the former vice-president of the Oatley RSL and Community Club. Licensed clubs are the heartbeat of every community. The member for Maitland spoke eloquently about those clubs that help out in times of need. The ClubGRANTS program enables them to open their doors to people when the chips are down. Every community has a club that it admires, and we should support our clubs. They are an important part of our communities.

On several occasions over the past couple of decades the licensed clubs in my electorate have helped people during emergencies. At the time of the Waterfall rail crash the local club fed State Emergency Service personnel and many others who needed help. It is great that those clubs are recognised and supported by Government funding. I thank the Opposition for supporting this important motion. I thank all licensed clubs in New South Wales.

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

Motion agreed to.

Pursuant to resolution Government business proceeded with.

HEALTH PRACTITIONER REGULATION NATIONAL LAW (NSW) AMENDMENT (REVIEW) BILL 2016

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

Second Reading

Ms PRU GOWARD (Goulburn—Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Medical Research, Assistant Minister for Health, Minister for Women, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) [4.04 p.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (NSW) Amendment (Review) Bill 2016. The bill makes minor amendments to the Health Practitioner Regulation (Adoption of National

Law) Act 2009 (Adoption Act) so as to amend the specific provisions of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (NSW). The Adoption Act implements the National Accreditation and Registration Scheme [NRAS] for health professionals in New South Wales. This was done in New South Wales by adopting the schedule to the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009 of Queensland as a law of New South Wales, subject to various modifications set out in the Adoption Act. The applied Queensland schedule, as modified by the New South Wales specific provision, is known as the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (NSW)—or NSW National Law.

All States and Territories have implemented the NRAS, generally by applying or adopting the Queensland schedule, which ensures a nationally consistent scheme across Australia in relation to registration and accreditation. While the NRAS operates as a national registration and accreditation scheme, it was established to allow jurisdictions to decide whether to adopt the national provisions relating to conduct, health and performance and complaints handling. If a jurisdiction decided not to adopt those provisions, it would become a "co-regulatory" jurisdiction. New South Wales has been a co-regulatory jurisdiction since the inception of NRAS, with Queensland following suit in 2014. The New South Wales specific provisions relating to conduct, health and performance and complaints handling, which include the New South Wales health professional councils, the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT] and the independent New South Wales Health Care Complaints Commission, are mostly set out in parts 5A and 8 of the NSW National Law.

In 2014-2015 the ministry conducted a statutory review of the NSW National Law in accordance with the requirements in the Adoption Act. The review focused on the New South Wales specific provisions of parts 5A and 8. A report on the review was tabled in Parliament in late 2015. The report on the review found that the objectives of the NSW National Law remain valid and that overall the NSW National Law operates effectively. However, it made a number of recommendations for legislative change, which the bill before the House seeks to implement. These changes are minor and are designed to promote consistency in the legislation, to give more flexibility and to ensure the smooth operation of the complaints handling processes.

The NSW National Law establishes 14 health professional councils, such as the Medical Council of New South Wales, to hear complaints in respect of the 14 different registered health professions. Each individual council is an independent statutory body that has its own statutory obligations. These councils are intended to be self-funded through registrants' fees. However, there is no ability in the legislation to respond if a council becomes financially unviable. To that end, and following on from a recommendation in the review, the bill includes a new section 41NA in the NSW National Law. This new section will allow the Minister to issue directions requiring that a financially unviable council delegate its functions to another council or person and that it allow regulations to be made modifying the functions of a council. The new provisions will "futureproof" the legislation by allowing for appropriate action to be undertaken in respect of a financially unviable council.

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The bill makes a number of changes to the provisions relating to professional standards committees. Under the bill, the chairperson of professional standards committees will be able to make interlocutory decisions, such as adjourning matters, which will increase flexibility of the committee. Further, the chairperson will have the deciding vote if the four-person committee is evenly split in its decision. This will ensure that matters do not need to be heard again should the committee be evenly split.

The bill includes a new section 171G, which requires all professional standards committee hearings to be audio recorded. This will assist parties should decisions be appealed. The bill amends section 152F to allow an Impaired Registrants Panel, which considers complaints that raise health issues in respect of a practitioner, to continue to investigate or take action in respect of a matter that the Health Care Complaints Commission [HCCC] is investigating but only if the HCCC consents. Currently, an Impaired Registrants Panel is prevented from investigating or taking action in a matter that is before the

HCCC, and this can cause delays. Allowing a matter to be considered by the panel as well as the HCCC, but only with the consent of the HCCC, will reduce delays and increase flexibility.

The bill amends section 155C to allow a health professional council to impose conditions, with the consent of a practitioner, following the receipt of a performance assessor's report. Currently, a council cannot impose conditions following a performance assessor's report but instead must refer the matter to a performance review panel. The amendment will help reduce costs and inefficiencies. The bill makes a number of changes in respect of assessment committees, which play a role in relation to conduct and performance matters. The bill will require members of an assessment committee to be appointed by a health professional council rather than by the Minister. This will bring assessment committee members into line with the appointment of professional standard committee members.

Further, the bill removes section 147B (1) (b) from the New South Wales national law. This section currently requires an assessment committee to encourage a complainant and practitioner to attempt to resolve the complaint by consent. Part 8 of the New South Wales national law is a complaints handling system for the protection of the public and is not aimed at resolving individual disputes. As such, complaints should be handled by bodies established under the national law for the protection of the public. The bill also makes a number of changes in relation to the role of the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT]. The tribunal hears serious matters involving allegations of professional misconduct and has the power to, among other things, cancel a practitioner's registration.

The report on the review recommended a number of changes in relation to the role of NCAT. In particular, the report recommended that NCAT should have the power to make an interim suspension order in limited circumstances. The bill implements this recommendation by amending section 165L to allow NCAT to issue an interim suspension order if particulars of a complaint have been proven and NCAT considers that such an order is necessary to protect the public. This will allow a practitioner, when the particulars of a complaint against the practitioner have been proven, to be suspended while giving NCAT appropriate time to consider the final order that should be imposed.

Clarifying amendments are also included in the bill to require NCAT to provide written reasons when making orders in circumstances when a complaint has been admitted. Written reasons will assist the practitioner and the public in understanding why a particular order was imposed. The bill also amends section 151 of the New South Wales national law. Currently, this section requires the medical superintendent of a mental health facility to notify the relevant health professional council if a registered health practitioner is detained under the Mental Health Act.

The report on the review found that section 151 required a mandatory report to the council at too early a stage and prior to any independent review of the patient under the Mental Health Act. In line with the recommendation in the report, the bill amends section 151 to require a report to be made if the practitioner is found to be a mentally ill person following review of the practitioner under section 27 of Mental Health Act. Of course, if it is clear that the practitioner poses a serious risk to the public before the reviews in section 27 then a notification could be made to the council at an earlier stage.

The bill also makes a number of minor amendments that are aimed at ensuring transparency and consistency of language between similar provisions. For example, the bill amends the various provisions setting out the appeal rights of individuals to ensure that the same language is used throughout part 8 of the New South Wales national law. In addition, the bill amends schedule 5F to require fees in relation to pharmacy premises applications to be set out in the regulations. Currently, the fees are set by the Pharmacy Council of New South Wales. Requiring the fees to be set out in the regulations will increase transparency and regulatory oversight.

The New South Wales national law is an important Act relating to the registration, accreditation and complaints handling processes in relation to registered health practitioners. Part 8 of the New South Wales national law sets out the New South Wales specific complaints handling processes. Under part 8,

New South Wales has retained its own independent complaints processes which involve the HCCC, the health professional councils and NCAT. Part 8 provides a strong and fair framework for hearing and addressing complaints. The report on the review found that part 8 was working well but that minor amendments should be made to ensure that it continued to operate to protect the public. The bill before the House implements these recommendations. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned on motion by the member for Cabramatta and set down as an order of the day for a future day.

Pursuant to sessional order private members' statements proceeded with.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

MULTICULTURALISM

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) [4.17 p.m.]: Australia is a country made richer by migrants. Our schools, hospitals, workplaces and parks show multiculturalism in action. We are made richer by our diversity, each of us benefiting from the varied perspectives, religions, beliefs, customs and celebrations that migrants bring from around the world. We are made richer by our kids learning from the earliest age that despite our differences we belong to a country founded on mutual respect.

Economic data shows that migration literally makes us richer. The Migration Council of Australia estimates that migration will add \$1.6 trillion to Australia's gross domestic product [GDP] by 2050, adding 15.7 per cent to our workforce participation rate and 5.9 per cent in GDP per capita growth. The project of multicultural Australia has for the most part been a brilliant success. Notable exceptions have been our treatment of Indigenous Australians, the White Australia policy and, most recently, our appalling treatment of asylum seekers. Like many Australians, I am left angry, often heartbroken and always profoundly disappointed by our asylum seeker policies.

As a parent, I am moved to tears by the images of children, many born in Australia, who are to be deported to a camp on Nauru or Manus Island. They are being sent to an uncertain future where we cannot guarantee their good health or wellbeing or even their safety. As a woman, I am furious that while Australia makes advances in the prevention of domestic violence the Federal Government will send women who have been raped and abused back to camps to live with the perpetrators.

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As a representative and a citizen I am frustrated that our Federal Parliament cannot balance our security needs with our human rights obligations. But as an Australian I still have great hope and great faith in our strength and promise as a multicultural nation. I have been inspired by the nurses and midwives who made a stand at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital last week and said they could no longer stay silent about the treatment of asylum seekers, and by the staff at Brisbane Children's Hospital who resisted the release of baby Asha if she was to be returned to detention. I am inspired by the community groups and protests—Australians joining together to fight for justice and compassion.

