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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday 17 March 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.

INCLOSED LANDS, CRIMES AND LAW ENFORCEMENT AMENDMENT (INTERFERENCE) BILL 2016

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

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

DRUG MISUSE AND TRAFFICKING AMENDMENT (DRUG EXHIBITS) BILL 2016

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

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Notices of Motions

General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) given.

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LAW ENFORCEMENT (POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES) AMENDMENT (SNIFFER DOGS—REPEAL OF POWERS) BILL 2016

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

Second Reading

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) [10.11 a.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

In New South Wales the use of sniffer dogs by police on public transport, at festivals and in bars is not about effective drug control. It is about police intimidation and harassment. In bringing the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Amendment (Sniffer Dogs—Repeal of Powers) Bill 2016 to

this place I am delivering on an election promise made to the people of the electorate of Newtown that if elected I would introduce a bill into this House to repeal the New South Wales drug dog program. The evidence is in and it is clear that this program, first introduced under the former Labor Government and continued and expanded under this Liberal Coalition Government, is a failure. As such, this bill seeks to bring an end to wasting public money on an ineffective program that simply does not work, and is nothing more than this Government, or the government of the day, using the NSW Police Force so that it can look as if it is being tough on drugs and law and order.

The object of this bill is to amend the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act to limit the use of drug detection dogs to those circumstances where police officers have a warrant for their use. It does this by omitting part 2, division 2 of that Act, which provides for general powers relating to the use of drug detection dogs. This removes the power to use these dogs on public transport, at festivals and in bars unless a warrant is obtained. A warrant for use of dogs can still be obtained in circumstances where a police officer has reasonable grounds for believing people in a public place may be committing drug offences, and makes an application to an authorised officer for a warrant.

The Greens believe the current broad use of drug detection dogs in public places is an infringement of basic civil liberties. We are concerned that the use of police drug dogs is an intimidatory tactic, used to discriminate and to create fear. We are also concerned that funding the Drug Dog Detection Program is a highly ineffective use of public money as the evidence continues to show that drug detection dogs do not work. In 2015, the rate of false positives given by dogs averaged 75 per cent. That means that in three out of every four cases the dogs got it wrong, and members of the public were forced to undergo intrusive and humiliating public searches with no drugs found.

<4>

The most recent expansion of the drug dog program was to allow the dogs to operate on the entire Sydney train network. That expansion has been a clear policy failure, with 4,925 searches conducted between 1 January 2014 and 18 May 2015 of which 3,948—or more than 80 per cent—were false positives. Any other police program that was getting it wrong 75 per cent to 80 per cent of the time would be shut down immediately, and that should be the case with the drug dog program. Data obtained by my Greens colleague in the other place Mr David Shoebridge makes it clear that the effectiveness of the program and the targeting of the program to certain areas are cause for grave concern. This information was reported in the *Huffington Post* in November 2015:

In 2014, 14,593 searches were conducted after a positive indication from a drug dog. Of those searches, only 3,830 found drugs meaning 10,763, or nearly 74 per cent, found no illicit drugs.

In the same year, 624 strip searches were conducted after positive indications from a drug dog, with only 233 yielding illicit drugs. That left 391 strip searches, or almost 63 per cent, where no drugs were found. In searches conducted by the Police Transport Command, only 20 per cent of searches found drugs.

That means more than 10,000 innocent people in this State had their rights violated and faced unjustified harassment in public spaces within the past year and nearly 400 people—391 to be exact—were subjected to the humiliation and trauma of being strip searched by police with no justification. We have been contacted by a former festival director of a national Australian music festival about what this looks like in practice. She described her firsthand experience of police action against drugs at festivals and major music events:

I was present at every festival, always around the gates before and at opening time, and watched every time with absolute dismay and horror as the police and their dogs intimidated the young kids (mostly 18-25 y.o.) coming to the festival to have a good time. So many of those kids were stripped searched by the police as a result of a sniffing dog. And then let go.

In 2013, in cases where drugs were found as a result of this program, most were small amounts for

personal use, with only 2.44 per cent of positive searches resulting in a supply conviction. It is not just the ineffectiveness of this program that is of concern in relation to intimidation and harassment; it is also the worrying trend of where the most searches take place. As reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald* in December 2014—again based on data obtained by The Greens—"searches are not spread evenly across the city, with people at Redfern train station far more likely to be searched than those at Central or Kings Cross stations, even though Redfern searches are less likely to identify drugs".

In 2013, 1,000 searches were conducted at Redfern station. This meant that people were 6.5 times more likely to be searched at Redfern than at Central, even though Redfern has the highest false positive rate for sniffer dog indications of any local area command. We need to ask why. Why have successive New South Wales governments failed to act on unjustified drug searches as a result of sniffer dogs? Given that far fewer than 1 per cent of New South Wales illicit drug users are found with drugs during a drug operation—and that from 2007 to 2010, when New South Wales doubled the number of searches, we saw an increase in the rate of illicit drug use from 12.1 per cent to 13.8 per cent—it is clear that this is about something other than drug detection. It is certainly not about harm minimisation and catching the big dealers.

We also need to ask: Why Redfern? Redfern is an area with a long, strong and proud connection with Sydney's Aboriginal community, who have consistently faced the brunt of over-policing and disproportionate law and order agendas. It is also an area with a high proportion of young people and students, and a station used by many who live in nearby public and community housing, all of whom are more likely to struggle to find the resources available to fight such harassment, intimidation and fear.

<5>

It is simply unacceptable. It is unsurprising, though very welcome, that the Redfern Legal Centre has been in contact with our office to express support for the bill. The ineffective nature of the drug dog program is not new and is not unknown. Yet we have seen successive New South Wales governments persist with this program. In 2006, the NSW Ombudsman released a review of the Police Powers (Drug Detection Dogs) Act 2001, which was introduced under Labor Minister for Police Michael Costa. The subsequent review by the NSW Ombudsman recommended decisively an immediate end to the program. The Ombudsman stated:

Despite the best efforts of police officers, the use of drug detection dogs has proven to be an ineffective tool for detecting drug dealers. Overwhelmingly, the use of drug detection dogs has led to public searches of individuals in which no drugs were found, or to the detection of (mostly young) adults in possession of small amounts of cannabis for personal use.

These findings have led us to question whether the drug dogs act will ever provide a fair, efficacious and cost effective tool to target drug supply. Given this, we have recommended that the starting point, when considering this report, is to review whether the drug dogs act should be retained at all.

Shamefully, despite the unambiguous recommendation from the 2006 review to end the drug dog program, successive New South Wales governments have continued to waste public money on it. The New South Wales Council for Civil Liberties has expressed serious concerns about this program. It is supportive of this bill and has written to our office to say:

The NSW Council for Civil Liberties has for years argued that the drug detection dogs program in New South Wales is a costly failure.

It targets users not the criminal suppliers. The dogs have a high rate of false positive causing public embarrassment to many. It provokes persons carrying drugs to consume them sometimes at great risk to health. It results in few convictions. There is no evidence that it deters drug use.

The program continues more for its visibility—police being seen to be doing something. We

support this bill.

The impact on people's rights is not just felt by civil liberty advocacy organisations; it is felt by individuals in our community every day. One wrote to our office and said:

On a practical level, there is empirical evidence that the use of sniffer dogs does not meet its declared objectives, and is a waste of public funds and police resources. On a more fundamental level, the use of sniffer dogs—and the policing approach more generally than it signifies—represents an area of irrationality and even insanity in our society, that desperately needs changing. ...we know that guiltless citizens often feel intimidated by such policing, and actually the Police Force are doing themselves a disservice; rather than emphasising "community policing", as they pay lip service to, they are alienating another generation of youth through such practices.

Stories from those subjected to arbitrary searches have found their way into the media. The *Vice* magazine, reporting on the use of the drug dog program at the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, quoted one individual who was intimidated by the searches inflicted on them by the New South Wales police. I quote:

"The handler was on the other side of the crowd. He made eye contact with me. I was nowhere near the dog, but as I was walking in and joined the line he walked through the crowd towards me. He put his hand on my backpack before the dog even indicated and then sat down."

It goes on to say that the person being searched, Tom, was then:

... led away by police officers to a tent nearby, where he was subjected to persistent questioning and his bag searched. He was then told to take off his clothes and squat before the officers. No drugs were found on him, as he didn't have any.

I am pleased to say that the NSW Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby has expressed support for The Greens' bill that I have introduced today. It notes the effects that the drug dog program has had on the relationship between the New South Wales police and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex [LGBTI] community. It writes:

...ensuring that the LGBTI community can maintain confidence in the New South Wales police requires constant efforts at improving responsiveness, both at an operational level and through reforms to policies and legal frameworks, including an end to the use of the drug detection dogs at events and venues, which have been shown to be ineffective in policing and harmful to individuals.

I have heard countless stories from the young, elderly, people with disability, and non-English speaking backgrounds about the fear they have felt when confronted by dark blue overall wearing police with dogs at train stations and on our streets.

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While it has been a long-term position of The Greens to oppose the use of sniffer dogs in our community, I also have direct experience of why this program just does not work. It was 3 July 2008 and I was having a drink with friends at the Bank Hotel in Newtown. I was due to meet my partner a bit later at the Coopers Hotel in King Street. While we were having a drink a group of police officers with sniffer dogs came into the bar in full uniform. The tension rose, the feeling of threat, fear, guilt and intimidation was palpable within the pub. A short time after the police dogs left the Bank Hotel I received a call from a friend who was with my partner at the Coopers Hotel. He sounded shaken up and said I should come down to the Coopers Hotel straightaway because my partner had been arrested.

I left my drink and raced down to King Street to see my friend standing on the footpath and my

partner looking pale, in pain and sitting in handcuffs on the ground outside the pub. There were a number of police around, a few of them searching a man and having him drop his jeans in the public space. At this point, you might think I will tell you that my partner had a joint on him, or was carrying a few pills. That is not the case. All he had in his possession was his Law Society of New South Wales solicitor's card. Neither the man in the pub who was searched nor my partner had any drugs on them. My partner was charged and had his rib broken by the police as a result of his offering legal assistance. In this case the charges were dismissed by the magistrate, including the requirement for the police to pay legal costs. We were successful eventually in a Supreme Court action, with a verdict in favour of my partner, and were awarded damages.

What has always concerned me about this incident is that not everybody who suffers this kind of intimidation is a lawyer and has the ability to engage in a fight for justice. The Greens will continue to stand up in Parliament and work with supporters in the community to call for laws that respect our civil liberties and to end programs that are ineffective and aim to harass and intimidate people. Too many people face this intimidation, and it must stop. It is entirely reasonable for police to use drug dogs operations when necessary, if they are able to get a warrant. It is not reasonable for them to be used without a warrant and in failed programs such as the drug dogs program. It does not serve our community interest and it does not serve an agenda where we should be seeing a harm minimisation approach to drugs rather than a war on drugs that seeks to intimidate young people and cause fear in our community.

I urge those listening to this speech on all sides of the Chamber to consider the evidence in relation to this program and to have the courage to speak out. It does not work. It is not just The Greens who are saying this; a number of organisations are saying it also. The Ombudsman's report in 2006 said that this program does not work. The Greens are committed to ending this ineffective program and call on the Baird Government and the Labor Opposition to join us in recognising the clear reality that the New South Wales drug dogs program does not work. I call on all members to support this bill and put an end to it.

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

PRIVACY AND PERSONAL INFORMATION PROTECTION AMENDMENT (STATE OWNED CORPORATIONS) BILL 2016

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Paul Lynch, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) [10.28 a.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

<7>

It gives me pleasure to introduce this bill on behalf of the Labor Opposition. The object of this bill is to amend the principal Act, the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998, known as PPIPA or the PPIP Act. The amendment proposed is to remove from the principal Act the exclusion of State-owned corporations [SOCs] from that Act and to extend that Act to State-owned corporations that are not subject to the Commonwealth Privacy Act. This proposal adopts a recommendation of the New South Wales Privacy Commissioner in her report under section 61B of the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act dated February 2015 and tabled in this Parliament.

The PPIP Act provides that the public sector agencies included within its regime are legally bound by the information protection principles. These include that information about individuals must be relevant, accurate and not intrude upon personal affairs. Public concerns over these issues and potential breaches are getting greater rather than receding. There are increasing worries, for example, about big data. The

PPIP Act provides for a regime of internal review with obligatory advice to and consultation with the Privacy Commissioner. There is also a provision for a complaint to be made to the Privacy Commissioner. Additionally, there is an option for a review of the conduct or decision complained about to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT]. Recommendation 3 of the section 61B report by the Privacy Commissioner states:

All NSW SOCs should be subject to privacy regulation so that either:

- a) the PPIP Act applies to SOCs not covered by the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth); or
- b) those currently not prescribed under the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth), are prescribed.