I am grateful to the New South Wales Government for offering free transit to asylum seekers and to the leadership provided by Premier Baird and Labor Leader Luke Foley in joining with other State and Territory leaders in offering support to let asylum seekers stay. I am proud of Mayor Darcy Byrne and Leichhardt Labor for proposing Callan Park be a refugee resettlement hub, putting words into action and showing the kind of generous response we expect of lawmakers. I am proud also of New South Wales Labor for unanimously supporting a motion to let them stay at our recent New South Wales State Conference demanding asylum seeker children not be sent back to Manus Island and Nauru. I take this opportunity to read the motion to the House:

Conference notes that following the recent decision by the High Court, a group of 267 asylum seekers who were brought to Australia from Nauru face the prospect of being forcibly returned to detention on Nauru.

Conference acknowledges that of this group, there are infants who were born in Australia. To send them to Nauru is to eject them from their country of birth. Numerous humanitarian organizations and medical professionals have explained that sending them back to Nauru would subject them to a life of physical and emotional trauma.

A sense of compassion is in the best interests of these families and our status as a fair and decent nation. We have an obligation to care for these asylum seekers and to provide them a safe, secure and welcoming environment.

NSW Labor congratulates Labor Leaders Luke Foley, Premiers Dan Andrews, Anastasia Palaszczuk and Jay Weatherill for offering to take responsibility for these asylum seekers [and allow them to stay in their respective states].

NSW Labor calls on Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull to work with our State leaders to show compassion and offer care and certainty to these families.

It is a motion I was proud to support, along with all my Labor colleagues. We have a lot more to do. We must live up to the promise of our own generosity and compassion. We must let them stay.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Parliamentary Secretary) [4.21 p.m.]: Mr Deputy-Speaker, I draw your attention to the comments just made by the member for Summer Hill. I have listened intently to the content and doubt very much whether it pertains solely to the electorate of Summer Hill. She has made comments regarding aspects of the Federal Government's responsibilities, certainly in relation to policies in regard to asylum seekers, refugees, and illegal immigrants to this country. I place on record, given those matters have been raised, the fact that under the Labor Government many thousands of lives were lost at sea by people who tried to access this country by illegal means, which has been successfully turned around in a very humanitarian way under the Abbott Government and Scott Morrison ensuring that no further lives have been lost at sea. Hundreds if not thousands of lives were lost under the Gillard-Rudd policy. I ask you to remind the member that private members' statements pertain to their local electorate.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Summer Hill made some comments very early in her contribution that referenced her electorate. I take the point made by the Parliamentary Secretary.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS FOUL PLAY INITIATIVE

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence—Parliamentary Secretary) [4.25 p.m.]: I congratulate Dallas Waters on his initiative to fight domestic violence in the Clarence Valley through his innovative Domestic Violence is Foul Play program. Dallas is a high-profile sportsman in the Clarence Valley. A champion rugby league player, Dallas has proved he can give back to the game that made him a champion. He coached the Lower Clarence Magpies to a grand final win in 2009 and the South Grafton Rebels to a grand final win in the 2015 Group 2 rugby league grand final in only his second year at the club.

Now Dallas is giving back to his community by tackling domestic violence in the sporting organisations in the Clarence Valley through his Domestic Violence is Foul Play initiative. Last week Dallas held an information session at the Grafton District Services Club and invited all the sporting organisations in the Clarence Valley to attend. Tonight he will hold another session at the Yamba Bowling Club, inviting sporting groups from the lower Clarence to attend. The message he will send to these sporting organisations is that they do not tolerate foul play in their sports, so nor should it be acceptable

that participants in their sports beat up their spouses or their children. If you see it, then report it. We need to protect our most vulnerable and the best place to start is in our own backyard. We know that the Clarence Valley is in the State's top 10 per cent for domestic violence-related offences and this initiative from Dallas is most pertinent and certainly most welcome.

Domestic violence is the ugly side of humanity that is rampant in the Clarence Valley and it has been hidden for too long. Whilst the brutal bashings and violence have been hidden behind closed doors we are seeing the other symptoms surface in our community all too often—the call on our health and family support services, the call for more social and community housing, the demand on our police and judicial system and too often tragedies that result in the deaths of women and children.

We know that victims of domestic violence need safe and secure accommodation and that is the reason for the high need for social and community housing. Similarly we know that families experiencing domestic violence have issues with drugs, alcohol and mental health. Helping to stamp out domestic violence in our communities will help to solve a broad range of social issues that plague our communities. This is a bigger problem than can be fixed by just one man or the Government alone. If we want to reduce domestic violence in our community then it is up to each and every one of us to speak out when we hear it or when we see it. If people know someone in their sport or their community is beating up on women or their kids they should speak up about it. This is not acceptable in our society. This is not acceptable in our community.

I am extremely pleased that the Premier's 12-point priority plan includes addressing those social issues that confront our most vulnerable, such as domestic violence, protecting our kids and youth homelessness. The measure of a society is how we treat our most vulnerable and I am proud to be part of a Liberal-Nationals Government that is providing for all the people of New South Wales during this terrific rebuilding period in New South Wales. It was very pleasing also to see the Federal Government under Prime Minister Turnbull announce \$100 million to help fight this scourge in our communities. Similarly the Premier of New South Wales, Mike Baird, announced \$60 million to help victims of domestic violence in New South Wales and to nail the perpetrators of this monstrous crime. I was pleased to hear the Premier speak in the House today about the suspect target management plans for high risk domestic violence offenders. We need to target these offenders. We need to put them away. We need to protect our women and children and we need to make our community safe. It is wonderful to see the Premier and the Government of New South Wales leading the charge in this area.

I congratulate Dallas for standing up for the most vulnerable in our community but he alone cannot carry the load and he needs the support of our sporting leaders and community champions to help spread the word that domestic violence is not acceptable in our sports. It is not acceptable in our community and we will not tolerate it. Well done to the South Grafton Rebels who have come on board with the program and to City Bears Hockey who are also embracing the campaign. So too have Grafton Redmen rugby and netball, and the Grafton Tigers Australian Rules Football Club. So I say to all the other sporting organisations, get on board with this program. Working together we can help reduce domestic violence in the Clarence Valley and protect our women and children and the most vulnerable people in our community. Congratulations Dallas on your initiative and drive and I pledge you all my support for such an important community program.

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WESTERN SYDNEY JOBS GROWTH

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Parliamentary Secretary) [4.29 p.m.]: In my role as Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier for Western Sydney I have a clear focus on the responsibility of this Government to ensure there are employment opportunities on behalf of the expected one million additional people who will move to this region by 2031. In my role I have had the opportunity to talk to many hundreds of businesses, both in my electorate and across Western Sydney, about how this

Government can remove impediments that may restrict inward investment in Western Sydney, both domestically and internationally. We often hear comments regarding our diminishing manufacturing sector, yet nothing could be further from the truth. The fact is we are manufacturing more than ever in New South Wales, especially in Western Sydney. However, through the innovation of technology, such as robotics and computerised equipment, we have reduced our manual workforce, but at the same time we have upskilled employees, thus developing a smarter and more innovative workforce. It is therefore imperative that we make every endeavour to encourage investment in Western Sydney that continues this trend and provides opportunities for the next generation of young employees in greater Western Sydney.

There are clear benefits in providing high-technology jobs in Western Sydney while at the same time educating the next generation with the appropriate skills to fill those jobs. One business that has embraced these objectives is Green's Food Holdings, in Glendenning, which I had the opportunity to visit recently. Green's is a striking example of a manufacturing success story in Western Sydney. Green's is a 100 per cent Australian-owned food manufacturer with its head office in Glendenning. It is Australia's second-largest Australian-based biscuit manufacturer, making cake mixes, snacks and cereals. Green's is a true Australian business success story. It provides a diversified portfolio of more than 10 food brands in eight grocery categories and produces in excess of 380 products.

The business also has a strong history of successful innovation and new product development, with expected sales for 2016 to be approximately \$275 million. Illustrative of the company's strong growth and astute investment, in 2015 Green's won the Australian Growth Company Awards in the Agribusiness and Food category. I was incredibly pleased to hear that in mid-2016 Green's will relocate its Victorian operation to Western Sydney—testament to this Government's efforts in attracting business to Western Sydney. Importantly, this move to enlarge its existing base in Western Sydney, at a cost of \$7 million, will boost jobs and production lines by 50 per cent, adding around 70 additional jobs to the existing 202 jobs currently on site—and adding six production lines to the existing 15 production lines. Additionally, Green's is relocating its export department into its Sydney headquarters, while centralising its information technology and research and development departments—adding both directly and indirectly to jobs and growth in the Western Sydney region. Significantly, the company has spent \$20 million in capital investment in New South Wales manufacturing since 2011 and \$5 million on information technology. While there has been a considerable investment in new automotive technology at the plant, Green's has retained its full workforce and will now increase employment by an additional 70 jobs with the relocation of its Victorian base.

This is an enormous win for New South Wales, and more importantly for Western Sydney. During my visit with chief executive officer and managing director Shane Noble and general manager Matthew Russell, I also had an opportunity to discuss Green's moving its Victorian enterprise to Western Sydney. They stated Green's is scaling up in Western Sydney because of the breadth and depth of suitably qualified employees in highly specialised technical areas including research and development, engineering, machine operations, commercial and project management and information technology—illustrative of the pool of skilled workers now readily available in Western Sydney and further testament to my initial statements for the need to continue to upskill future generations of young people in Western Sydney. Added to this, Western Sydney provides Green's with access to key customers and markets, while being in close proximity to local agricultural supply inputs.

Lastly, Green's stated that its move to New South Wales was because of the strength of the New South Wales economy and this Government's policies, including our payroll tax incentives and infrastructure investment in Western Sydney, such as public transport and roads. From my time visiting Green's operating facility, it was clear that the business has grown on the back of hard work and dedication by its staff, led in particular by Shane and Matthew. I sincerely thank Green's Foods Holdings for its continued investment in Western Sydney and also for its generous hospitality and time to show me how the business operates. Green's Foods Holdings is a business with great potential beginning a new chapter of future operations in Western Sydney, and I wish the company every success for the future.

While I was there I was pleased to note that one of the products still being made is lolly gobble bliss bombs. They were one of my favourites when I went to school, and I am sure they were one of your favourites, Mr Deputy-Speaker. Lolly gobble bliss bombs are still available on grocery shelves today. I commend Green's for the role the company plays in improving employment opportunities in Western Sydney.

Mr ANDREW GEE (Orange—Parliamentary Secretary) [4.34 p.m.]: I thank the member for Castle Hill for brining to the attention of the House the achievements of Green's Foods Holdings, in Glendenning. Clearly, the business is going from strength to strength. The company shows great enterprise and is a great employer of local people. I pass on the congratulations of the House to Green's Foods Holdings and its team for being a wonderful Australian food manufacturer and for producing Australian icons such as the lolly gobble bliss bombs.

THE ENTRANCE MOTOR REGISTRY

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) [4.35 p.m.]: I draw the attention of the House to The Entrance Motor Registry and more particularly the Baird Government's announcement that it will close on 21 April this year as a consequence of the "expansion" of the Service NSW network. While expansion sounds like a great term, in reality it means that the citizens of my electorate, The Entrance, will be left without a motor registry or ready access to any of the services offered by Service NSW. The Entrance Motor Registry was established in 1991. It is a busy, little local registry and its manager, Ray Dorahy, who has been with the registry since it first opened, and his staff do a great job servicing our community.

There is a lot of concern in our community about the prospect that The Entrance will be left without a motor registry service. Long-time resident Barry Bradshaw, who managed the first registry to be opened in Wyong shire in 1966 and was area manager when The Entrance Motor Registry opened, knows the value of local services and has reported to me the concerns of retirees living in the area. If The Entrance registry closes, Wyong shire will have only two locations for residents to access motor registry services, while they currently have three. The Entrance electorate will have none.

The 152 mainly elderly citizens with modified licences which restrict their travel radius will now rely on a postal service to renew their licence if they cannot access the internet—a postal service, I might add, that has been made slower and more expensive by the Federal colleagues of those opposite. Acting New South Wales Auditor-General, Tony Whitfield, has now looked into the rollout of Service NSW and, in a report released on 17 February, has criticised the Government for overestimating and underdelivering on its promises. Crucially, the Auditor-General found services to regional New South Wales, areas like the Central Coast, have reduced access. He said:

Fewer service access points have opened in regional and rural communities compared to the approved business case. This reduction has resulted in a smaller area of New South Wales being served by a service access point. As key objectives of the initiative were to improve citizen access and satisfaction with Government services, the reduction of service access points is a significant change to the approved business case, and a reduction in the anticipated benefits to the community.

This is exactly what is happening on the Central Coast. The closure of The Entrance Motor Registry will leave a service gap for The Entrance in much the same way as closure of the Woy Woy Motor Registry has left a service gap in the southern part of the Central Coast. Critically for our local chamber of commerce, it will remove the regular passing trade relied on by local businesses and make The Entrance shopping precinct more reliant on the vagaries of tourism.

Local people know that the geography of the Central Coast channels traffic onto one or two main roads, and when one reduces access points, as the Service NSW model will, one channels more traffic onto those roads and makes access to the service worse, not better. Finally, the Auditor-General's report

identified a change in the Service NSW business case, which occurred in 2014, that has moved the aim of Service NSW from better service to self-service. Referring to all these criticisms the Auditor-General's report notes:

There is no reporting of customer satisfaction with digital services, or service coverage in regional and rural New South Wales.

The reality, I think, is that those opposite do not want to provide a public service. Just as their Federal colleagues have wrecked the postal service, they want to wreck our State public services and replace them with self-service.

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What that means for the Central Coast is less service. The Entrance motor registry provides a great service to local, mainly elderly, citizens who prefer face-to-face interaction. We have not given up on the fight to keep the registry open. If the Government was serious about service delivery in regional and rural areas such as the Central Coast, expanding the services of The Entrance motor registry would be the way to provide better, not fewer, services. That will be the outcome if the Service NSW model is fully implemented in our area.

LAKE MACQUARIE LEAD CONTAMINATION

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) [4.39 p.m.]: I wish to update the House on progress concerning lead contamination in northern Lake Macquarie and note the concerns of local residents about the continued stigmatization of their suburb. It has arisen from a recent renewed focus on its post-industrial challenges. Lead contamination in Boolaroo and the surrounding areas is the legacy of a lead and zinc smelter that operated for more than 100 years until closure in 2003. Measures to address these legacy issues have included: a lead abatement strategy for eligible residential properties; a blood lead monitoring program operated by Hunter Health; heightened controls for development activity; and, of course, general public awareness.

In late 2014 research by Macquarie University students found that high lead levels remain in soil on some residential and public properties and challenged the effectiveness of the lead abatement strategy. In response the Environment Protection Authority appointed an expert working panel to review the strategy and a community reference group, which I chair, to liaise with the panel and be a conduit to the community. Importantly, a new round of blood lead testing in young children was recently undertaken by Hunter Health. It returned pleasing results with the level of all children tested found to be below the recently lowered benchmark recommended by the National Health and Medical Research Council of five micrograms per decilitre. Over the past 18 months this issue has received considerable media attention.

I acknowledge that this media focus has, if nothing else, provided a valuable opportunity to revisit the issue of lead contamination, evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies put in place and determine how we can ensure the health of children growing up in the affected suburbs is not compromised. This is a good thing, but I am aware that the nature of this continued focus on the suburb has frustrated and annoyed many residents who believe it paints an overly pessimistic picture of the area and the people who live there.

There is concern that not enough attention has been paid to the positive outcomes achieved so far such as the low levels of lead detected in the blood of young children. This result demonstrates that while challenges still exist in managing exposure to lead in local soil, the community is meeting those challenges well. We cannot demolish residential Boolaroo, remove the top layers of soil and then replace everything afterwards. It is not practical to do it and it is not what the local people want. They are proud of their homes and their town and they are, by and large, confident of their ability to manage legacy lead issues now that the most serious contamination source, that of lead pollutants from stack emissions at the former plant, is long gone. What they want to see from this current review by the lead expert working

group and the response from the State Government are tangible outcomes that will help them to continue managing those issues into the future without undue burden on residents.

They want: to know how the risk of exposure to contaminated soil on private property and public land can be minimised in areas if and where the lead abatement strategy has not been effective; they want a possible future fund or some other financial safety net to ensure the community can deal with ongoing contamination issues; access to a conveniently located waste facility where they can dispose of contaminated soil without additional cost; consistent and streamlined processes for development of their property; to know that authorities will respond in a timely manner when areas of exposed slag or contaminated soil are discovered—as happened last year at Marmong Point after a major storm; and, most importantly, they want confidence that children will be safe from lead and that their homes, their suburbs, and their communities are not re-stigmatised on a regular basis.

Last week the *Newcastle Herald* highlighted findings from a new study led by Professor Mark Taylor of Macquarie University, a member of the lead expert working group. The study links higher than average levels of violent crime to a number of communities, including Boolaroo, where perpetrators had been exposed to high levels of lead pollution as children. I have little doubt that people have been adversely affected in this way, and I believe the statistical correlation established by the study supports theories on lead exposure and delayed behavioural impacts. The findings are a salient reminder of the risk of lead in our communities but should be understood to reflect a time in this area when this contamination spewed from an operational plant through its stacks. What we have now is a different circumstance with the source removed and active strategies in place to manage the situation. Strategies are being reviewed at this time.

In some ways we also have a better situation than many other older residential areas, particularly in cities, where the lead legacy of leaded fuel and leaded paint is also very real but not as well understood by the community. It has now been 18 months since the issue of lead contamination resurfaced and it is important for the outcomes that I mentioned earlier to be achieved sooner rather than later. I told a recent public gathering that I want to see a clear strategy for dealing with the legacy of lead pollution before the end of the year, and I trust the Government will recognise the need for, and ensure the resolution of, these long-running issues.

OCEAN 12 CRICKET TEAM

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) [4.44 p.m.]: I acknowledge and congratulate the Ocean 12 cricket team on its ongoing success. Ocean 12 is a cricket team comprised of Sri Lankan Tamil asylum seekers. Fleeing genocide the members of the team arrived in Australia by boat between 2010 and 2012 at the end of Sri Lanka's long running civil war—hence the fantastic team name Ocean 12. To the members of the team who are present today, along with their friends and supporters, venukhum. Australia should have been as welcoming of Tamil refugees as we are now for Syrians, but it turned its back and closed its borders because they arrived on boats. Both Labor and Liberal governments worked with the despised—and thankfully now departed—Rajapaksa regime instead of its victims. The United Nations Human Rights Commission has now concluded its investigations into human rights abuses in Sri Lanka and found extensive documentation of extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, torture, alleged war crimes and lands and homes forcibly seized by the military. More than six years after the end of the war there are still more than 120,000 refugees and more than 50,000 internally displaced people.

There is a large and successful Tamil population in Australia that arrived decades ago under the Colombo Plan, fleeing the war from the 1980s onwards, or as business migrants, Tamils have settled successfully and seamlessly. They are enormously successful academically and in their chosen professions. Suburbs such as Wentworthville, Westmead and Pendle Hill are thriving, due in no small part to Tamil families and businesses. I am sure the member for Prospect would agree with me. We have fantastic interaction with the Tamil community and it is great to see them succeeding. Despite this, Tamil asylum seekers in Australia are still in limbo. I make these criticisms not as a naïve idealist but as

someone who has done research work in a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR] administered refugee camp, and who strongly sympathises with people stuck in camps for decades, bored and hopeless.