The Government has taken no steps to act on this sensible recommendation. Accordingly the Opposition proposes this bill. I note the Privacy Commissioner has reiterated her position as recently as two weeks ago at a parliamentary committee hearing. At that hearing the Privacy Commissioner, Dr Coombs, was asked whether there was in her view the slightest justification for the exclusion of SOCs from the privacy regime to continue. Part of her answer to this question was:

When that exemption was put in it was very much about SOCs being on a level playing field with commercial organisations. Since then SOCs are covered by the 1988 Commonwealth Act, and I think there are three prescribed under the schedule at the back. I note that the statutory review of the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act which occurred in 2003-04 recommended that SOCs be included in the legislative regime of the New South Wales privacy legislation and the NSW Law Reform Commission made a similar recommendation that they be brought in. My view is that it is entirely appropriate.

Now you have seen the movement of State-owned corporations into what is considered to be the government sector underneath the Government Sector Employment Act and I think other Acts as well.

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

GOVERNMENT INFORMATION (PUBLIC ACCESS) AMENDMENT (SYDNEY MOTORWAY CORPORATION) BILL 2016

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 25 February 2016.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Parliamentary Secretary) [10.32 a.m.]: The member for Strathfield introduced the Government Information (Public Access) Amendment (Sydney Motorway Corporation) Bill 2016 on 25 February 2016 to amend the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009, or the GIPA Act as it is commonly referred to. The purpose of the amendment bill is to include the Sydney Motorway Corporation [SMC] and its subsidiaries as public authorities under the GIPA Act. This would have the effect of extending the disclosure obligations the GIPA Act places on government agencies to the Sydney Motorway Corporation, which is a proprietary company.

In her second reading speech, Ms McKay indicated that the supposed rationale for the bill is to increase public visibility of the WestConnex road project currently being undertaken by the New South Wales Government by "throwing open the doors". Curiously, those doors are already open through Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] as the client agency for WestConnex, which remains subject to the GIPA Act, just as it always has been. As someone who has already utilised precisely these GIPA provisions, the member for Strathfield is fully aware of this fact. That is why this entire bill is simply a stunt and a

complete waste not only of this Parliament's time but that of the people of New South Wales.

The Government opposes the bill, not because it objects in any way to information about the Sydney Motorway Corporation and the tollway projects it funds and delivers being open to public scrutiny but because the bill serves no genuine purpose. The Government fully supports openness and transparency concerning information about significant road projects—and the WestConnex project is a significant road project—and has no objection to being accountable to the public in this manner.

The Government's objection to the bill is based on three main reasons. The first is that it has never been the intention of the GIPA Act to apply directly to private companies in the same way that it applies to government agencies. The second is that the bill is based on a lack of understanding of the relationship between the Sydney Motorway Corporation, the WestConnex project and Roads and Maritime Services. The third and perhaps the most significant is that there is already a great deal of information about Sydney Motorway Corporation and the WestConnex project that is publicly available or potentially available under the GIPA Act or via other channels.

The WestConnex project will cost some \$16.8 billion. The WestConnex project is a 33-kilometre corridor linking Sydney's west, the city, the south and the airport. As I have said in this Chamber on several occasions, the WestConnex project will provide one continuous, free-flowing motorway completely around the Sydney metropolitan area. It is true that the upgrading of roads will not solve all the problems people have in moving around this city and how they commute. However, it is fundamentally important to ensure that our roads keep up with increases in population, that they meet the demands of both business and community, that they provide the most efficient ways for people to access their place of employment and that that is also combined with a necessary upgrade in public transport.

The failures of our predecessors to recognise these fundamental objectives whilst populations are increasing have caused a situation in which we have traffic congestion right across the Sydney metropolitan area in peak hour every day. I will go a little further and say that we have traffic congestion now on a Saturday and a Sunday which is similar at some times of the day to our weekday peak hour traffic. In some cases we are at gridlock. So we need to recognise the fact that the very best that we can hope for in providing public transport in any particular area is to get 20 per cent of that working and travelling population onto public transport. The remaining 80 per cent of people will need to use our roads.

This Government, recognising its fundamental responsibility to service delivery on behalf of this State, is funding the WestConnex project at a cost of \$16.8 billion. The project connects the M4, as it currently is—it will be expanded—with the tunnel under Parramatta Road to the city and south to the airport and further tunnelling to link up the M5. It will improve the dreadfully exhaust-ridden tunnel that exists on the M5, criticism of which has been so much in the public domain and which was left to us by our predecessors—a very poorly constructed tunnel. The Government will improve the emission control from that particular tunnel at the same time as improving the traffic flow, as I said, in one continual motorway loop right around the Sydney metropolitan area. This city expects nothing less and this Government is intent on delivering it.

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I will now expand on the Government further objections to the bill. The Government Information (Public Access) Act was introduced in 2009 following a review by the New South Wales Ombudsman that pointed out the shortcomings of the old Freedom of Information Act. The intention of the Act, as reflected in its object, is to promote responsible and representative democratic government that is open, accountable, fair and effective by promoting, and in some cases mandating, public access to government-held information unless there is an overriding public interest against that information's release.

In order to meet this objective the Government Information (Public Access) Act places information disclosure obligations on New South Wales government agencies as defined in the Act. These obligations

do not generally apply to private corporations as it was never the intention of the Act to cover the private sector to the same extent as public sector agencies. The Sydney Motorway Corporation and its subsidiaries operate as proprietary limited companies incorporated under the Corporations Act 2001. They are not public sector agencies. Currently the Sydney Motorway Corporation is wholly owned by the State, with the New South Wales Treasurer and the New South Wales Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight as shareholders on behalf of the people of New South Wales or on behalf of the State of New South Wales.

The Sydney Motorway Corporation board comprises independent directors, a shareholder representative and a chief executive officer. The Sydney Motorway Corporation board has been classified by the Public Service Commission as A6 and is constrained by the remuneration range specified by the Public Service Commission. The Public Service Commission lists the Sydney Motorway Corporation in its board committees, and the remuneration paid, on its website. This is published information. The structure of the Sydney Motorway Corporation is designed to maximise the value of the future private sector lease of motorway assets and tolling rights to enable the recycling of capital to further projects.

It is also designed to minimise the cost to the taxpayer and the Government of the overall financing structure and ensure that there is no material weakening in the New South Wales credit rating metrics. WestConnex is one of the flagship projects enabling the New South Wales Government's vision for a greater Sydney. WestConnex will provide motorway connections between Western Sydney and the Sydney Airport and Port Botany precincts, transforming urban travel by providing greater connectivity between key employment hubs and local communities, and improving productivity and reliability.

I spoke earlier about traffic congestion and gridlock. Gridlock in New South Wales costs \$5.5 billion now and is expected to cost more than \$8 billion by 2020 unless we provide relief on our motorways. The increased economic benefit provided directly by WestConnex is approximately \$20 billion. One starts to get a picture of the economic loss of productivity, damage to the environment and loss of time for businesses and families through people sitting for hours on end in traffic gridlock as a result of the failure of previous governments to recognise their responsibility to continue to provide funding for road upgrades.

WestConnex will benefit 95,000 people who currently use Parramatta Road and 94,000 people who currently use the M4. I will repeat that because they are astonishing figures—just under 100,000 movements on those roadways. Those people will benefit every day of the week from a free-flowing motorway. Traffic on Parramatta Road will be reduced by 45,000 vehicles a day and by 60,000 on the M4, with 3,000 trucks a day being removed from Parramatta Road. Up to 52 sets of traffic lights will be bypassed through the provision of the WestConnex motorway.

It is expected that the average person will save 40 minutes in a peak hour journey between Parramatta and Sydney Airport. That is an extraordinary saving to communities, families and, importantly, to businesses, which have suffered a loss in productivity through traffic congestion. It is expected that 40 minutes will be saved by motorists travelling between Port Botany and Silverwater; 30 minutes will be saved by those travelling between Liverpool and South Sydney, 23 minutes will be saved by people travelling between Burwood and Sydney Airport and 23 minutes will be saved by those travelling between Kogarah and the central business district. One can see that WestConnex will provide greater connectivity, a smooth roadway without congestion, for a large part of the Sydney metropolitan area.

It is crucial that we provide this free-flowing motorway loop around the Sydney metropolitan area that will aid people. Regardless of which direction they travel, they will benefit from WestConnex, and in the process 10,000 jobs will be created, including hundreds of apprenticeships through the construction phase. It was never the intention at any stage during the establishment of the Sydney Motorway Corporation and its subsidiary companies to structure them in such a way as to avoid public scrutiny of the process of the WestConnex project, nor has the creation of the Sydney Motorway Corporation had this effect, contrary to the view expressed by the member for Strathfield. The Sydney Motorway

Corporation and its subsidiary companies develop, finance, design, construct, own, operate and maintain the WestConnex project under concession contracts granted by Roads and Maritime Services.

This is very similar to a number of other public-private partnership arrangements for the delivery of motorway infrastructure. Roads and Maritime Services is the client agency for the WestConnex infrastructure and is accountable to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight for the delivery of the WestConnex motorway project. As the planning proponent for the WestConnex project, Roads and Maritime Services remains accountable and subject to scrutiny through the Government Information (Public Access) Act and other laws in relation to the project. In this respect, obtaining information under the Government Information (Public Access) Act about WestConnex is no different from obtaining it in relation to any other tollway. The truth of the matter is that this Government is more open and transparent than our predecessor, the Labor Government, ever was, and we will maintain openness and transparency through all our projects. The Government does not in any way, shape or form support the bill.

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) [10.47 a.m.]: I support the Government Information (Public Access) Amendment (Sydney Motorway Corporation) Bill 2016 introduced by the member for Strathfield. This Government's performance on open government, transparency and access to information has been atrocious, a point well made recently by the Information Commissioner. The bill tries to remedy one of the many failings in the Government's approach to access to information. The bill's objective involves an amendment to the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009, known generally as GIPA. That amendment in clear and unambiguous terms provides that information held by the Sydney Motorway Corporation is able to be accessed under the provisions of GIPA, that is, it will reverse the closed government approach of the current Government to WestConnex. When the Government Information (Public Access) Act was first introduced the then Premier said in this place:

The public's right to know must come first.

The Government Information (Public Access) Act's aims and legacy have been trashed generally by this Government and particularly treated with contempt by it in relation to WestConnex. The legislative mechanism adopted by this bill is elegant and simple. It inserts the words "the Sydney Motorway Corporation Pty Ltd and any of its subsidiaries" into the list of entities and bodies covered by the Government Information (Public Access) Act. The arguments in favour of this are logically irresistible. WestConnex is a \$17 billion project. It is obviously expensive. It is subject to cost overruns and budget blowouts. It is self-evidently controversial.

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It is almost the perfect example of a public project that should be subject to public scrutiny and the Government Information (Public Access) Act. WestConnex is regularly claimed by the Government to be the largest infrastructure project in the country's history. Hiding something like that from public scrutiny is the antithesis of open government. It flies in the face of all contemporary notions of good governance, which is utterly inconsistent with what John Keane calls monitory democracy. The benefits of public scrutiny should be well known by now. Public scrutiny provides better governance and reduces government waste. It also goes to the core of the community expectations of government. The Information Commissioner's recently released report on the operation of the Government Information (Public Access) Act states:

Open Government embodies a collective right, a right enjoyed for the benefit of communities. This right provides the foundation upon which we as a fair and open society effectively uphold and actively participate in our system of democracy.

Achieving Open Government requires legislation to enshrine citizens' right to access information and authorise decision-makers to release information.

Citizens expect Government decision making to be open, transparent and accountable and the GIPA Act represents NSW Parliament's commitment to realising that expectation.

The member for Strathfield in her second reading speech pointed to the many inadequacies and uncertainties in the process of WestConnex, the contradictions and the inconsistencies with counterintuitive and inexplicable muddling. The case for subjecting WestConnex to the Government Information (Public Access) Act could hardly be stronger. The failure of the Government to open the project to public scrutiny inevitably leads to the question: What is it trying to hide? If there is nothing to hide, then the Government is simply being overtaken by the all-consuming hubris and arrogance that says the public does not have a right to know about public projects.