Thankfully, plenty of members in the community are welcoming and supportive. Members of the Blue Mountains Refugee Support Group visited many young Tamil men in immigration detention and in their homes and often discussed cricket with them. Despite their constant boredom and social isolation their passion for cricket often bought a smile to their faces—and the idea of a cricket team was born. Noeline Nagle and Anne-Marie Clifton have done an amazing job to bring the team together. In 2013 they secured a grant of \$10,000 from Wenty Leagues for uniforms and equipment to get them started. The team entered and won the Last Man Stands Sydney Sports League competition and went on to win the statewide competition. They are the current Sydney champions and have won the Western Sydney World Cup three times. Their success has continued with support from Wenty Leagues club grants program. Their team manager, Bala Vigneswaran, has transformed them from passionate cricket fans that had never played the game or worked as a team, into champions.

I wish the players continued success. I congratulate Satheesh Sivakumaran, Kartheban Ratnavadvel, Donald Redol, Jegan Shanmugarajah, Sutharsan Packiya Nathan, Muralitharan Neelamagam, Prasanthkumar Uruthiran, Sivaraj Manmatharasa, Sutharsan Suntharamoorthy, Samantha Dinesh Kumara, Dishantha Ramachandran, Chanthuru Thieventhiran and Suthakar Senathipillay. The cricket team has boosted the players' morale. It has been a constant in their disrupted and quite unstable lives. They fled from war to a new life in Australia only to face years of bureaucratic headaches. Some of them have applied for temporary protection visas and safe haven visas but in the four to six years they have been in Australia none of the team members have achieved permanent residency. Work rights that are restricted to three-month contracts makes it difficult to secure work and constantly looking for a job is incredibly stressful. Despite this they are positive and optimistic. Noeline Nagle, who has supported the team since its inception, states:

The greatest success has been their willingness to embrace their role in the community. They have grown up, taking their place with confidence and pride. Their English has improved, confidence soared and self-belief is no longer a dream but a reality.

The cricketing community was curious at first. Now firm friendships and mutual respect have paved the way to embrace a multicultural scene the community can be proud of.

Ocean 12's story started as a dream. The chapters are not all good news stories. There have been plenty of ups and downs but the difference is Ocean 12 wrote the story.

I once again congratulate the team on its success.

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Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Social Housing) [4.49 p.m.]: It was great to hear about the Ocean 12 cricket team from the member for Granville. All members of this Chamber strongly support what the team is doing. I am very happy to have the team members and their supporters in this country. I will put in my two bob's worth and point out that although the Federal Labor Government was slow on the uptake, the Federal Coalition Government also has some problems with refugee visa application processing. More money should be spent on speeding up the application process because applicants go through hell while they wait. During my 25 years in this place I have repeatedly rung the relevant authorities to find out what is going on, and too often I have been told that the person handling the case has gone on leave and no-one else knows what is going on. The file is sitting at the bottom of a drawer and nothing is happening. I am sure that, like me, our Tamil community is fed up with it. Hopefully the Federal Government will allocate more resources to improve the efficiency of the refugee visa application process, because at the moment it is appalling.

NORTHERN BEACHES HOSPITAL

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Social Housing) [4.50 p.m.]: It is an exciting time for the people of the northern beaches because the construction of the new hospital is finally underway. I was delighted to join the Healthscope staff a couple of weeks ago to inspect the incredible site. The basement is in place and the lift towers are going up. The construction teams are working flat out to complete the new hospital. I heard someone say the other day that it is not a public hospital. Yes, it is. The NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association representatives have not been as helpful as they could have been on this issue. I point out to them that we are very lucky because we will have a first-class privately funded but public facility that will also provide private services. The facilities on the site will be shared and we will have a twenty-first century resource, and I am extremely excited about that.

However, the Government's \$500 million road infrastructure program will mean that traffic conditions will be a little tough for a while. The traffic disruptions are the result of not only the construction of the hospital. The roadworks needed to be done and have been brought forward some years because of it, and that is a plus for the local area. Clearly, some issues will arise during the morning and afternoon peak traffic periods. I am particularly concerned that as our magnificent roadworks get underway we can expect problems, particularly if there are vehicle breakdowns. Roads and Maritime Services officers and the contractors will be doing everything they can to ensure that traffic flows freely. However, breakdowns will occur, and when they do local residents should know how to respond. Coincidentally, yesterday as I travelled on Warringah Road between Allambie Road and Wakehurst Parkway I came across a white sedan sitting with all the doors open and no-one in attendance. Of course, such a situation could clearly cause major problems for peak-hour commuters.

Residents should be aware that in such circumstances they should do what I did yesterday; that is, dial 131 700 and inform Roads and Maritime Services of the precise location of the breakdown, including the nearest cross streets, the cause of the breakdown, a description of the vehicle, whether someone is with it, and preferably its registration details. I failed in providing an accurate description of the vehicle concerned and the registration details, but next time I encounter a breakdown I will know that those details are required. Everyone in the metropolitan area should know that if a vehicle is broken down on a clearway they should dial 131 700 and provide that information to ensure that a tow truck is dispatched speedily. Residents of the Warringah area will be pleased to hear that in discussions with our wonderful Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, the Hon. Duncan Gay—

Mr John Sidoti: What about his Parliamentary Secretary?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Of course. He is a wonderful, intelligent and capable human being.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! I assume that the Minister is referring to the member for Orange.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I am. He knows his stuff. Thank you for that guidance, Mr Deputy-Speaker. The Minister has agreed to ensure that a tow truck is on standby during morning and afternoon peak-hour periods. As a result, when someone's vehicle breaks down he or she will not have to wait for a tow truck for 20 minutes; it will be only one or two minutes away. That will be a big plus as we face a challenging time while the new hospital is constructed and roadworks are undertaken. Northern beaches residents travelling along Warringah Road should know about the 131 700 service and call it to ensure that our traffic flows as freely as possible.

TRIBUTE TO JAN SHARMAN, OAM

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) [4.56 p.m.]: Members should all be familiar with the state-managed program Hidden Treasures and the Hidden Treasures Honour Roll. Hidden Treasures

recognises the wonderful volunteers within our communities for their efforts and gives them the proverbial pat on the back. As we know, volunteers are the backbone, arms and legs of country New South Wales and make meaningful contributions to our communities. They give true meaning to a word that we bandy about so readily in this place—community. In the community of Glen Innes in the beautiful New England region we have one such hidden treasure, although I must admit that there is nothing "hidden" about Jan Sharman. Not only has Jan been a member, president, secretary, treasurer and dog's body for many organisations in Glen Innes; she has also been at the forefront of quite a few dog fights with bureaucracy, politicians and anyone else who stands in her way in ensuring that her beloved community of Glen Innes achieves its goals and completes its to-do lists.

I have heard via the family grapevine that Jan's community work probably began in the late 1950s and 1960s. She was 18 and had just moved to Glen Innes from the coast when as a swimmer she was put out by the fact that there was no town swimming pool. What did she do? She certainly did not sit around complaining about the problem. She joined the fundraising campaign and encouraged council to build one. While out fundraising she got into trouble for selling raffle tickets in the main street, because at the time such behaviour was considered inappropriate for a woman of her standing, and it was reported to her parents. However, the job was done and the pool was built. Did she rest on her laurels? No, she did not. Jan and her equally determined cohorts moved on to raise funds to provide heating for the pool when her two young children decided it was time to learn to swim. This little tale is an indication of Jan's grit and determination, which is the foundation stone for her continuing involvement in and advocacy for the community's needs.

At 78, Jan is still an active member of the Anglican Parish Council, for which she has worked tirelessly for more than 40 years. She has successfully organised the church fete, assisted with the training of the debutants and helped with the day-to-day running of the parish.

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She was head of the Holy Trinity Anglican Church catering committee for over 30 years, ensuring no-one who attended a church function went away without a cuppa and a scone. She is a committee member of the Corinya Retirement Village and Community Information Centre. When her children were at school she was always helping out with the lunch at the school and any tasks that needed doing.

Jan has been a member of the Glen Innes Hospital Auxiliary for more than 40 years. She has helped raise hundreds of thousands of dollars for the hospital to purchase much-needed equipment to support the work of the hospital staff. When I first came across Jan in 2012 she was doing her best to garner support for the then member for Northern Tablelands, my predecessor Richard Torbay, helping to gather 10,000 signatures so he could petition the Parliament to begin a debate on the provision of new hospitals for Glen Innes and Inverell. Her efforts were supported by the local newspaper. That campaign saw her gather more than 6,000 signatures from Glen Innes—not bad for a town with a population of only 5,000, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Be assured that Jan's energy and determination know no bounds. Her most recent campaign has been to see a helipad built at the Glen Innes hospital. At present the rescue helicopter lands at a town park and patients have to be ferried to and fro by ambulance. Again Jan has rallied the troops. The auxiliary has already raised more than \$80,000 and the community has pledged further funds when the construction date is settled. The campaign has not been an easy one, I assure members of that. On many occasions Jan has locked horns with the health bureaucracy—thankfully, not with me—when a project is not moving fast enough for her liking. Indeed, things cannot happen quickly enough for Jan. Jan has been acknowledged with an Order of Australia medal in 2013 for her huge amount of work and she has been honoured as a Glen Innes Citizen of the Year. It has been my great honour this year to award Jan the Northern Tablelands 2016 Local Woman of the Year. Well done, Jan. Keep up the great work.

Mr ANDREW GEE (Orange—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.01 p.m.]: I thank the member for Northern Tablelands for his contribution. He often refers to the Glen Innes area as GOC—God's own

country. It is fitting that he paid tribute to Jan Sharman, OAM, today. She certainly is a hidden treasure—perhaps not so hidden anymore, as the member for Northern Tablelands points out—and she has not done all her community work for the accolades. This House should recognise her achievements, which commenced in the 1950s with the scandalous practice, back then, of selling tickets unaccompanied in the main street of Glen Innes, for which she was duly reported to her parents. Glen Innes has come a long way since those days and much of the development and community spirit can be attributed to Jan Sharman, OAM, and those like her who work tirelessly for that community and make it such a great place in which to live. I thank the member for Northern Tablelands for bringing this matter to the attention of the House. We salute Jan Sharman, OAM.

LAND TAX

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.02 p.m.]: I address the House this evening on a matter of great concern to many of my constituents and also to constituents throughout the State. It is a matter I referred to the House in my inaugural speech in 2011 and also in a speech in 2012—that is, the matter of land tax. Land tax is a tax levied on owners of land in New South Wales as of midnight on 31 December each year. Properties liable for land tax include vacant land, investment properties, residential, commercial and also industrial. Many people who are forced to pay land tax are not exactly wealthy investors either. Many in my electorate have invested in properties rather than in the share market. However, because in some cases the rents from these properties have not kept pace with values, the amount they are forced to pay in land tax is incredible. It is the double whammy of the property market when people not only pay land tax on property but also are hit with substantial fees in stamp duty when purchasing, capital gains tax when they sell, and so it goes on. It is turning people off investing in property in this State. It is narrowing the rental market and sending up the cost of rents, particularly on new properties.

Last year's budget papers showed that New South Wales land tax revenues are forecast to rise at a greater rate than stamp duty revenues. Translated, that means that there is an expected 5.7 per cent annual average boost in land tax paid by New South Wales investors over the four-year forward period, rising from \$2.49 billion to \$3.11 billion in 2018-19. Against this backdrop, stamp duties remain at levels introduced three decades ago. It is simply not fair to the people owning investment properties who rely on rents received to fund their retirement. Rents cannot be constantly increased to absorb the increases in land tax, because people cannot afford them. The alternative is that people will be left worse off because they cannot afford to pay more rent. There is no doubt that the cost of land tax for investment residential properties needs to be examined.

I admit there is no quick answer to this problem, so I ask the Government to look seriously at reducing land tax and to encourage more people to invest in property. A report by Access Economics entitled "Options for practical land tax reform" was completed in 2012. I spoke on a couple of occasions about this report and it had all the evidence needed. There were many options. One option was that 60 per cent of land tax is collected on commercial properties which in turn is passed on in the form of the prices of goods and services that are purchased, and the other 40 per cent on residential properties will be passed on in the form of higher rents. Another option was a 0.25 per cent reduction over eight years to get rid of the tax completely. I think people are quite prepared to pay tax, but it should be a reasonable amount.

Data obtained some years ago by NSW Treasury showed that 56,958 businesses were liable for land tax on commercial properties alone, compared with 28,609 businesses that paid payroll tax in the 2004 tax year. When he came to power in 2005, former Premier Morris Iemma abolished property vendor duty as one of his first acts as the new leader. The response was positive, with the removal of the tax seen as a way of stimulating economic activity. The 2.25 per cent vendor duty introduced by then Treasurer Michael Egan was widely criticised by investors, unions and the real estate and building industries. When it comes to land tax, New South Wales is not competitive with other States and we are losing revenue as a result. On becoming Premier, Mr Iemma abolished the vendor tax. We should now

consider making land tax more equitable and fairer for property investors across the State.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! Before I call the member for Gosford, I acknowledge in the gallery this evening Sydney university pre-law students and welcome them to the Parliament. I hope they have an enjoyable evening. I thank Daniela Giorgi and Jeannie Douglass for the great job they do in Parliamentary Education giving people from all sectors of New South Wales an opportunity to come in and see this place "work".

WOY WOY PENINSULA

Ms KATHY SMITH (Gosford) [5.08 p.m.]: I speak on behalf of constituents in my electorate who are concerned about the occurrence of crime on the Woy Woy Peninsula. There has been a string of dangerous activities including teenagers pushing shopping trolleys off a multistorey car park, a house fire, the setting up of a roadblock at night made up of garbage bins and bikes, and a plethora of graffiti. Damage estimated to be in the thousands of dollars has been caused and the majority of residents are too scared to leave their vehicles in the Woy Woy commuter car park fearing that their cars will be broken into or vandalised.

With thousands of people commuting to the city each day, it is disappointing that they do not have a safe place to leave their vehicles. In one instance we learnt of a young person in the peninsula community who is well known to police. The police have had 24 interactions with this person in just one month. He has been arrested for a number of different offences but is still on our streets, going from offence to offence. Residents on the peninsula who are having issues with drug dealing, vandalism or other threatening behaviour have advised that in some instances when they have contacted the police they are simply advised to move out of the area.

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Residents on the Central Coast who are good neighbours and citizens should not have to move suburbs to feel safe in their own homes.

Time after time, police do not respond to reports of crime. In fact, they did not respond to a call from Parliament security personnel when an alarm was triggered in my electorate office, which is a mere 30 to 40 yards from the police station. Following instructions from Parliament security personnel, I waited for police to attend to clear the offices before I entered the premises. However, I was still waiting outside 30 to 40 minutes after the request was made. I eventually walked to the police station and asked for police to accompany me. Reluctantly—and rudely—they finally did their job.

A large portion of the community in this area consists of elderly people, and I am constantly receiving reports that residents are afraid to leave their homes, particularly after dark. I have also heard from young women who are not prepared to walk from their home to their cars. Facebook pages that have been given to me show youths posing with high-powered firearms, flares, fireworks and other explosives. Those pages have been available to view for quite some time, which leads me to ask: Who is monitoring this activity? Have the authorities approached these youths? Are the firearms legally obtained and licensed? While the posts are visible they are giving those individuals "street cred" with their peers.

The level of drug-related crime on the peninsula is of particular concern. The New South Wales Recorded Crime Statistics for October 2014 to September 2015 show the recorded drug-dealing charges in the Brisbane Water Local Area Command for this period are: one recorded offence for dealing, trafficking in narcotics; 11 recorded offences for dealing, trafficking in amphetamines; two offences for dealing, trafficking in other drugs; four recorded offences for dealing, trafficking in cannabis; and four recorded offences for dealing in ecstasy. There is a significant difference between the reported crime statistics of the Brisbane Water Local Area Command and the Tuggerah Lakes Local Area Command. Only 22 drug-dealing offences were recorded in the Brisbane Water Local Area Command while more than 150 offences were recorded in the Tuggerah Lakes Local Area Command.

The health of residents on the Woy Woy Peninsula is being affected by the stress and strain of living amongst out-of-control groups who are left to run rampant. People see drug dealing occurring every day and the relevant premises are being reported but nothing is done about it. Those reports are being ignored and people continue to watch drug transactions occur openly, week after week. It is time for police to act on all reports of drug dealing and other crimes that are reported to officers in Brisbane Water and to Crime Stoppers. It is no longer enough to tell us that police are watching those people. We want the activities stopped and the culprits removed from our streets. We do not want to be told we should move.

We are seeing the lives of our young people going down the drain, and it must stop. Members of my community have had enough of living restricted lives because of the activities of those uncontrolled minority groups. I call on the police of the Brisbane Water Local Area Command to start making our community a safer place. We should not be living in fear in the twenty-first century.

MONARO ELECTORATE COMMUNITY BUILDING PARTNERSHIP GRANTS

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) [5.12 p.m.]: Dozens of dynamic communities are dotted across the Monaro electorate and each has its own unique needs and ambitions. As the local member for the past five years, I have had an opportunity to become familiar with my communities and to understand them. I realised quickly that they are rich, diverse and vibrant. Recently I had the pleasure of travelling through the electorate of Monaro to congratulate many community-based organisations that were successful in obtaining funding from the 2015 Community Building Partnership program. This program is greatly valued because it helps to deliver the amenities that are important to the growth of small communities.

I was particularly excited to announce funding for the Cooma Basketball Association. We all know how cold the Monaro region is in winter, when temperatures plummet. A cold stadium is the last place we want to be on a weekend. The funding will go towards installing six heaters in the stadium to ensure that more people can enjoy the facility throughout the cooler months and remain active. It is often the little things that matter most to our communities. I look forward to visiting the stadium when the new heaters are installed—this time I promise my three-point shot technique will be much improved. I also travelled to Bywong, which is another great community in the Monaro. I announced an \$11,000 grant that will help the Bywong Community Association build a playground at its community hall for local children. This is the first time that children in Bywong will have their own playground to enjoy because at the moment the closest play equipment is 10 kilometres away in Bungendore, or at the Wamboin Hall.

The Stoney Creek Community Hall has been located in Carwoola for a number of years and the Carwoola Community Association has plans to construct a new veranda. It was a pleasure to meet with some of its members to discuss funding for their community hall. All members of Parliament enjoy meeting their community groups, and I particularly enjoyed meeting the 2nd Queanbeyan Scouts. Previously they received funding to improve the flooring at their hall. On this recent visit I announced funding to improve the security fencing that protects the hall and its members. The Monaro is a multicultural region and I believe it is the melting pot of multiculturalism. We saw many people from different nations working on the Snowy Hydro scheme, which is one of the greatest engineering feats of this nation. The family of John Sidoti were there.