Other than the powerful arguments in support of open government, the approach should be adopted because the Government made a conscious effort to go down the opposite path. To avoid open government, it intervened last year and the private corporation structure, Sydney Motorway Corporation, took over the role of WestConnex Delivery Authority. The Government, with premeditation and malice aforethought, decided to pursue this course. This bill seeks to undo that action. The Government's action has been so extreme that the Information Commissioner said recently she could not think of a similar example of this. Of course, the absurdity of the situation is that the shareholders of the private corporate structure are Government Ministers, but it is still not subject to the Government Information (Public Access) Act. The Government's malice in this is clear to see and this is one example of its rejection of open government.

The suggestion that open government somehow affects WestConnex so severely that it cannot be subjected to the Government Information (Public Access) Act is nonsense. I notice that the Information Commissioner's report says state-owned corporations had 100 per cent compliance with the Government Information (Public Access) Act. If it is good enough for state-owned corporations, why is it not good enough for the Sydney Motorway Corporation? The Information Commissioner had other things to say about this Government which helped explain its approach to the Sydney Motorway Corporation and the need for this bill. In her report released recently she states:

In 2013-14 total information release rates declined to 69 per cent from 80 per cent in 2010-11.

At page 2 it states:

There has been an overall decline in information release in response to applications. In 2012-13 the rates of full and partial combined was 80 per cent. This year the combined release rate has declined to 69 per cent.

At page 39 it states:

In 2014-15, 27 per cent of all outcomes granted access in full, a decline from a high of 55 per cent in 2010-11. This gap between access in full and in part outcomes is attributable to the government sector.

She also states:

Levels of mandatory proactive disclosure of information remain consistently below 85 per cent for agencies, largely attributable to lower levels of compliance with contract reporting and disclosure logs.

All of this leads to an increase in external and internal review. There has also been a decline in the timeliness of decision-making by Ministers in relation to Government Information (Public Access) Act applications. The case of the Sydney Motorway Corporation is thus part of a larger picture of a government that is arrogant, is consumed by hubris, and is denying the public a right to information in cases where that right is undoubted. The arguments stated by the Parliamentary Secretary about the Government's opposition to the bill were quite extraordinary. He put two arguments. The first was that it is

already open and we already have access. If the information is already there then what possible logical reason is there for the Government to oppose the bill? There is none. If in fact their argument is correct, they had only to stand up and say, "We agree", and we could vote on it. The Government is being profoundly deceptive and disingenuous in its argument.

The second argument that was put up was that it was never intended that the Government Information (Public Access) Act would apply to private organisations. The WestConnex project was put into a private organisation so the Government Information (Public Access) Act could not apply to it. It is an extraordinary argument. It is well known that the Parliamentary Secretary lacks intellectual capacity. He has displayed that today. The Government has put up no substantive argument. It is trying to hide things from the people of New South Wales. The Government is a disgrace. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne—Parliamentary Secretary) [10.54 a.m.]: I note the absence of the member for Strathfield, who introduced the Government Information (Public Access) Amendment (Sydney Motorway Corporation) Bill 2016. The Government opposes the amendment bill introduced by the member for Strathfield because relevant information about the Sydney Motorway Corporation and the tollway project it funds and delivers is already open to public scrutiny, contrary to what the member for Liverpool alluded to. He has made comments, thrown grenades and has walked out of the Chamber. When I was at school it was known that when we started throwing insults, it meant we had lost an argument before it had started. The Government opposes the bill because it is unlikely to achieve its stated aims. Even though the bill will not achieve its aims, it was introduced anyway. It is a gimmick and a waste of parliamentary time. The bill will do little to increase public availability of information about the Sydney Motorway Corporation or its involvement in the WestConnex project because that information is already available under the Government Information (Public Access) Act or via other channels.

The member for Strathfield is being nicknamed The Whisperer in her electorate. She attends public protests and defends the rights of the community by saying she does not want WestConnex to run under people's properties, but then she will say here she is in favour of it. She runs around the electorate whispering because she does not want people to hear. Her nickname—The Whisperer for Strathfield—is starting to gain momentum. It is inappropriate to extend the ambit of the Government Information (Public Access) Act to apply directly to private companies in the same way that it applies to government agencies. It does not make sense. The intention of the Act is to maintain a responsible and democratic government that is open, accountable, fair and effective by promoting, and in some cases mandating, public access to government-held information unless there is an overriding public interest against the release. These obligations do not apply to private corporations because it was never the intention of the Act to cover the private sector to the same extent as public sector agencies. The Sydney Motorway Corporation and its subsidiaries operate as proprietary limited companies incorporated under the Corporations Act 2001. As such, they are subject to the disclosure requirements of that law in the same way as other similarly structured companies.

The WestConnex project is the silver bullet in my electorate of Drummoyne. Traffic was never meant to be funnelled through Concord. For far too long my electorate has accepted the traffic by-products of congestion and pollution courtesy of the former Government. It is no surprise that a Labor-dominated council in my electorate is fully in favour of the WestConnex project. They understand the effect it has had on my electorate. Those opposite take any opportunity to say, "We are in favour of it." Of course they are in favour of infrastructure, except when it comes to designing and paying for it. They will take the easy road: "We are supportive of all infrastructure", but they have no runs on the board. They have never delivered infrastructure, and when they have, they have been too embarrassed to say so. The classic example is the duplicate Iron Cove Bridge in my electorate.

Mr Ray Williams: Desalination plant.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI: Yes, it is great piece of infrastructure. It was well over budget and took ages to

construct, but when the then Premier Kristina Keneally opened the bridge, it was done on the bus.

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The bus drove through, and that was the official opening, because the protesters would have been all over her.

Mr Ray Williams: It was doing 65 kilometres per hour.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI: We will not even go down that path. I can hear the interjections by the member for Summer Hill. She was not a member of this House five or six years ago. That is probably to her benefit because she did not have to listen to the trash that came from the previous Government. The Opposition should not start enacting the previous Government's policies because if members opposite do that they will probably not be here for another six years. The coalition is in Government, and we take full responsibility for what we are doing. The Opposition is doing what oppositions do. It is being obstructionist. It has no financial planning. It is conducting smear campaigns. We have seen that happening for a long time, but particularly over the past few weeks in this place. The Opposition has shown time and time again, that it is not ready for government in this State.

I return to the bill. The Sydney Motorway Corporation board is comprised of independent directors, a shareholder representative and the chief executive officer. The remuneration of the Sydney Motorway Corporation board members is limited to a range that is published on the Public Service Commission website. That is right—this information is already publicly available. The structure of the Sydney Motorway Corporation is designed to maximise the return to the people of New South Wales from any future private sector lease of the motorway assets and tolling rights, to minimise the cost to the taxpayer. I repeat: It is designed to minimise the cost to the taxpayer and to protect the New South Wales credit rating, which is something that those on the other side of politics will not take responsibility for.

Ms Jo Haylen: I think taxpayers like to know how the money is being spent.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI: I note that the member for Summer Hill is interjecting. She will probably say that she loves the project, but she will find the disgruntled members in her branches and The Greens/Labor members in her electorate. She will try to keep them content because she wants to be in this Parliament for the long haul. The people of Canada Bay in my electorate of Drummoyne have suffered for far too long. It must hurt the members opposite when they drive along the M4 and see bulldozers, tractors, cranes and construction—jobs. In the 1940s the Labor Party used to be the party for jobs. That party is gone, and members opposite know it.

I look at the very few members opposite who have a business background and I see them smile. I can see the member for Rockdale smiling. He understands that the people of his electorate are being employed. The greatest thing we can do is to create jobs, give people independence and freedom and allow them to invest. But these issues will be tackled by the Opposition through negative gearing and those sorts of things. Members opposite belong to the party that is meant to represent the worker, but it does not do that anymore.

The structure of the Sydney Motorway Corporation is designed to maximise the return to the people, and that is critical for the people of New South Wales. These are all very sensible and prudent measures that directly serve the interests of the people of this State. That is what good governments do. It was never the intention at any stage during the establishment of the Sydney Motorway Corporation and subsidiary companies to structure them in such a way as to avoid public scrutiny of the WestConnex project—no way, Jose. It is totally open and transparent. Those opposite will take any opportunity to introduce a bill as a smokescreen.

The Greens are meant to be about public transport, bicycles and the rest but I have not heard them once talk about the WestConnex project, the seven kilometres of designated bus lanes from Burwood to the city and the impact of good public transport in this State. I have not heard The Greens say

one thing about that. I no longer hear The Greens talk about bicycle laws or promoting bicycle use in this State. I only hear them saying, "We've got to wear helmets now" and "The fines have gone up." We have not heard The Greens talk about the massive amount of infrastructure that this Government has built for public transport, better bicycle paths and so forth. That goes under the radar. It must hurt.

Mr Nick Lalich: What have you got against transparency?

Mr JOHN SIDOTI: The member for Cabramatta is interjecting now. I call him Elvis Presley—"It's one for the money". [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

I need a bit more time because I also have a song for the member for Port Stephens. I will come to that a little later. As the client agency and planning proponent, Roads and Maritime Services is fully accountable to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight for the delivery of the WestConnex motorway project. As such, Roads and Maritime Services holds a vast amount of information about the WestConnex project, including information about contracts, planning, design, construction, funding, acquisitions, pollution monitoring tolling, and traffic projections and forecasts. This is all already subject to scrutiny through the Government Information (Public Access) [GIPA] Act and other laws in relation to the project.

Roads and Maritime Services has released WestConnex information in response to GIPA access applications on several occasions, in full compliance with the GIPA Act. That is something that is conveniently forgotten by those opposite. I remember the old adage: Keep peddling the lies because if you say them 10 times people might start to believe them. That is exactly what Opposition members are doing. Instead of grabbing hold of the facts and selling these infrastructure projects to the community of New South Wales they say, "We are in favour of these projects but ..." They always add "but". That is what is happening. Members opposite are having an each-way bet. What is that called in racing terms?

Mr Ray Williams: It is called having a bob each way.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI: Yes, if you have a bob each way you cannot lose. You cannot win, but you cannot lose. The proponent of this bill knows full well that WestConnex information is readily available through Roads and Maritime Services under the GIPA Act, and that this bill is simply a cheap political stunt that serves no public purpose whatsoever. This Government's commitment to the principles of openness and transparency embodied in the GIPA Act remains as strong now as it has ever been. Those of us on this side of the House have based our entire five years in Government on honesty, openness and transparency. In 2019 the people of New South Wales will judge us again. If the best that the Opposition can do is to introduce this kind of bill as a stunt and waste the Parliament's time, they will be judged very harshly.

The people of my electorate fully support the WestConnex project and the infrastructure that is being built right across this great State. I recognise that there are challenges; most certainly there are challenges. It is not easy to infrastructure, of course, some people are affected by acquisitions. I can give members a classic example. Mrs Danky, one of my constituents, has a husband who is severely disabled and needs constant care. Under the provisions of the legislation her house has been acquired. That couple is trying relocate to the adjoining electorate, in Ashfield. I can hear interjections from members on the other side of the Chamber and I ask them to listen because this is a very serious case. They do not know whether they will be in the same position one day.

This woman's husband is severely handicapped, through no fault of his own. Their house has been acquired and they have bought a place in Ashfield. Ashfield Council has all sorts of building conditions, because of the heritage nature of the area, which is making it difficult for the couple to adapt the house to suit their needs. As a result they cannot possibly move out of their current home within the time frame required for the acquisition, and that is posing some very serious challenges. We are trying to work as closely as we can with that couple to assist them. I am not trying to be political; if I were, I would not bring this case to the attention of the House. I expect the same courtesy from those opposite because

we are here for the good of our constituents.

Mr Jihad Dib: You should be not putting a disabled person out of his House.

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Mr JOHN SIDOTI: No, we are trying to work hand in hand with them. I am not trying to score a political point. If that were my intention I would not bring up this case. I expect those opposite to extend the same courtesy. We are here for our constituents and the good of the residents of this State. I do not represent myself in this place; if I wanted to represent myself I would be in my own business, but I represent my constituents. I often do not say what I think because if what I think does not represent the views of my community, it is worthless. I say to those opposite—particularly new members who have been thrown into the fire—that they should not listen to what the party tells them is the plan of the day.

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) [11.10 a.m.]: I speak in debate on the Government Information (Public Access) Amendment (Sydney Motorway Corporation) Bill 2016. This bill would open the Sydney Motorway Corporation to proper scrutiny by ensuring the public can access information about its dealings. I thank the member for Strathfield and shadow Minister for Transport and Roads for introducing this critical bill. I thank her for standing up for integrity and open government, principles that this Government is averse to. As she noted when the bill was introduced, Labor, under former Premier Nathan Rees, introduced the Government Information (Public Access) Bill in 2009 to ensure that information could be withheld only if there was an overriding public interest against disclosure.

It is abundantly clear that the public interest test in the case of WestConnex is overwhelmingly in favour of disclosure. WestConnex will cost taxpayers \$16.8 billion and counting. As the Government likes to boast, it is the largest transport infrastructure project in Australian history. But still, the Premier, the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, and the Treasurer worked to ensure the Sydney Motorway Corporation was shielded from public scrutiny by naming it a private corporation. They created an unacceptable anomaly, and this bill will fix it. This bill will ensure that the public can properly access information about how their \$16.8 billion plus is being spent. It will put an end to the secrecy and the deception.

When it comes to WestConnex, this Government has shown it is not interested in meaningful consultation or opening up the project to proper scrutiny. Despite collecting thousands and thousands of community submissions through the environmental impact statement processes—in the case of the M5 extension, the most submissions ever received on an infrastructure project in New South Wales—the Government is pressing ahead, making only minor concessions. The Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight continues to respond to public opposition with mockery and derision, dismissing anyone opposed to the project as a "latte sipper", or any other beverage that comes to mind for Inner West residents.

Mr John Sidoti: Soy latte.

Ms JO HAYLEN: Is that the member for Drummoyne's drink of choice? Those opposite held back the business case for WestConnex until after the last parliamentary sitting day of 2015 to avoid questioning in this place. And disgracefully they exempted the Sydney Motorway Corporation from access of information laws, shielding it from proper public probity. The community is right to ask: When it comes to WestConnex, what does the Government have to hide? Despite what the Government might like, we need to talk about WestConnex. We need to talk about the palpable anger of residents who are forced to sell their homes, uproot their lives and accept shamefully low compensation, all in the blind hope that the Government will do the right thing by them. We need to talk about students learning in the shadow of ventilation stacks.

We need to talk about locals afraid their kids are in danger from hordes of cars rat-running through their neighbourhoods, particularly in Haberfield, in my electorate. We need to talk about motorists themselves, who must accept exorbitant tolls on the M4 and who will pay through the nose only to be spat out into Haberfield or St Peters and yet another traffic jam. It is not going to work. We need to talk about

the residents of Rozelle, Lilyfield and Camperdown, who are now set to have their very own massive spaghetti junctions and tunnel portals right near their residences. We need to talk about the \$16.8 billion price tag, which blows out every time someone bothers to cost it. We need to talk about the arrogance of the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight and the Premier who refuse to listen to the community's total opposition to WestConnex. And we need to talk about the Government's lack of transparency and secrecy.

Our freedom of information laws exist because they help to maintain trust between the public and their elected officials and the public service. The right for citizens to hold government processes up to the light has been hard won and is fundamental to our democracy. The arguments the Government gives for exempting the Sydney Motorway Corporation from this democratic process are entirely without reason or merit. This bill will make sure the public interest is put back where it belongs—at the heart of our Government. It will restore some of the public's trust in the decision-making process, particularly around WestConnex. Most importantly, it will allow the community to ask the questions they have every right to ask about how this Government is wasting \$16.8 billion of its money. The community has every right to ask why the Government has chosen not to invest that money in public transport. The community asks why the Government has systematically ripped off property owners in Haberfield, Ashfield, St Peters and Alexandria.

The community asks why the Government now plans to do the same in Rozelle and Lilyfield, destroying its own plans for the Bays Precinct by throwing up an unwanted and polluting spaghetti junction. This beggars belief, but the reality is the community cannot get answers because the Government has set up a smokescreen to hide the truth. The Baird Government wants to shut down scrutiny of WestConnex because it knows the project does not add up. I commend this bill of the shadow Minister to the House, because the people in my electorate who are impacted by WestConnex deserve better. They deserve answers and they deserve to know why this road that is ruining so many lives has been forced upon them. The Government cannot hide any longer. We need to talk honestly about WestConnex.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) [11.16 a.m.]: I wish members a happy St Patrick's Day and I am delighted that the member for Cabramatta is wearing a green tie, as I am. One important thing about this debate on the Government Information (Public Access) Amendment (Sydney Motorway Corporation) Bill 2016 is that the member for Cabramatta is present in this Chamber. He and I—and you, Mr Deputy-Speaker—are probably the only members present who saw this road being built. I lived and worked in Strathfield for 35 years and travelled this road every day. It is one of the greatest shames of this Parliament that former Labor Premier Neville Wran cancelled the extension of the motorway through Lilyfield in 1976 and then sold off every property in that corridor for the purpose of delivering to interest groups that had been responsible for bringing him to power.

The first comprehensive plan for a road system in Sydney was delivered through the Cumberland County Plan in 1948. This plan envisaged a radial road network through Sydney's central business district. Although construction of roads progressed slowly, by 1971 only isolated sections were complete. The plan ensured corridors were reserved, providing property owners with certainty about future infrastructure. This changed in 1976, with the election of the Australian Labor Party under Neville Wran. Wran was faced with his predecessor's ambitious infrastructure plans, inner-city opposition to motorways including by the powerful "green bans" movement and a deteriorating financial situation, so he halted work on those projects and scaled back those already under construction.

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It is to the undying shame of this Parliament that it was never delivered to the people of New South Wales. In seeking to deliver this legislation the Opposition shows a fundamental lack of understanding of the Government Information (Public Access) Act. There is no winding back of rights in relation to access to Government information. There is a company responsible for delivering this project to Sydney in exactly the same way as the NorthConnex is being delivered. Does this legislation seek to cover the delivery of the NorthConnex project? The infrastructure that is being delivered is identical. The

failure to understand the relationship between companies that deliver infrastructure and the delivery of information is fundamental to the Opposition's misunderstanding. This company acts in the same way as any private company and is subject to the governance regulations that apply to every company.

Mr Edmond Atalla: Where do you find the transparency?

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: The transparency is already there. Who are the shareholders? The shareholders are Roads and Maritime Services and Treasury. Do you say you do not have access to information from both those bodies? You do have access. Make your Government Information (Public Access) application in exactly the same way as you would in relation to any other project and it is available through Roads and Maritime Services. This bill is a stunt of the first order and should be exposed as such. We owe it to the people of New South Wales to deliver this project. In exactly the same the Government is delivering the north-west metro and NorthConnex, this is a project for tomorrow's Sydney. Within the next 10 years an additional one million people will call Sydney home. That means more people, more businesses and more freight will be using the transport network.

Those opposite would have us do nothing. They would condemn the future of Sydney to exactly the same transport system as we have now. If we do not do this work that will deliver the train and road systems of the future then we betray our children. Tomorrow's Sydney needs new infrastructure, roads, public transport networks, hospitals, schools and motorways. Tomorrow's Sydney needs a Government that will invest in that future and recognise the need to address population growth and traffic congestion with real solutions. WestConnex will deliver those solutions. For 35 years I sat every day and asked for this solution. Tomorrow's Sydney needs community representatives who are willing to consider thoughtfully and examine the project, and provide solutions on merit to help their communities. I have lived in Strathfield for longer than the current member. I know the problems of Strathfield more than she ever will.

Mr John Sidoti: So do I and I lived there for six weeks.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: The former Mayor of Burwood, who had to deal with it on a day-by-day basis knows more about the problems of Strathfield and the inner city than the members for Summer Hill or Strathfield ever will.

Ms Jo Haylen: Really?

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: Yes, really.

Ms Jo Haylen: Those are significant accusations, that I don't know anything about the inner west.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: One hundred per cent. If we are to believe the statements made in this place by the member for Summer Hill she knows nothing about the inner west.

Mr Guy Zangari: Point of order: A longstanding ruling requires the member for Epping address his comments through the Chair and not across the table; nor should he make disparaging remarks about the member for Summer Hill.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! I uphold the point of order. I remind Opposition members that interjections are disorderly at all times. The member for Epping will address his comments through the Chair.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: In answer to the member for Summer Hill about the inner city, I have run small businesses in Glebe, Enmore and Leichhardt. If the member wants to ask me about my connection with inner-city Sydney the answer is that I have been involved in businesses in all of those areas and I know more about those communities than she is ever likely to know. The delivery of projects

to relieve the congestion that currently exists will be welcome. A leading senior counsel who lives in Strathfield came to me and said, "While you are in Parliament if you do nothing about the congestion which plagues the people of Strathfield who have to drive to the city every day, then you will have failed the people of the inner west." Access to the city from Strathfield and outer western suburbs takes so long during the day that people are deprived of time that could be spent with their families. It is an enormous problem for people who are spending an hour and a half each day to get to and from work instead of spending it with their families. It is those people for whom this Government does the work. The jobs that are created and money spent on these projects is indicative of responsible Government. This project is transparent and open in the same way as the north-west metro, the Sydney Metro—

Mr John Sidoti: Light rail.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: —light rail, NorthConnex and Parramatta light rail. It is those opposite who spend their time in this place to create an atmosphere of conspiracy that suggests we should not do it. The reality is that this Government is determined to deliver the product of the future that this State needs. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

Mr Stephen Kamper: Tell us about the secret business plan.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! I ask Opposition members to cease interjecting. If members continue to interject I will place them on calls to order and they can attend question time with existing calls to order. Under Standing Order 52 each member is allowed to be heard in silence.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: I inform the House as to the progress of this project. It is one of the great success stories of this place. It is good to see the member for Heffron has arrived. The first part of the project is a badly needed \$500 million widening of the M4 from three to four lanes in each direction. The last time I visited my mother in a nursing home at Concord, significant progress was evident.

Mr Edmond Atalla: It was a car park.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: It is a car park. The observation that the M4 is a car park has been made.

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The very fact it is a non-navigable road underlies the reason that this project is so important to the people of this State. The next section, which has recently received planning approval, is the \$3.8 billion M4 East—the first underground section of the WestConnex. It will connect to the widened M4 and extend via twin tunnels three lanes in each direction from Homebush to Haberfield. This is the section that the Labor Party cancelled in 1976.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! I call the member for Summer Hill to order for the first time.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: If the Labor Party had not sold the corridor in 1976 it would be completed today.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! I remind the member for Summer Hill that she is on a call to order. If she continues to interject I will call her to order for a second time.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: The admission that we now need to retrofit Sydney with the road corridor that it needs is the great condemnation of those opposite, who would condemn the future of Sydney.

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

future day.

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

SYDNEY GREEN GRID

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Parliamentary Secretary) [11.31 a.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes the Government's commitment to deliver the Sydney Green Grid by connecting open spaces in existing metropolitan urban areas to increase amenity and lifestyle and promote a healthier urban environment.
- (2) Notes the Government's commitment to working with local councils and communities to connect walking trails identified in the Regional Tracks and Trails Framework and locate new recreation and sporting facilities within the Sydney Green Grid.
- (3) Notes that the Government is working with councils to encourage appropriate local planning to connect open space and meet the needs of communities through bushland, parks and waterways with walkways and cycleways.
- (4) Acknowledges the Government's commitment to making people's lives better through sustainable and inclusive growth.

As the member for Drummoyne just said, this is a commonsense motion that I have brought to this Chamber because I think it is important. I know the member for Coffs Harbour thinks it is important too—I can see his interest. The member for Fairfield is very excited about the green grid and the opportunities it presents. As we know, open space is one of Sydney's greatest assets. Our national parks, harbour, beaches, coastal walks, waterfront promenades, playgrounds and reserves are integral to the character and life of the city. As we plan our future growth and development across the greater Sydney region, access to high-quality open space will become increasingly important.

The Sydney Green Grid initiative was a key commitment in A Plan for Growing Sydney. The initiative is one of the best examples of the Government's commitment to make Sydney a truly liveable, sustainable and inclusive city. The Sydney Green Grid will create an interconnected network of open spaces, parks, tree-lined streets, bushland reserves, riparian walking tracks and national parks. It will provide green networks through the landscape, connecting our homes to centres, public transport, jobs and recreation. The green grid will increase our access to open space, encourage sustainable transport connections and promote active living, create a high-quality and active public realm, conserve the natural environment, adapt to climate extremes, improve air quality and increase urban greening.