Mr John Sidoti: No, they were cousins.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Importantly, a multicultural community now remains, which has a diverse combination of skills and entrepreneurship. It was a pleasure to visit the Macedonian community in Queanbeyan; they are an integral part of our community. I have had the opportunity to work with that community to improve their facilities. A large number of Macedonians who live in Queanbeyan are business people who own cafes and hair salons and they have representatives on the local council.

Through the Community Building Partnership program, a grant of \$75,000 was offered to build much-needed infrastructure and to carry out renovations to the kitchen and roof of the local hall. I congratulate Queanbeyan City Councillor Velice Trajanoski on his dedication in advocating for the Macedonian community.

My region extends to the snowy mountains. In Jindabyne, \$40,000 was allocated to Marine Rescue volunteers who have never had a base on Lake Jindabyne for training. The Community Building Partnership program has been able to support another amenity, which will be used well into the future. One of the most supported community amenities is the Australian Men's Shed Association and it was great to see funding go to the men's shed at Jindabyne. It is fantastic that this Government is supporting regional communities.

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.17 p.m.]: I take this opportunity to congratulate the Minister for Regional Development, and member for Monaro on his outstanding work serving his community. We would struggle to find a member more committed to their community than the member for Monaro, which is one of the most beautiful electorates in this State, covering towns such as Braidwood and Bungendore and the Snowy River. It is iconic for all Australians, not just for people in New South Wales. In return for receiving its grant, the Cooma Basketball Club can do a lot to help the Minister with his rather average basketball form. I hope it is better than his cricket. The 2nd Queanbeyan Scouts are men for all seasons and they could also lend some expertise to the member for Monaro. He mentioned that the diversity in his electorate—which is a result of the multiculturalism that thrives there—is important for Monaro, as it is for all State electorates. Monaro is known for its multiculturalism because of the Snowy Mountains scheme, which is one of the best things about it.

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MEDICINAL CANNABIS

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) [5.18 p.m.]: It gives me great pleasure to speak about the great work and advocacy and also the big struggle of Ben Oakley, a young gentleman in my electorate. Ben suffers from a rare disease known as stiff person syndrome. Ben has been advocating, for some time now, for the legalisation of medicinal cannabis. This is an issue that is near and dear to my heart. I want to see Parliament progress this issue. I want to see members from across the political divide agitate this issue and advocate for it. I am very proud that the Victorian Government, in an Australian first, recently legalised access to locally manufactured medicinal cannabis products for use in exceptional circumstances from 2017. I understand and I support the fact that the Government is taking some steps in this regard here in New South Wales, but I urge it to accelerate the process and take the lead from Victoria.

We need to get this right. Like many others, my constituent Ben Oakley has suffered for too long while trying to get access to a drug that gives him some quality of life and some relief from pain and that reduces the stress for his family and loved ones. I want to champion in this place the legalisation of cannabis for those who need it most—not just for those with very severe and life-threatening conditions but also for those with chronic pain. This should not be just for the terminally ill; it should also be for those who, every day, suffer enormous pain. The Victorian Law Reform Commission recommended that eligibility for the scheme be based on the following conditions and corresponding symptoms: severe muscle spasms or severe pain from multiple sclerosis; severe pain, nausea, vomiting or wasting arising from cancer or HIV/AIDS; severe seizures resulting from epileptic conditions where other treatment options have failed—this is very similar to what Ben has experienced—and for patients with severe chronic pain, where two specialists have granted approval.

I come from a health education background. No-one will argue more strongly than I for strong controls on illegal substances. I am not in the game of opening up drugs and making it easier for people who do not need them to access illegal drugs. To be very blunt, I am about making sure that those individuals who need to access drugs such as medicinal cannabis can do so without feeling like criminals.

If our friends and colleagues in the Victorian Parliament can do this we should be able to do it in New South Wales in 2016. The Government made it clear that the Victorian Law Reform Commission did extensive work in this area. We want to make sure that we take the lead from the Victorians—not because we are in the game of copying what they are doing, but because, hopefully, we are all in the game of helping people across Australia who are living with chronic pain and terminal illnesses and suffering each and every day. We should be providing them—in a controlled, legal and highly-regulated environment—the opportunity to get some relief, and providing their families with the opportunity to get some respite and relief.

This issue is very important to me and I know it is an issue that is important to many members in this place. I hope that all of us will encourage the Government to accelerate the reforms that it is currently looking at, in order to provide some relief for those who need it most.

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.23 p.m.]: I thank the member for Keira for his genuine advocacy on behalf of his constituent Ben Oakley. Stiff person syndrome is a very rare disease of the nervous system, which leads to progressive muscle stiffness. There is immense pain associated with the condition. As the member for Keira said, the importance of the opportunity for someone suffering such pain to participate in a trial of medicinal cannabis cannot be understated. That is why the New South Wales Government is investing \$9 million over the next five years in a clinical trial to undertake research into the effects of medicinal cannabis. The trials take time because they must meet national and international standards and best practice. All of us in this place want this trial to occur so that we can better understand the appropriate use of cannabis and cannabis-derived products for medical purposes to help people like Ben.

Private members' statements concluded.

Pursuant to resolution matter of public importance proceeded with.

SYDNEY METRO NORTHWEST

Matter of Public Importance

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) [5.26 p.m.]: It is a pity that the member for Keira is leaving the Chamber because it strikes me that he would be very interested in the progress of the Sydney Metro Northwest and the great work of the Government in delivering the biggest infrastructure project in the Southern Hemisphere.

Mr Greg Warren: He is not leaving; he is still here.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: I see that the member for Keira has returned to the Chamber.

Mr Ryan Park: I wanted some speaking notes.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: The member for Keira wants some notes. He does not need notes about this issue. He just needs to get up and say that this is the most wonderful thing that has ever occurred in New South Wales and that it is a pity the Labor Government did not do it when it had the chance.

Mr Matt Kean: They shelved it.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: The Labor Government did not shelve it once; I think it shelved it about eight times.

Mr Ryan Park: Don't worry; I will go through it blow by blow in a minute.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: I am sure the member for Keira will go through it blow by blow. In September last year I addressed this House to recognise another milestone of the North West Rail Link—as it was then called. It is now called Sydney Metro Northwest. One of the tunnel-boring machines had just broken through at Epping. Tonight I am pleased to report that all the tunnelling for the Sydney metro for the stage comprising Rouse Hill to Epping has now been completed. When dealing with a government that is so expert in delivering projects, members will not be surprised to learn that this project is—they can complete the sentence—under budget and ahead of time. I have attended almost every tunnelling breakthrough along the Sydney metro line. I have done that because this is such an overdue, vital piece of transport infrastructure. Every breakthrough that I have attended is a reminder of the achievement of this Government in finally delivering what the Labor Government promised yet failed to do.

Mr Greg Warren: The highest unemployment.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: One of the great things about this project is the employment opportunities that it offers. When you look at the new yards at Kurrajong for the servicing of trains you see the enormous employment opportunities that have been relocated to north-west Sydney. There are lots of new housing estates out there where people can live close to those employment opportunities. The Sydney metro presents major employment opportunities. Labor had previously promised to build the rail line to the north-west as part of its long history of broken infrastructure promises to the people of New South Wales. To its credit, the Labor Party was very good at producing glossy election flyers about projects that it promised to build. What Labor was not so good at was actually building them. Labor first made a promise to build a rail line to the north-west in 1998, with completion due in 2010. The 2010 deadline passed long ago and it is no surprise that Labor never actually built anything. The Labor Government delivered virtually no new infrastructure in 16 years.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! I remind the member for Campbelltown that he is on three calls to order.

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Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: Sure, there is the Chatswood to Epping rail line, but Labor left the job half done. Labor promised that the line would go from Chatswood to Parramatta but then ran out of money and it only got as far as Epping. The Baird Government does not leave projects half done. We keep our promises and we build major infrastructure. That is why this is a government that I am proud to be part of. There is a reason that we have more cranes in the sky at the moment than any city except Dubai. It is because the Baird Government is getting on with the job of building vital infrastructure for New South Wales. We keep our promises and we get things done.

I am proud to say that in January at Cherrybrook I attended the final breakthrough for the Sydney Metro Northwest with the Premier and the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. I was proud to have them visit my electorate for this milestone. This is the largest public transport infrastructure project under construction in Australia. The tunnelling contract has supported more than 900 jobs. It is ahead of schedule and \$300 million under budget. Our \$8.3 billion Sydney Metro Northwest will be open to customers by 2019. With eight new railway stations, 4,000 new commuter car parking spaces and a train every four minutes in peak hour, the people of the north-west will finally get the accessibility to the city that they have been waiting for all these years. I can tell you that I have been to Cherrybrook station and it is a very welcome project indeed for local residents.

The Sydney Metro Northwest will allow for 14 million fewer car trips each year. During the two-hour morning peak there will be 12,000 fewer car trips on our roads. As part of the metro link, the Epping to Chatswood line will be transformed into a next generation metro. Commuters between Epping and Chatswood will have more than triple the number of trains that they have today. But it does not stop there. By 2024 we will have completed the second part of this project, with a new tunnel running under

Sydney Harbour. The metro will extend as part of Sydney Metro City and Southwest line, running through the city, Waterloo and Campsie to Bankstown and, hopefully, all the way to Liverpool. Once completed, the metro will completely transform public transport for Sydney commuters. It will finally bring the transport system of this city to a world-class standard. I congratulate the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure and the Premier on delivering such an outstanding project to my electorate, and I look forward to the opening of the first half of the Sydney metro in 2019.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) [5.31 p.m.]: It gives me great pleasure to talk about public transport and infrastructure in general. I am sure the member for Epping knows about a project called the Lane Cove Tunnel. He may or may not drive on that road occasionally but it is one small project. Another project that members opposite may have heard of—again, it is a fairly small infrastructure project—is the Eastern Distributor. I have seen many of my good Tory friends driving on it in cars that are a lot flashier than mine. That small infrastructure project was delivered by Labor. Another tunnel that is used fairly frequently—I would say certainly by my good friend the member for Balmain but also by many others in the inner west; I am sure the member for Drummoyne has used it—is the Cross City Tunnel.