I can see that the member for Coffs Harbour is most interested in this subject and would love to have a green grid in his electorate, but it is probably not as urban as some other electorates. The green grid goes further by improving management and maintenance of green spaces, and by promoting green skills and sustainable green space designs. The Government will deliver the Sydney Green Grid by continuing to implement the Metropolitan Greenspace Program. We will work with local councils and communities to connect trails identified in the Regional Tracks and Trails Framework and locate new recreational and sporting facilities within the Sydney Green Grid. We will deliver new open space in greenfield locations to support the Sydney Green Grid and we will implement the Western Sydney Parklands Plan of Management. The Sydney Green Grid initiative will inform planning in Sydney at district and local levels, encouraging local councils to work with government agencies and other stakeholders to take an integrated and long-term approach to open space provisions, and promoting a coordinated response to the recreational needs of a growing population.

This motion is important for the future of our cities. It is not just for Parramatta but for the whole of greater Sydney and the State. I know that members in the Chamber today fully support the green grid proposal. The member for Tweed is 100 per cent behind Parramatta—which is fantastic—as is the Minister for Local Government, who is looking forward to future evolutionary development of which the green grid is part. Parramatta is growing and 45 per cent of its residents live in high-density housing. Some wonderful developments are underway, with housing concentrated close to major rail and bus interchanges. The solution to our future transport needs involves more than just private cars. We must have an integrated approach, which the green grid embodies.

The member for Drummoyne is in the Chamber because he supports the green grid. That is wonderful. Parramatta is an exemplar for why the green grid is necessary. It is a wonderful plan for growing Sydney. The metropolitan strategy highlighted the Parramatta green grid pilot as a joint initiative of the State Government and Parramatta City Council. Simply having infrastructure such as roads, stadiums, light rail and housing and jobs is not enough; we need connectivity. We must have a whole liveable city; it is about amenity and about creating communities where people want to live. Parramatta is one of those places. I know that other members are jealous of that. They are looking at me with disapproving eyes—especially the member for Drummoyne, who loves Parramatta. Government members support our community.

I hope that the member for Fairfield, who will speak to the motion on behalf of the Opposition, will support the green grid. Like us, he knows that connecting people with their jobs, homes, sporting activities, parks, gardens and rivers is most important. Parramatta is the place to start. We will be an exemplar of the opportunities that can be created through the green grid. This has occurred overseas. London has a fantastic plan, which it is implementing. We look forward to Parramatta's green grid pilot, which is in its genesis.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! The member for Tweed and the member for Drummoyne will come to order. Every Thursday morning I sit in this chair and I hear mumble, mumble, mumble. Perhaps one of you should sit on another bench so that you are not tempted to chat away like schoolchildren. It is quite annoying, and it is annoying for the Hansard reporters who are trying to record what is being said in the House. I am happy to put you on calls to order, but first I ask that you cease and desist from chattering. If you want to have a private conversation, do so outside the Chamber.

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Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [11.39 a.m.]: Mr Assistant-Speaker, I commend you on your ruling and for restoring order to the House. You are doing a great job, particularly in calling Government members to order. I support your separating the member for Tweed and the member for Drummoyne, like schoolchildren, so that I may give some information that is vital to this—

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! I point out to the member for Fairfield that he is very close to canvassing a ruling of the Chair.

Mr GUY ZANGARI: I put on record that New South Wales Labor will not oppose the motion moved by the member for Parramatta. However, I must set the record straight regarding a couple of matters. Not once during his address did the member for Parramatta outline the specifics of the green grid in Sydney and in Parramatta. I know that he is an advocate for his area, but there was no mention of Parramatta River, Lake Parramatta, Parramatta Parklands or Upper Toongabbie Creek walkways and cycleways. He did not mention the reopening of Parramatta prison. He did not even mention Sydney Olympic Park, which is a great Labor legacy. He did not mention the fact that great cycleways and walkways exist. I know that the member for Drummoyne uses them. He puts on the lycra, gets out there and cycles away—which is quite a sight for locals residents.

It was rather extraordinary that the member for Parramatta read his speech. He did not provide any examples; he could not even confine his remarks to his motion. That is quite extraordinary. The green

grid is a good proposal. We all support the creation of green space; we are all for walkways, cycleways and picnic areas. But in Western Sydney, for example, the local government areas of Holroyd, Blacktown, Fairfield, Bankstown, and Auburn have between just 10 per cent and 19 per cent tree canopy cover. Compare that with the leafy suburbs of the North Shore and in the Hills shire—Hornsby, Ku-ring-gai, Warringah and Pittwater—which have more than 50 per cent canopy coverage.

It is interesting to note that of the \$3 million in the 2014-2015 funding round only \$550,000 was allocated to Western Sydney. That amounts to about one-sixth of the funding, yet there are just under 1.9 million residents in Western Sydney from a total Sydney population of 4.2 million. The member for Parramatta talks about green space and trails. Let us consider the legacy of former Labor governments. It cannot be denied that the lungs of Western Sydney were created by the former Labor Government. Plough and Harrow, Lizard Log and Cecil Park are great areas in Western Sydney. It is possible to cycle all the way up the M7—

Mr John Sidoti: Do you cycle?

Mr GUY ZANGARI: Yes, I do. Thanks to former Minister Carl Scully, who put in place the wonderful cycleway along the M7 to connect the green spaces, it is possible to ride up the M7 to Cecil Park or Plough and Harrow. It is a great piece of infrastructure created by the former Labor Government. It is ironic that the member for Parramatta said the Government is working hard with local government on the green grid. The Government is currently embroiled in a massive fight over council amalgamations, so I do not know how it is working with councils. There is so much going on and the Government and councils are at loggerheads. The Government talks about connected walkways and cycleways, but what happened to the cycleway in College Street? It is gone.

Dr Geoff Lee: College Street where?

Mr GUY ZANGARI: Here in the city. Footpaths are shrinking along the light rail corridor on Anzac Parade, and heritage fig trees along Anzac Parade and Alison Road have been removed. While I have the utmost respect for the member for Parramatta and his motion, he neglected to identify the Government's failings when it comes to connected green spaces. We support and want green spaces, but the member did not put on record the facts about what the Government is doing in this area. I invite the member for Parramatta to visit the lungs of Western Sydney—whether it is Plough and Harrow or Lizard Log—and see the wonderful integrated picnic and barbecue areas there. That is a proud Labor legacy that cannot be denied. Labor members will not cop the comment, "For 16 years you did nothing." Because guess what? We did a lot. There is a green grid in Western Sydney but the Government cleared a significant amount of green space to make way for the big factories at the end of the Horsley Drive, connecting onto Cowpasture Road.

Dr Geoff Lee: Are you against jobs?

Mr GUY ZANGARI: We are not against jobs. But we must have some perspective. Labor will not oppose the motion, but let us set the record straight: The former Labor Government had a proud track record of preserving green space and connecting existing metropolitan urban areas—and the member for Parramatta knows it.

Dr Geoff Lee: We are not talking about that; we are talking about the future.

Mr GUY ZANGARI: Yes, we are talking about the future. But we should acknowledge and put on record Labor's achievements over 16 years.

Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH (Coogee) [11.46 a.m.]: We know that Sydney's population is growing. It will grow by 1.6 million people, with 900,000 in Western Sydney, over the next 20 years. So we must get the planning right. Representing an electorate such as Coogee, I realise that retrofitting any

sort of infrastructure, whether it is light rail—as is happening at the moment—bike paths or a green grid, is very difficult, so we must get it right from the start and begin planning now. I appreciate the comments by the member for Fairfield about what was done in the past, but now we must talk about where we will go in the future. We must ensure that we have a planning regime in place so that there are no ifs or buts as to whether we should set aside important public space to ensure connectivity, either by walking or cycling, between recreation centres across Sydney. When I was the Mayor of Randwick I proposed—

Dr Geoff Lee: You were the best mayor Randwick ever had.

Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH: I acknowledge the interjection. I had a proposal that only made it into draft form because at the time there were other priorities, such as fixing the decades of degraded infrastructure that the Labor Party had left us. I was thinking about areas such as Kensington, in particular, which has a grid of streets with very wide curtilages even though the streets are not wide. I wondered, "Is it absolutely necessary to be able to drive from one end of all those streets to the other?" Obviously it is not. I proposed that it was possible to block off a number of those streets in the middle so that bike paths, angle parking and wider footpaths could be built to create a safer and much more pleasant means of traversing the suburb. That would cost local government an enormous amount of money.

A restriction on foliage coverage in suburbs across Sydney is overhead powerlines. Until powerlines are either bundled, or preferably placed underground—which is a very expensive undertaking—we will never have the foliage, tree coverage or urban forest that many people dream of.

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I know that because I see trees that have been butchered by EnergyAustralia contractors. They have been carved into shapes that offer no amenity to the street. It is downright stupid. I support the motion because it is the start of an important mindset in planning for the future. When these greenfield sites are opened up, infrastructure should be put in place not only for today but also for the future to recognise the importance of cycling and walking. [*Time expired.*]

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! I welcome to the gallery 100 year 12 students from a range of Sydney schools and schools from the Swansea, Belmont and Wyong areas as part of the Leadership Program conducted by the Education Unit of the Parliament.

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) [11.51 a.m.]: I am happy to support the motion about the green grid moved by the member for Parramatta, and I thank him for bringing it to the House. As the member for Fairfield indicated, the member for Parramatta failed to mention many of the projects in his electorate, such as Sydney Olympic Park, Parramatta River and Toongabbie Creek. We all know that Bob Carr was the greatest green space Premier this State has ever had. Bob Carr was all about the environment—indeed, sometimes to his own detriment. The city of Fairfield has more than 150 kilometres of bikeways, parts of which were built during my time as mayor. The member for Parramatta said that Labor did very little but Labor did a lot. The M7 was built by a Labor government. The bikeway mentioned earlier was commissioned by Carl Scully.

Mr Mark Coure: Federally funded.

Mr NICK LALICH: It was federally funded but built by Carl Scully.

Mr Mark Coure: Just say thank you John Howard.

Mr NICK LALICH: I thank John Howard for the M7. I do not have any problem thanking him for the funding, but Carl Scully was the guy who delivered it. Carl Scully was castigated by many of his colleagues for building the bikeway along the M7. The bikeway extends nearly the full length of the M7 and it is lit so that cyclists can use it at night. I think the lighting is a bit too close to the road but it is necessary. At the time I thought the number of lights along that expressway was probably a bit exorbitant

but it was explained to me later that they were needed to ensure cyclists' safety.

A one-kilometre wide expressway that is 27 kilometres long extending from the back of Blacktown to the back of Liverpool runs through the Western Sydney Regional Park. All that land was dedicated by Bob Carr. So Government members should not claim that Labor did nothing. Under Labor, a bikeway was built that allows cyclists to ride from Port Botany all the way up into the Blue Mountains—although some parts in the Blue Mountains have not yet been completed. That was all done under Labor. For the member for Parramatta to get up in the Chamber and rubbish us when we are supporting his motion—

Dr Geoff Lee: Point of order: The member for Cabramatta is misleading the House. I was not rubbishing Labor. I was speaking about the principles of the green space.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! There is no point of order. There is no standing order about misleading the House.

Mr NICK LALICH: The member for Parramatta was insinuating that Labor had done very little. I will choose my words more carefully so that the member does not get upset. I quite like the member for Parramatta; he is a decent guy—even though he is a Liberal. Bob Carr dedicated land as an Aboriginal sacred site along Elizabeth Drive close to the M7 at Judds lookout, where one can see almost the whole of Kemps Creek. It is said that the Aboriginals used to look for kangaroos and other animals in the fields so they knew where to get their meals for the day. I support the motion about the green grid. I thank the member for Parramatta for bringing it to our attention but I remind him that Bob Carr and Carl Scully did a lot for New South Wales. *[Time expired.]*

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) [11.55 a.m.]: Labor loves to rewrite history. Since Bob Carr there have been three Labor governments and three Labor Premiers—Morris Iemma, Nathan Rees and Kristina Keneally. But the history books, according to Labor, stop at Bob Carr. So you, sunshine, love rewriting history.

Mr Guy Zangari: Point of order—

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! I believe the point of order will be that the member for Oatley should address members by their correct titles.

Mr Guy Zangari: That is the first point of order. You are on fire today, Mr Assistant-Speaker. The member for Oatley knows very well that he must direct his remarks through the Chair and not across the table.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! If Opposition members cease interjecting I am sure the member for Oatley will address his comments through the Chair.

Mr MARK COURE: They love rewriting history. The member for Cabramatta should announce to the House who wrote that speech because I am sure it was not him.

[Interruption]

You might learn something. You use Dr Google. The New South Wales Government is working with local councils and communities to deliver new and enhanced green connections across the greater Sydney region. I acknowledge the member for Parramatta, Parliamentary Secretary for Communities and Multiculturalism—

Mr Bruce Notley-Smith: He should be knighted.

Mr MARK COURE: I would not go that far; he should not be knighted. I acknowledge him for

moving this motion and taking this initiative forward. I say well done to the member for Parramatta. When A Plan for Growing Sydney was released in December 2004 it announced the vision for Sydney's green grid. We are getting on with the job of turning this vision into reality in a number of ways. The Government is working to deliver the Sydney Green Grid by continuing to implement the Metropolitan Greenspace Program, work with local councils and communities to connect working trails identified in the Regional Tracks and Trails Framework, and locate new recreation and sporting facilities within Sydney. I welcome students to the public gallery and say to them: This is vision. We hear from the Opposition nothing but tired, old, stale rhetoric. We are building for the future.

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Mr Guy Zangari: Point of order.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! I warn the member for Fairfield it is that it is the Ides of March.

Mr Guy Zangari: Et tu, Brute. My point of order is Standing Order 73. The member for Oatley is seeking to impugn the reputation of the member for Cabramatta. Further, I ask that he withdraw the reference to "old" in his address. What does he have against seniors?

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! It is amazing how everyone comes to life when we have an audience. There is no point of order.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne—Parliamentary Secretary) [11.59 a.m.]: There being a great bunch of future leaders in the audience, I could not control myself and had to speak. I remember quite a few years ago I was in the same spot—1988. It was a good year. I say to the student leaders to look around. This is Government over here and that is Opposition over there. This is where they want to be. This is where the evidence-based legislation comes from. On that side they say no to everything and achieve nothing. I compliment the member for Parramatta on his four-part motion. He is a member who goes out on a limb and fights tooth and nail for his community. The member for Parramatta has delivered \$1 billion worth of infrastructure for the people of Western Sydney.

Those opposite talk about green space. Once upon a time the city was a paddock. They attribute the development of the city to their governance, but they are on the wrong track. There is a plan to develop Sydney. Remember part 3A that was introduced in the days of Labor? Developers could build what they wanted because they knew someone in government. Those days are long gone. This Government is developing Sydney in an holistic way in conjunction with a State plan. When we talk about development, we are talking about hospitals, infrastructure and public transport. That is how we have addressed the problems in Sydney. Those opposite did nothing for 16 shameful years and they forgot about the people of Sydney, particularly those in Western Sydney.

Mr Guy Zangari: Point of order—

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! I am not taking any points of order from the member for Fairfield.

Mr Guy Zangari: There is nothing unruly about a member taking a point of order. It is Standing Order 129, relevance. The member is now straying from his motion.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! I suggest the member for Fairfield has a look at the standing orders on the table. Standing Order 129 does not apply.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI: I am happy to apologise to the constituents of the member for Fairfield for the Opposition's lack of planning over that time. This Government has taken the right approach; look no further than the beautiful electorate of Drummoyne. We have wonderful walkways around the water.

Dr Geoff Lee: Bays walk.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI: It is unbelievable. We spent \$2 million upgrading the Bay Run with a beautiful bridge. We have spent millions of dollars upgrading bicycle paths in my electorate. The member for Fairfield and the member for Lakemba can interject as much as they like.

Mr Jihad Dib: We are standing up for our communities, not interjecting.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI: Opposition members are not doing a good job because they are not achieving results.

Mr Jihad Dib: Point of order: We are all here for the same reasons. We are here to fight for our communities.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! What is the member's point of order?

Mr Jihad Dib: Standing Order 73.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! There is no point of order. The member for Lakemba will resume his seat.

Mr Jihad Dib: We are all here for our communities.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI: I acknowledge the member for Lakemba. He is here for the right reason, but we are talking about achieving results. The facts will speak for themselves in time. When the training wheels come off, the member for Lakemba will be judged. I commend the motion to the House.

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.04 p.m.], in reply: I thank the member for Fairfield, the member for Coogee, the member for Cabramatta, the member for Oatley and the member for Drummoyne for supporting my motion concerning green grids. The motion is about having a connected community. I am disappointed with and critical of the member for Fairfield for not mentioning specific initiatives in my electorate. The motion is about understanding why the principle of having a green grid is so important. I have chosen to use my time to look at the increasing need to connect our communities because of urbanisation and high density living. The students in the gallery are now leaving. I thank them for attending. Remember this side is more fun. This is the achievement side and that side is not so much fun.

Mr John Sidoti: The wannabe side.

Dr GEOFF LEE: The wannabe side.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! I remind the member for Parramatta to speak to the motion and address his comments through the Chair.

Dr GEOFF LEE: The member for Fairfield may not understand that the State Government has been working with local councils. We may not always agree on everything. State Government and local councils have complex relationships, but this Government has been working for more than six months with the local council on a pilot for Parramatta. Sadly, Opposition members choose to ignore it. We have invested millions of dollars in completing the pedestrian access and cycleway along the Parramatta River so it can meet up with Ryde. With the North Parramatta heritage precinct coming on board, we will continue the pedestrian access along the waterfront.

The member for Coogee understands the green grid principles because he did not reiterate them. He understands the need for vegetation. He is a wonderful member. He understands, as a past

mayor—he was one of the best mayors if not the best mayor—about connecting and planning for the future. This motion is about planning and implementing that planning. Unfortunately for members on the other side it is about living in the past in the glory days of Bob Carr. Members on this side have a clear vision. The member for Coogee enunciated the clear vision for his community. He should be commended. The member for Cabramatta—

Mr John Sidoti: He did his best.

Dr GEOFF LEE: He did his best. I acknowledge his contribution. I remind the member for Cabramatta that it is not about Bob Carr, it is about planning for the future. The member for Oatley pointed out what a passionate and visionary person he has become as a result of the green grid. I thank him for his contribution. The member for Drummoyne understands and loves his community. I can see him running around the Bays walk every morning, enjoying the green grid. Even though the Bays walk is for walking I know the member is fit and likes to run. I commend the motion to the House. I thank all members who have spoken. We are all in agreement that the future focus for Sydney must be on not only infrastructure but also the green grid.

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

Motion agreed to.

ASHLEY HANSEL YOUNG REGIONAL ARTISTS SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) [12.08 p.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Ashley Hansel, the fashion designer behind online fashion label "Spun Kit Designs", on being awarded a New South Wales Young Regional Artists Scholarship.
- (2) Notes Ashley will use the scholarship to buy a new sewing machine, organic fabric, design software, run workshops and continue her commitment to "dare to be different", the mantra behind her successful fashion business.
- (3) Acknowledges this award and funding has changed her life and wishes her the very best for the future and efforts to grow her business.

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Dundee is a small community in the north of my electorate. Dundee-based young artist Ashley Hansel first came to my attention last year when she won a \$10,000 scholarship in the inaugural New South Wales Government Young Regional Artists Scholarship program. I had the pleasure of meeting and personally congratulating Ashley on her selection. I can only say I was more than delighted to see such a talented young local artist and entrepreneur win this scholarship. As I said in my motion, this scholarship will allow her to further develop her skills and grow her fashion label business.

Ashley has created a fashion business called Spun Kit Designs and works from her little house on the top of a mountain at Dundee, just north of Glen Innes, where she designs and produces handmade sustainable fashion garments, wearable art and accessories, and markets them on line. A huge proportion of Ashley's business is derived from the United States. She is constantly exporting her unique designs and garments.

Ashley's mantra, "Dare to be different," is about sustainable and ethical fashion. Her entire range is made from 100 per cent natural fabrics, and as a firm believer in recycling, Ashley scours second-hand clothing stores for the perfect fabrics. This scholarship will allow her now to purchase bundles of organic fabric, a prospect she is incredibly very excited about. As I said, Ashley's clothing is sold in Australia and

overseas. Her customers are becoming more aware of the impact their clothing choices have on the environment and are looking more carefully for alternative fashion design and materials. Ashley's most recent commission, which is she more than thrilled about, is for a Las Vegas showgirl, who wants the perfect outfit for the Hall of Fame weekend.

Ashley's first purchase after winning the scholarship was of six deep cycle gel batteries, which have been added to her solar-powered system. This has meant that her workshop is now 100 per cent powered by renewable energy. She has also purchased two semi-industrial machines, which are incredibly solid and able to tackle with ease the thick fabrics she uses. They are perfect workhorses for Ashley's garments. She has also been able to upgrade from what she calls a "dodgy" laptop to a new state-of-the-art computer and iPad, which has made her work a whole lot easier, not only in the design of her fabrics but also in conducting her business.

Dr Geoff Lee: And her craftsmanship.

Mr ADAM MARSHALL: And, as the member for Parramatta said, her very fine craftsmanship. Her new computer has meant that she is better able to deal with her clientele across Australia and overseas. Ashley has also just purchased a new steam iron and a specialised ironing board, which is such an important item when producing handmade garments. It is another exciting purchase for Ashley, and she now has a new-found love of ironing. That is great because everyone in this House knows that I also love ironing. I iron all of my shirts. She also created a new invoicing system and custom-made order forms and has been courted by a few clothing stores in Australia which are interested in carrying her label.

As part of her scholarship grant from Arts New South Wales she had a two-day trip to Sydney for an inspirational artist development workshop. She spent two jam-packed days in the city, visiting arts studios, galleries, theatres and Parliament House. I thought the trip to Parliament House would have been the highlight. Ashley enjoyed her visit here but, with all due respect—and disappointingly, for all of us here—it was not the highlight of her trip to Sydney.

She has just recently finished putting together her new collection, which is an amazing effort. The whole process of producing a collection on her own is massive. She had to learn and master so many new and different skills, and that is a story in itself. Compare her label to the big fashion companies, where they employ a whole army of people to produce their collections—designers, pattern-makers, construction sewers, marketers, accountants, and the list goes on. Ashley has managed to fill each of these roles to bring some seriously sustainable and quality garments to the marketplace. And then, of course, there are the photo shoots to display her garments on line. Ashley also has some plans to conduct workshops as she would like to pass on her skills and passion to others and involve them in her business. It has been her long-time dream and now this scholarship brings it all that much closer.

The New South Wales Young Regional Artists Scholarship program was a key part of the Government's new policy framework to guide investment and partnerships to grow a thriving, globally-connected arts and cultural sector in this State, particularly in country New South Wales. Ashley was absolutely thrilled to receive the scholarship and was incredibly grateful for all the support she received from the Glen Innes arts community. I am pleased to say that she was motivated to apply for the scholarship after seeing a story I did for the *Glen Innes Examiner* about the scholarship program. She proceeded with her application based on expanding her local business.

Ashley is a delightful and highly motivated young woman, who is so enthusiastic about her life and her work that it is infectious. It was a pleasure to meet her and it was wonderful to see how this scholarship has helped her move forward with her dream. It is a wonderful investment by the State Government. Well done, Ashley. All the best with your future and your business development.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [12.15 p.m.]: I speak on behalf of the New South Wales Labor

Opposition on this motion presented by the member for Northern Tablelands. The motion congratulates Ashley Hansel, the fashion designer behind the fashion label Spun Kit Designs and on being awarded the New South Wales Young Regional Artists Scholarship. The member for Northern Tablelands noted that the scholarship is worth \$10,000.

The motion also says that this House:

2. Notes Ashley will use the scholarship to buy a new sewing machine, organic fabric, design software, run workshops and continue her commitment to "dare to be different", the mantra behind her successful fashion business.
3. Acknowledges this award and funding has changed her life and wishes her the very best for the future and efforts to grow her business.

Why would we not support this motion? There is no doubt that we support the motion, but I remind the member for Northern Tablelands that this is more like a community recognition statement than a motion to be put before the House. I recognise that the member is proud. As a former technological and applied studies teacher, who taught textiles and design, I know my way around a Janome.

Dr Geoff Lee: Do you know how to sew?

Mr GUY ZANGARI: I do know how to sew. I can sew bean bags and old library bags. The good thing about this is that Ashley has brought together a whole range of skills, incorporating design programs into textiles and design. She is looking at different ways to use fabric including recycling old fabrics with new designs and using organic fabrics in a sustainable business. The member pointed out that Ashley is producing for the Australian market—that is fantastic—and overseas markets.

The member for Drummoyne will probably speak in this debate because I can see him prompting me to keep speaking on this motion and to acknowledge the great work that Ashley Hansel is doing. We on this side of the House do not oppose this motion because we want young, vibrant, energetic people to go out into the marketplace and use whatever they love—whether it be textiles, timber or metal—to bring their designs forward. We want them to get out there in markets in Australia and overseas to do their bit for the regions they come from. I know that the member for the Northern Tablelands is proud of his constituents because he has brought this motion forward.