Mr John Sidoti: Went broke. The Lane Cove Tunnel went broke.

Mr RYAN PARK: I will talk about projects that went broke in a minute. The Cross City Tunnel—a small project—was delivered by Labor. Turning briefly to public transport, the highly successful Metrobuses led to a 45 per cent increase in capacity on bus lines across Sydney. I know that many people from the eastern suburbs like them, as do those in the north-west. That small project was delivered by a Labor Government. All the transitways—small projects—were delivered by Labor. Over the past 20 years the vast majority of easy access upgrades across hundreds of stations in all electorates—small projects—have been delivered by Labor.

Mr Mark Coure: Point of order: My point of order is relevance. The member for Keira is not discussing the matter of public importance.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! I uphold the point of order. The matter of public importance raised by the member for Epping is about the Sydney Metro Northwest. I do not believe the member from Keira has touched upon that subject. I draw him back to the topic of the discussion, which is the Sydney Metro Northwest.

Mr RYAN PARK: I note that my good friend the chair of the Independent Commission Against Corruption committee spoke about a range of infrastructure projects and emphasised about how bad Labor was in government. I am trying to give a sense of history and an understanding of reality.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! The member for Keira will not canvass my ruling.

Mr RYAN PARK: I would never do that.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): The member will be out on his ear if he does.

Mr RYAN PARK: I certainly do not want to be out on my ear. The Sydney Metro Northwest project is very important. It will not only bring huge benefits for those in the north-west but also provide relief down the line. My good friend the member for Campbelltown is in the Chamber. As a resident of a growth suburb in a growth region, he knows better than most how important the South West Rail Link is. The South West Rail Link commenced under Labor. Those opposite will not take credit for that. I notice also that my good friend the member for Swansea is in the Chamber. Her electorate did really well out of the infrastructure budget—a big fat zero. Thank you. The people of Swansea have been very supportive of the Liberal Government—not. The Northwest Rail Link is a very important project. It will combine with the projects delivered by the Labor Government to relieve congestion on other parts of the rail line and

ensure that people can move around our global city.

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) [5.36 p.m.]: It is my understanding that the majority of people in New South Wales are trying to forget history but unfortunately we have been reminded of it again this afternoon by the member for Keira. As the member for Epping said, this is one of the most wonderful things to happen in New South Wales. He should have gone on to say that we did it, and we did it as soon as we could do it.

Mr John Sidoti: As Frank Sinatra would say.

Mr MARK TAYLOR: What a great thing for north-western Sydney and, importantly, for the people of Seven Hills. The Sydney Metro Northwest brings something most important to the families of north-western Sydney. People want to be able to get home to their families at night at a reasonable hour. They want to get home and have dinner with their families. They want to get home and see their friends. They want to get home and play sport and socialise. They want to know that when they start their morning commute there will be a reliable service. The provision of great infrastructure and transport systems in this great State will allow them to live their lives and enjoy their lives. What does an \$8.3 billion project as big as this one deliver? It will provide a fantastic service. We will have eight new railway stations, 4,000 commuter car parking spots, a "turn up and go" service and, importantly, a train every four minutes. People can throw away those old paper timetables—

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Mr John Sidoti: Driverless trains.

Mr MARK TAYLOR: Turn up and hop on a driverless train; reliability, cleanliness and an ultra-modern service. The people of north-western Sydney deserve this service, after all those years of broken promises from the former Labor Government. This Government is building the infrastructure it believes is needed for the people of north-western Sydney. This service will carry 10,000 commuters every hour during the peak period, resulting in 14 million fewer car trips every year.

On 8 February 2015, two prototypes for the new Sydney Metro stations were unveiled at the location for the future Cudgegong Road station. One prototype is for an underground station and the other the above-ground concourse. These ultra-modern facilities are well deserved by the people of north-western Sydney. Key features include interactive user displays and improved accessibility measures to deliver a world-class user experience for customers. Other features include the energy-efficient leaf design features of station roofs for above-ground concourses. This service sounds almost too good to be true, but it is happening in north-western Sydney. The tunnels are built and the viaducts are in the air. This is the greatest infrastructure project for New South Wales.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) [5.40 p.m.], in reply: I do not know what contribution the member for Keira made to the discussion on this matter of public interest but by the conclusion of his remarks he acknowledged that the Sydney Metro North West is a project that will benefit the whole of the Sydney region and needs to be delivered to relieve current congestion in the Sydney metropolitan area. Members ought to be proud of this project. As the member for Seven Hills said, we are engaging in the delivery of a state-of-the-art transport system and infrastructure around each of the new stations.

I attended an Epping Chamber of Commerce breakfast this morning where representatives of the Sydney Metro North West talked to members of the chamber of commerce who raised issues relating to the delivery of this project. Whenever there is a retrofit of a public transport system—especially one that should have been delivered many years ago—there is inconvenience for local communities. But my perception is that the local community understands that this project is essential and it would be negligent for us not to deliver this infrastructure. The Government recognises this and is fundamentally wedded to the idea that we need to provide infrastructure in the form of a rail system for our future generations. People need to be able to get home from work to their families within a reasonable time. Recognising that

people want an efficient service, we need an integrated public transport system.

The objective of delivering this project is predicated on the basis that we are improving the quality of people's lives. People are prepared to put up with inconvenience during the construction phase of the project because they see the long-term benefits. A great aspect of the way that governments deliver projects now—and which is a fundamental aspect of the way this Government delivers projects—is the communication plans that are adopted to ensure that all residents know exactly what is happening in their neighbourhood, such as, the use of tunnel-boring machines and earthmoving equipment. During a project, a lengthy process of communication is engaged in to inform the local area. I recommend this project to the Parliament and I will continue to speak about it in this place. This project is for the benefit of my electorate and for the Greater Sydney region.

Discussion concluded.

Pursuant to resolution matter of public importance proceeded with.

OVARIAN CANCER

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) [5.44 p.m.]: Today is indeed a very important day. Ovarian cancer is diagnosed annually in nearly a quarter of a million women globally and is responsible for 140,000 deaths each year. Statistics show that just 45 per cent of women with ovarian cancer are likely to survive for five years. That is why today I recognise that Wednesday 24 February is Teal Ribbon Day. Teal is the international colour for ovarian cancer, and Teal Ribbon Day is a way to show support for ovarian cancer awareness and for research and to recognise those affected.

Raising awareness of ovarian cancer is most important. Today on Teal Ribbon Day Ovarian Cancer Australia invites New South Wales parliamentarians to encourage women everywhere to Know Ovarian Cancer. With knowledge comes power, and women have the power not only to give themselves the best possible chance of beating this disease but also to change the story of this harrowing disease.

In Australia, four women are diagnosed with ovarian cancer every day. It could be you, your friend, your partner, your sister, your mother, your grandmother or your daughter. Unlike more common cancers, there are quite significant challenges, as the disease has been largely overlooked and unfortunately is underfunded at this point. Each year in Australia around 1,400 women are diagnosed with ovarian cancer and more than 1,000 of them will die from the disease. Approximately 75 per cent of women are diagnosed at an advanced stage, when the cancer has spread and is difficult to treat successfully. At the moment, only 43 per cent of women with ovarian cancer will be alive five years after diagnosis. But if ovarian cancer is diagnosed at an early stage, women have an 80 per cent chance of being alive and well after five years.

More women need to be diagnosed at an early stage when ovarian cancer is very treatable. That is why everyone needs to know more about ovarian cancer and, most importantly, its symptoms. Every woman needs to know the symptoms of ovarian cancer. Symptoms of ovarian cancer can often be confused with less serious conditions such as gastrointestinal disorders. Symptoms include increased abdominal size, persistent bloating, difficulty eating, feeling full quickly, abdominal or pelvic pain and needing to pass urine more urgently or more frequently.

I wish to relate a story of a person I met whilst I was doorknocking during the 2015 election campaign. I was invited into the home of Carolyn Bear. She was making beautiful trinkets and I asked her why she was making them. She told me she was making them to raise funds for ovarian cancer research. Carolyn's daughter Kylie died from ovarian cancer at 34 years of age. She was a psychologist studying for a PhD and newly married. Kylie is one of those unfortunate statistics. She was originally misdiagnosed with irritable bowel syndrome.

Carolyn and her husband, Rob, have raised more than \$100,000 for cancer research, with more than \$60,000 specifically for ovarian cancer research. This does not include last Friday's event, the Kylie Bear Memorial golf day, held in the electorate of the member for Oxley at South West Rocks, where \$17,000 was raised for ovarian research. I know the member for Oxley is a supporter of ovarian cancer research. Carolyn is an ambassador for ovarian cancer research and I could not think of a better person to hold that role. As I was leaving Carolyn's house something she said has stuck with me. Carolyn said: "I recently retired, Yasmin. I was preparing to become a grandmother; instead I lost my daughter."

There are five key things to remember on Teal Ribbon Day: all women are at risk of ovarian cancer; awareness of the early warning signs of the disease could save lives; diagnosis at an early stage vastly improves a woman's chance of survival; ovarian cancer is often diagnosed at a late stage; and many women mistakenly believe the cervical smear test, or Pap test, will detect ovarian cancer, but unfortunately that is not true.