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Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.19 p.m.]: The member for Northern Tablelands is passionate about his electorate and those opposite should take note of how well he represents his constituents. He stands up for his community and highlights the achievements of outstanding citizens in his electorate. Last week in this place we acknowledged Women of the Year and now is a perfect time to bring this worthy motion to acknowledge the achievements of Ashley Hansel. It is clear that she has a huge future with her online fashion label Spun Knit Designs. I have no doubt this brand in the electorate of Northern Tablelands will be further highlighted by the member bringing this motion to the attention of the House.

Members of Parliament are proud to acknowledge the achievements of our constituents across New South Wales. If members did not highlight such outstanding achievers we would not know about them. The Baird-Grant Government has been instrumental in acknowledging such achievements, particularly those in rural New South Wales. I congratulate Ashley Hansel on being awarded the Young Regional Artists Scholarship and would be happy to wear the garments she designs. Scholarships like this acknowledge the outstanding contributions young people like Ashley Hansel make to their chosen industries. Receiving such a scholarship highlights the recipient's talent, and according to the member for Northern Tablelands it has changed her life. Ashley Hansel's scholarship meant she was awarded \$10,000, which is a lot of money for a young person.

I note that she will use it for equipment, continuing professional development and software, which will encourage her to stay in the industry and grow her business. I believe Ashley Hansel is a worthy recipient who will leave a legacy for those who come after her. Ashley Hansel is committed to daring to be different, and that is not easy. These days businesses have to dare to be different. They cannot rest on their reputation as was the case in the past. Businesses are only as good as their last job and they must have their finger on the pulse of what is happening in their industry. I commend this motion and congratulate the member for Northern Tablelands for bringing it forward.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) [12.23 p.m.]: I support the motion of the member for Northern Tablelands congratulating Ashley Hansel on being awarded a New South Wales Young Regional Artists Scholarship, which included \$10,000 in funding to pursue her chosen career. Ashley Hansel is the tremendous fashion designer behind the fashion label Spun Knit Designs. She comes from Dundee, a lovely village near Glen Innes. Fashion is a dynamic industry and careers in fashion can be taxing. I note the member for Northern Tablelands' strong support for up and coming talent in his electorate. The member for Northern Tablelands described Ashley Hansel's use of materials in her designs as very ethical. The fashion industry is becoming increasingly aware of ethical practices.

There are a number of tremendous Australian labels like Alex Perry, sass & bide, Maurie & Eve and Backstage Label. Most of them started in similar circumstances to Ashley Hansel's. I note that seven Australian fashion labels were featured at this year's Paris Fashion Week, an all-time record. I congratulate those seven fashion labels for lifting the profile of the land down under, which is a recognised force on the international fashion stage. I hope Ashley Hansel has similar success in her career and I wish her all the best. I acknowledge the work of the member for Northern Tablelands, who has become rather a fashion icon in this place, particularly in his choice of ties. Only yesterday he was informing me of the different fashion requirements in his electorate. Apparently on the eastern side of his electorate ties are appropriate, whereas on the western side the fashion of choice is more R.M. Williams.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! The member for Tweed should cease his chatter and look at standing orders 12 to 14.

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.26 p.m.]: I too support this worthy motion by the member for Northern Tablelands and congratulate Ashley Hansel on being awarded a New South Wales Young Regional Artists Scholarship and for her hard work, creativity and passion in the artistic community. I am sure her business will be very successful. Fashion, creativity and artistic endeavours are not confined to just the Northern Tablelands. All members present would, I am sure, acknowledge Parramatta as the capital of arts and creative endeavours. I congratulate Sophia Kouyoumdjian, the coordinator of the Parramatta Artists Studios, who has 15 years of experience in the creative world. There are 14 non-residential studios and one residential studio with artists focusing on painting, sculpture, film, digital media and much more. Activities include making, learning and sharing by groups. Parramatta Artists Studios is an exemplar of what can be done in the artistic community.

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) [12.28 p.m.], in reply: I thank the member for Fairfield, the member for Drummoyne, the member for Tweed and the member for Parramatta for contributing to this debate in such a respectful and eloquent manner. On behalf of Ashley Hansel I also thank them for their kind words. I am sure that when Ashley has a chance to read a record of this debate in *Hansard* she will be greatly encouraged by the very kind and thoughtful remarks made by members of this place. Ashley thoroughly deserves these remarks and members' best wishes. As I said before, she is incredibly passionate and dedicated to her craft.

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Ashley is incredibly talented at what she does and is grateful for the support she received through the scholarship, which help to turn what was a small cottage business into something that will grow and grow. It is encouraging that a number of stores across Australia are considering picking up her label. We will hear Ashley's name and her fashion label, Spunkit Designs, spoken of more and more over the coming years. Ashley's enthusiasm is infectious and it was a pleasure to meet her last year. I have seen

and spoken to her a number of times since at various events around Dundee, Glen Innes and the Northern Tablelands. She is a talented young woman. I will continue to support her business and her efforts to grow her business. It is great for her and the local community. Well done, Ashley, and congratulations. I commend the motion to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Oatley Railway Station Upgrade

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) [12.30 p.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Government for upgrading Oatley Railway Station to include a lift and additional commuter car parking.
- (2) Notes the historic and record government spending on transport in New South Wales.

By way of introduction for those watching on the internet today from Oatley I will provide a brief introduction to the history of Oatley railway station. It was built in 1885 and it was rebuilt in 1905. From 1 March 1926 the rail from Central to Oatley was electrified.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The member for Oatley has the call. There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

Mr MARK COURE: We stand in this Chamber 90 years later debating this historic motion. This will be the biggest upgrade of Oatley railway station in 90 years. Thanks to this side of the House three lifts are being built—one on each end of the station and one in the middle. In addition, a commuter car park will be built at Oatley railway station. Since World War II successive governments have promised the people of Oatley that the station would be upgraded. In 2004 I started my campaign as a resident and a newly elected councillor on Kogarah city council. I thank each and every one of those people living in my city council ward for signing the petition not just once but twice. It was a long campaign. Without success we tried to convince the previous member of Parliament and the former Labor Government to upgrade this station. This Government is doing just that. Since 1926 people have asked for upgrades to the station. I am happy to announce that we are getting on with the job and doing just that. In 2012 Gladys Berejiklian, Minister for Transport at the time, announced plans to upgrade the station. The plans were put out for community consultation.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Why has it taken so long, five years?

Mr MARK COURE: It was at the end of 2012. There were a number of plans. The member for Maitland will be pleased to know that construction started a year and a half ago as part of a major redevelopment. At the beginning of this year the new community car park at Oatley was opened. Previously only 18 commuter car spots were available. Today 100 are available.

Dr Geoff Lee: A more than 500 per cent increase.

Mr MARK COURE: That is correct, it more than a 500 per cent increase. The people of Oatley and those living throughout my electorate will be able to use a station upgraded through the Easy Access Program, which provided \$770 million of funding and was announced in one of the early budgets of this Government. It has taken only a couple of years build a community car, along with a major significant upgrade to Oatley railway station. I thank each and every one of my community for signing my locally

based petition. This Government is getting on with the job. It has taken only a year or two to see the fruits of our labour and a major upgrade at Oatley.

Four weeks ago the footbridge was laid down and soon the lifts will be installed. It will be open to the public soon. But it does not stop there. Under the Transport Access Program, Arncliffe station, which is in the electorate of the member for Rockdale, will be upgraded. Ashfield community car park, Asquith community car park, Balmain East transport interchange, Berala station, Blacktown station, Broadmeadow station, and Campbelltown station will receive upgrades. Come in spinner. I saw the member for Campbelltown in the Chamber a second ago on. Members opposite are standing in a queue: Rockdale, Blacktown and Campbelltown.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The member for Oatley will direct his comments through the Chair. I call the member for Drummoyne to the order for the first time.

Mr MARK COURE: Labor opposes the upgrades, but the Government is getting on with the job of rebuilding local railway stations and community car parks because we mean business. Engadine community car park, Harris Park station, Heathcote station, Holsworthy community car park, Hornsby, Huntley Point, and Jannali station will receive funding for upgrades. The news keeps getting bigger and it does not stop there. My next motion of which I will give notice will deal with the great work being done on Narwee station. People in my electorate have waited far too long. Oatley station is being upgraded. We are getting on with the job, which is something those opposite could not do.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! I call the member for Kiama to the order for the first time.

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) [12.38 p.m.]: I say to all of the people in the Oatley electorate who are tuned in on the internet, "Hello from Parliament House. What a performance from your local member." He is passionate. Hello to Mrs Coure if she is listening in, it was a great performance. I will address one comment made by the member for Oatley—that the Opposition opposes upgrades. I cannot think of anyone who would oppose Easy Access upgrades to railway stations. The Opposition looks forward to easy access to all the stations.

Dr Geoff Lee: Sixteen years of failure.

Mr JIHAD DIB: The Government speaks about 16 years, but I remind members opposite that they have been in Government for 5½ years. Can they stop living in the past and show us what they are going to do? As was sung in *Frozen*, "Let it go". Let us see what the Government can do. Let us live into the future. I congratulate and I am happy for the people of Oatley. Who would not be? Everybody deserves an Easy Access upgrade. The biggest disappointment I have is that this should not be pitting one electorate against another. Nor do we try to pit one particular party against the other.

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I am here in the spirit of bipartisanship because it is clear that there are people in every electorate who deserve easy access. Nobody on this side of the House or in their right mind would argue against easy access. We must make that clear. We are happy for them. Members on the Government benches say hypocritically "work hard", and we are working hard. But the difference between us and them is that we do not get the same opportunities they give themselves. They should stop doing it for their own party. I am here in the spirit of bipartisanship and I would appreciate fewer interruptions.

In every electorate there are people who deserve easy access. It is not a luxury. I am not saying it is something we need to have because it is something nice to have. It is something a necessity and it is what people in all of our communities need. It is a means of getting to work, appreciating life and being able to do the things that we take for granted. We are here because we want to tell the real stories about humans and the impact of what we do in this place. I am sure the member for Oatley—when he pays attention to what I am saying— will appreciate this. Last week I met an 89-year-old woman from

Punchbowl. We were talking about an Easy Access upgrade to Punchbowl railway station. She pulled me aside and said, "Mr Dib, I just want to tell you one thing about how it affects my life." We can talk about the high profile things that we do, but this is the heart of the matter.

This 89-year-old woman who suffers from cancer has no means of transport other than public transport. She has to come into the city regularly for medical treatment. But she cannot do that because she does not have easy access to Punchbowl railway station. She has to try to organise community transport, but she is not always able to do that and as a result she misses her medical appointments and treatment. I am not talking about a luxury; I am talking about the need to attend medical appointments and other things that people need to do. An 89-year-old has the right to easy access, the same as everybody else, regardless of where she lives. It is not about partisanship, it is about doing the right thing. It really broke my heart when she said, "Mr Dib, it affects my lifestyle." Her vision is not very good, which is why she cannot go up and down the stairs. She said:

I listen to the wireless and I hear that there is going to be a beautiful day on the harbour, or that there is a boat that has come into the quay and I wonder what it would be like to go in there and see that myself but I can't do it.

She has to rely on other people, whether it be community organisations or a neighbour, to do things. We have to start bringing those human stories back into consideration. It is not about whether we are in the right electorate or the wrong electorate, it is about what we do. And we do the right things, because we are here for the people. Every member comes to this place because they believe they can make a difference, and they stand here to make that difference. I have made my point many times, including to the Minister, and by way of notices of motions, and I have made it clear that this is about what is right. I appreciate the Minister will have a meeting down the track in relation to this.

It was suggested that \$770 million has gone into Easy Access upgrades. These are important. I look forward to seeing that, not only in my electorate but in all electorates. We do not split people apart. Three lifts and a footbridge at Oatley—I am happy for them. I saw the pictures on the internet and I think it is a great thing. I look forward to the day when that happens across the board. We do not want this to become a political issue. We often hear "we on this side of the House" from the Government. We on this side of the House want the same thing and we look forward to working with those opposite. When the Government announced the Transport Access Program there was much talk about where it is needed most.

The data does not lie, the statistics do not lie. Lots of places need it and are eligible for it, but do not get it. We have the Sydenham to Bankstown rail corridor and there are other opportunities where we can do things differently. We can be creative, we can do it right. Every member in this place knows in their heart that they cannot look into the eyes of the 89-year-old and say, "I am sorry, we have the opportunity to do something for you but we are not going to do it because something else is more important." Everyone is valued, everybody is important. All communities are important, regardless of whether they are elderly or disabled, a parent with a pram or someone with an injury.