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Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Cootamundra—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.49 p.m.]: I speak to this important motion concerning Teal Ribbon Day. The Government submitted a matter of public importance on the same subject recognising that the entire Parliament realises the importance of Teal Ribbon Day. Each member has expressed sincere thoughts for all of those women, their families and friends who have been subjected to this dreadful affliction of ovarian cancer. February is recognised as ovarian cancer awareness month in order to raise awareness of ovarian cancer and to recognise the women, their families and friends that are affected by this insidious cancer.

The last Wednesday in February is Teal Ribbon Day. It is the international colour for ovarian cancer. I am pleased to hear from the member for Swansea about the fundraising drive that occurred in the electorate of the hardworking member for Oxley. It raised considerable funds for this wonderful cause. The gynaecological cancers that are the most common, and the most common causes of cancer deaths, are cancers of the ovary, uterus and cervix. The relative survival rate for ovarian cancer is lower than for other gynaecological cancers. The five-year survival rate for ovarian cancer is about 44 per cent overall, but is 86 per cent where the disease is localised at the time of diagnosis. The symptoms are so broad ranging and nonspecific it can be difficult to diagnose. A lot of women will put up with uncomfortable abdominal swelling, pelvic and back pain, and constipation thinking it is part of the menstrual cycle or perimenopausal symptoms. By the time it is investigated it is often too late. There is no screening for ovarian cancer currently available in Australia.

The member for Swansea spoke of some of the causes of ovarian cancer and it is interesting that the contraceptive pill, much maligned by those involved with breast cancer, is one of the saviours in ovarian cancer. When you are a woman it often feels as if you are damned if you do and damned if you don't. You have to take some action and control what goes on in your body and sometimes it is just the luck of the draw. If there is any way that we can implement screening for ovarian cancer in Australia it will be progress. This is where fundraising drives and encouragement and support of appeals become so important. A future screening program arising from research is not an impossible task. In recent years in Australia there have been breakthroughs by our brilliant scientists relating to immunisation for cancers. I believe there is a way of screening ovarian cancer but it is not known to us now. It is incumbent on us all to continue to support and encourage people to donate. It is the responsibility of governments throughout the nation and the world to support any science in relation to screening for ovarian cancer.

I encourage women to make sure they go to their doctor if they are experiencing possible symptoms of ovarian cancer. The doctor can suggest several scans to look for cysts, tumours or other changes. I cannot sufficiently express the Government's desire to one day see an immunisation system in place to prevent ovarian cancer from occurring. I support the motion before the House. Our thoughts are with those people who are subject to ovarian cancer or who have lost family members to it.

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) [5.54 p.m.]: I support the matter of public importance and my

colleague, the wonderful member for Swansea, in recognising that Wednesday 24 February is Teal Ribbon Day. I acknowledge the contribution of the member for Cootamundra. Today we wear a teal ribbon as it is the international colour for ovarian cancer. Teal Ribbon Day is a way to demonstrate our support for ovarian cancer research and awareness. It is also an occasion to recognise those affected by this disease. I urge members to get behind local efforts in their community and support awareness-raising events. In the Blue Mountains this coming weekend there is a disco for mums and kids, "Dancing for a cause", that will be held in Yellow Rock on Saturday and on Sunday the Blackheath community will host an "Afternoon Teal" at the Ivanhoe Hotel. I thank Rachel Evans at Ray White, Blackheath, and other amazing locals for their efforts in organising these events.

The personal stories of women who have ovarian cancer or who have a loved one with ovarian cancer attest to the significance of sharing words of wisdom. Today, due to the constraints of time, I pay tribute to one incredible woman, Sue Morrison from the Blue Mountains. Today her sons went to school wearing teal nail polish. Her daughter Kittani, full of love and positivity, regularly holds ovarian cancer awareness-raising events. Sue says:

I always expected to be a doddering old grandma one day but a diagnosis of advanced ovarian cancer [OC] exactly two years ago took away that option. I knew recurrent OC was not curable, especially when it recurs within six months of treatment ending, but around a third of women live with advanced OC for five or more years. I have met quite a few of them.

Everyone's story and prognosis is different. It is a tricky cancer that is hard to diagnose and treat because it behaves differently to many common cancers, but its trajectory is somewhat predictable, if not all removable at initial surgery. You can expect multiple recurrences requiring second, third and more lines of chemotherapy, with shorter and shorter periods in between each recurrence, until chemo is no longer effective. Ongoing treatment is often hard on women and hard on their families.

I was recently diagnosed with my second recurrence and will soon start third line chemo. Median survival in this situation is less than a year, considerably less with no treatment, and so far I have been on the wrong side of the median. It is my 57th birthday next week ...

That was yesterday.

... and I don't expect to see the next one after that. I am at peace with this outcome and my family is amazingly resilient, but in the limited time I have left I will do everything I can to ensure other women, other mothers, do not have to go through the same experience. Ovarian cancer can happen to any woman at any age regardless of medical family history; even in the absence of known risk factors. I had none!

If a woman in your life is experiencing vague but persistent abdominal symptoms plus unusual fatigue, don't panic, but don't delay getting it checked out because if it's cancer it could already be well advanced. The earlier the diagnosis, the better the prognosis. I put off GP visits because I was too busy. Please buy a teal ribbon this week or next at any Chem-mart Pharmacy to help fund research, support and awareness programs. I have still got plenty of fight left in me yet for online environmental campaigning and those politicians won't know what hit them!

Go well, Sue. This is for you and all the courageous women amongst us.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley) [5.58 p.m.], by leave: I join with my parliamentary colleagues to speak on this important motion concerning ovarian cancer Teal Ribbon Day. The member contributions have highlighted the fact that every day in Australia four women will die from ovarian cancer. There are 1,400 diagnosed throughout the country at any one time. The five-year survival rate of 48 per cent is one

of the worst performing results in terms of cancer survival. At a local level I acknowledge the work of Jason Bear. He loved his cousin enormously and was devastated when Kylie died in 2012. For the past three years he has been instrumental in the South West Rocks ovarian cancer charity golf day at the South West Rocks Country Club.

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In the first year they raised \$10,000, in 2015 they raised \$12,500, and in 2016 they have raised \$17,000. That is a magnificent contribution and it demonstrates the incredible generosity, heart and spirit of the people of the Macleay region and South West Rocks and of Jason's colleagues and friends. It is an incredible effort.

However, we must ensure that the funds raised as a result of these local efforts reach the research scientists. As Parliamentary Secretary for Rural and Regional Health, I was always insistent when having conversations with groups such as the Cancer Council that the funds raised reach the scientists. We have 73 cancer charities in New South Wales alone. Given that, we must work with all of them and everyone else who has a passion to raise funds for research and to ensure that as much funding as possible finds its way to the researchers. It is the scientists who undertake the groundbreaking research that will allow for better ovarian cancer diagnosis. We must also conduct public relations campaigns to raise awareness so that people do not think that the pain in their tummy is not serious. Early diagnosis is vital, and in Kylie's case the misdiagnosis of irritable bowel syndrome was particularly devastating. I thank members for their contributions to this debate. Everyone looks resplendent wearing their teal ribbons. I also commend the people working in this area. We must ensure that we channel as much funding as possible to scientists so that they can undertake this vital research.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) [6.01 p.m.], by leave: The member for Swansea correctly described the impact of this disease on families. My sister passed away as a result of having ovarian cancer. The description that the member for Blue Mountains provided about the suffering involved in this disease was extremely accurate. It affects the victims' families, and it affected my sister's family very badly. I still miss her today.

By leave, speech incorporated in Hansard.

I rise to support the Matter of Public Importance raised by the Member for Swansea. The Member correctly identifies that ovarian cancer is an invidious cancer, which may strike at any family. I have some significant personal experience in relation to ovarian cancer in my own family. Some three years ago, my sister Trish had a wonderfully productive career as a very well-respected primary Principal and teacher, ended by ovarian cancer. The Member for Blue Mountains correctly describes the manner in which ovarian cancer progressively destroys those women which it strikes. From its first diagnosis some three and a half years before she passed away, to her final ending at Mt Druitt Hospital, I watched my sister suffer and progressively deteriorate at the hands of this illness. My immediate family is a very close-knit family and the impact of her passing struck us all very hard. This was a woman who had lived a very productive and valuable life. She had so much to offer, both to her own family and the school where she was the Primary principal. To this day, her husband and two adopted children grieve for her passing. All I can say is that the most important thing we do on a day like today is acknowledge that this is a disease which we all need to fight because of its enormous impact on families. Today is a day in which I say to my sister, Trish I miss you.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) [6.02 p.m.], in reply: I thank all members who contributed to this discussion. The member for Cootamundra raised the importance of fundraising. This Parliament has got behind the ovarian cancer fundraising campaign in the past and it will continue to do so in the future because we appreciate the importance of funding medical research. I thank my dear friend the member for Blue Mountains for her contribution. There is good work happening in her wonderful, close community.

Of course, communities across the State are also working hard to raise funds. As I pointed out earlier, the community of the member for Oxley is making an enormous fundraising effort. The member reminded us that country communities stick together, and for the right reasons.

I also thank the member for Epping for his contribution. His loss is enormous. His sister was obviously a beautiful person and was lucky to have such a beautiful brother. I remind members that tomorrow morning I will be co-hosting the 2016 New South Wales Parliamentary Morning Tea along with the Hon. Pru Goward in her role as the Minister for Medical Research in the hope of raising awareness among our fellow lawmakers and much-needed funds for Ovarian Cancer Australia. Representatives of Ovarian Cancer Australia will be at the morning tea tomorrow along with a woman who has ovarian cancer. I encourage all members to attend the morning tea and, once again, thank those who participated in this discussion.

Discussion concluded.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to resolution, at 6.05 p.m. until
Thursday 25 February 2016 at 10.00 a.m.**