People use easy access because it helps them get through their situations in life, whether it gets them to work or a medical appointment. It allows them to live their lives and to do the things that we sometimes take for granted. I can jump in my car any time, but a lot of people do not have that luxury. I promised the 89-year-old that I would not mention her name, but I did say I would take any opportunity to express that idea. I cannot look her in the face and say that I did not try. I commend the Government for the Easy Access upgrades that are being implemented and I congratulate the people of Oatley. I look forward to visiting—it is right next door. I look forward to the day when all railway stations have Easy Access upgrades, especially in my electorate, and when the criterion is need rather than what will work best in the political sense.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.40 p.m.]: I join with the member for

Oatley and congratulate him on his motion. This is a member who learnt from the experience of his days as a pizza delivery boy, because this is a member who delivers. This is a member who works relentlessly for his electorate, and you can see the results all through Oatley. When you walk down the streets of Oatley you can hear the cries of "hooray for Coure", you can hear the calls of "Courageous." The member for Oatley is a man who knows how to get things done. There are two types of members in this place. I know all members work hard, except the member for Cabramatta, of course.

Mr Nick Lalich: Point of order: My point of order is relevance under Standing Order 129. The motion is about the upgrade of Oatley railway station, not the glorification of the member for Oatley.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I understand the member for Cabramatta's point of order. I think the member for Kiama was engaging in some preamble before addressing the motion.

Mr GARETH WARD: To the point of order: The motion talks about Oatley railway station. The member for Cabramatta cited Standing Order 129, which relates to relevance during question time. If he had cited Standing Order 76 he would have been more accurate but still he would have been wrong. I ask that the member for Cabramatta's point of order be ruled out of order.

Ms Noreen Hay: Further to the point of order—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Stop the clock.

Ms Noreen Hay: Further to the point of order: The member for Kiama was calling out to members across the Chamber and not going through the Chair. That is a relevant point of order.

Mr GARETH WARD: The motion is about easy access, not red rattlers. The member for Wollongong should be quiet.

Ms Noreen Hay: It is about easy access in Unanderra.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The member for Wollongong should settle down.

Mr GARETH WARD: I commend the member for Oatley for his hard work. This is something that he came into this place to fight very hard for. There are two types of members in this Parliament: many who work hard, and those who are effective. Here we have an effective member for Oatley who delivers for his community. He should be very proud of the fact that something his community called for, something he has spoken about in this House, something he has lobbied the Minister for, has been delivered. My friend the member for Lakemba talked about bipartisanship. I think every member of this House, including my friend the member for Wollongong—who raises the Unanderra lifts at every opportunity, and I support her calls—would make the point that we all want our stations as accessible stations.

As one who lives with a visual impairment and relies on public transport I can assure members that I completely agree. What I would say to the Labor Party is that it has opposed every one of our measures in relation to savings and economic policies that seek to provide more funding in the budget to deliver the programs that are being delivered. In this State we now have an \$890 million program of transport access and the Labor Party has opposed every one of the measures the Government has undertaken to reform the budget to deliver it. They can talk about bipartisanship and say they want upgrades up and down the State, but they are not prepared to acknowledge that when it comes to doing the heavy lifting they are nowhere to be seen.

Mr Jihad Dib: Point of order: The member for Kiama is misleading the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): What is the standing order?

Mr GARETH WARD: What is the point of order? Cite your standing order. What is the standing order? What is the number? You cannot just interrupt the debate.

Mr Jihad Dib: Is there a debate going on?

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! There is no point of order. The member for Kiama has the call.

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Mr GARETH WARD: What we have seen is the Labor Party trying to destroy this debate because the Labor Party has no credibility on transport access. Members on the other side have taken up my time, but one thing they will not take away is the outstanding record of the member for Oatley.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! I remind the member for Drummoyne and the member for Kiama that they are each on one call to order.

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) [12.50 p.m.]: I note the wording of this motion that the good member for Oatley has proposed. He is right to be pleased with his Government's pork-barrelling in his electorate. He is the beneficiary of the stamp duty bonanza that underpins the Baird Government's budget surplus at the expense of Sydney housing affordability. While Mike Baird has been looking after his own supporters in safe Liberal seats, elsewhere in the state the Premier is missing in action. Public transport is the primary method of transport for many residents in my electorate of the Blue Mountains. I have reflected in the past in this Chamber on the considerable distances that are often overlooked by people when thinking about Blue Mountains villages and the electorate as a whole.

We are spread out across more than 60 kilometres of highway and railway along a ridgeline that runs through the middle of my electorate. This means that commuting for work, doing the shopping or visiting friends or family in neighbouring villages is almost impossible by foot. The Government and the Opposition must focus policy attention on alternative transport infrastructure projects. For example, there is no continuous footpath or cycleway linking all of the villages and towns in the Blue Mountains. This makes it impossible to travel through my electorate without a car or without relying on one of Minister Constance's unreliable, antique trains.

Mr Mark Coure: Point of order: Relevance—

Ms Noreen Hay: What is the number?

Mr Mark Coure: It is Standing Order 76.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! I uphold the point of order. The motion is specifically about Oatley railway station.

Ms TRISH DOYLE: We are talking about railway stations. People in my electorate have to rely on Minister Constance's antique trains, which have fewer carriages every year. For the working poor, pensioners, the disabled and young people, as the member for Oatley knows, transport over these long distances by private motor vehicle is beyond their means or is impractical. This means that reliable, accessible and affordable public transport services are absolutely essential for people in my electorate. Depending on which station a person is near, accessing the station can be impossible if one is in need of a wheelchair, has a disability, is using a bicycle, has luggage or is using a pram. A number of our most popular train stations are accessible only via a long set of steps. When one makes it onto the train, a general problem for most passengers is the lack of storage and space. Access to the main carriage from the platform is also a problem.

After five years, this is an area that the Baird Government must address quickly. The Government

has promised upgrades for Wentworth Falls and Leura stations, and for that we are thankful, but these projects are progressing slowly and when finished will leave the upper mountains with three accessible stations in a row and no accessible stations in the mid mountains. The Woodford Railway Access Action Group has been doing excellent work to draw the attention of the Government to the plight of residents in Woodford who experience difficulty accessing their train station. Not only are residents faced with a train station with no disabled access, they are faced with timetable cuts, unreliable trains and no Opal top-up facilities to be seen for miles. The member for Oatley might boast of his own electorate's shiny new facilities, but the Government has made it quite clear that it does not care about the transport needs of the working poor or the elderly elsewhere in this State and is leaving vast areas of my electorate to deal with inadequate, archaic transport infrastructure.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) [12.54 p.m.]: It is with great pleasure that I speak in support of this motion. The residents of the Oatley electorate are fortunate to have a member such as Mark Coure and a Government that is deeply passionate about investing in transport infrastructure. In the Oatley electorate one often hears people saying what a good local member he is and what a big difference this will make.

Ms Noreen Hay: I expected better from you, I have to say.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS: I assure the member for Wollongong that it is very true. I have friends who live in the Oatley electorate. They drove me past the station recently and said, "Look how the lift is finally coming along. Look at the difference the member for Oatley is making. Look at the car park." They are so excited and cannot wait to see it and use it, because he has made a difference. Unlike the former members who have held that seat, he is actually making a difference.

Ms Noreen Hay: Point of order: It is 76. The leave of this motion is about Oatley railway station and easy access. This constant conga line of sucking up to the member for Oatley is a disgrace.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The member for Wollongong will resume her seat. It is close to the contributions of other members this morning.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS: The motion actually refers to the Government's historic and record spending, and the member for Oatley is a big part of getting that historic and record spending in his electorate. Often the member for Oatley is referred to as the "member for Coure", because his name is synonymous with that electorate. It happens all the time with delivery and with the electorate name—when you think of Oatley, you think of Coure. It works that way. He has been able to secure a \$23 million parking station for his community, which will provide additional spaces so that more people can utilise the railway station. The lift will help people with prams, people with disability and the elderly. That is incredibly important. As you know, Mr Assistant Speaker, we now have a lift at Sutherland railway station, and what a difference that has made to those commuters.

The Government has built new car parking at Holsworthy station. The first half has already been built, with the next half underway now. That will be open by the middle of the year. It is all very exciting. It is thrilling that there is historic and record spending not just in the member for Oatley's electorate but across the State—in Parramatta, Holsworthy and so many seats held by Opposition members. The Opposition should just say "thank you" rather than say that members on this side are pork-barrelling. The Government is actually getting it done and Opposition members should be thrilled and thankful.

When we were talking yesterday about extending the Sydney Metro from Bankstown to Liverpool I was very surprised that the member for Bankstown did not seem very excited about the fact that it was going to Bankstown. The difference that will make to her commuters will be phenomenal. It will help 100,000 people every hour during peak travel times from north-west Sydney and south-west Sydney. It will help free up the line. It will mean more seats on trains from the Illawarra, the network will be far more easily accessible than it is at the moment and there will be better access to the timetable. The South

West Rail Link was under budget and ahead of schedule. Not a centimetre of track was laid under Labor. For record and historic spending, you need a New South Wales Coalition Government. I am proud to be a member and I am proud of what it is achieving.

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) [12.58 p.m.]: I thank the member for Oatley for bringing this motion forward because it gives me a chance to lament the car park that was budgeted for under the member for Blacktown when he was the Minister for Transport. It was budgeted for \$30 million for a 300-space car park at Cabramatta. When Barry O'Farrell got into Government and became the Premier, that car park was cancelled. The car park was planned and budgeted for but those opposite cancelled it. And what did they do with the money?

Mr Gareth Ward: Point of order: I cite Standing Order 76. I point out to the member for Cabramatta that this motion is about Oatley railway station. Should he wish to move a motion in relation to his own matters he should come into the House and do it, but he has not done that. The motion does not relate to car parking either.

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ACTING-SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! I uphold the point of order.

Mr NICK LALICH: I congratulate the member for Oatley on his \$23 million upgrade of Oatley railway station. I do not begrudge him for that upgrade of his station because he fights for his constituents. But I do cry for the people of Cabramatta, who had a \$32 million car park planned and Barry O'Farrell ripped the money out of Cabramatta to give to Liberal electorates.

Mr Mark Coure: Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 76. The motion is about the great work at Oatley railway station—no other station—and the successful delivery of not one but three lifts and a commuter car park. It is not about the electorate of Cabramatta.

Mr NICK LALICH: Labor had a \$400 million commuter car park fund that was expended every year. That is where I got the money for my station. That is where the member for Oatley probably got the money for Oatley railway station and I understand Narwee railway station, which is also in his electorate. A \$5 million car park was built at Canley Vale railway station in my electorate but no lift. The member for Oatley has a lift at his station.

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

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

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 15/56

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

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) [1.01 p.m.]: I was present for the debate on the previous motion, and it was very entertaining. I will do my best to continue the entertainment, but do not hold your breath, Mr Acting-Speaker. I thank the House for the opportunity to speak about the Legislation Review Committee's fifteenth digest for this Parliament. The committee commented on five of the six bills introduced into Parliament in the sitting week commencing 7 March 2016. The committee noted that the Assisted Reproductive Technology Amendment Bill 2016 proposes to allow the secretary to disclose certain identifying information about an individual conceived using assisted reproductive technology without that person's consent. The committee commented that disclosing such information without consent could interfere with the individual's right to privacy.

Advice from the department on this issue indicated that the information would only be disclosed on rare occasions and in extreme circumstances. The accompanying regulations will also set out a number of considerations that would need to be met, such as a requirement to try to obtain consent before any disclosure. Given those considerations, the committee made no further comment. The committee also commented on the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Amendment (Drug Exhibits) Bill 2016. The bill proposes that certain prohibited substances and plants that are evidence in drug-related proceedings may now be destroyed on the order of a police officer rather than the court. The committee highlighted that this can occur before an offence has been finalised. The committee noted the safeguards in the bill and the objectives, which are to ensure that police officers are not unduly exposed to dangerous substances. The committee made no further comments on this issue.

I turn now to the Inclosed Lands, Crimes and Law Enforcement Legislation Amendment (Interference) Bill 2016. The committee made comments concerning search and seizure powers, and the right to peaceful assembly. In relation to search and seizure powers, the committee noted that the bill amends the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act to provide police officers with the power to search for and seize things without a warrant. Such things include anything that is intended to be used to lock on or secure a person to any plant, equipment or structure for the purpose of interfering with the conduct of business and which is likely to give rise to a serious risk of injury to any person.

The committee noted that the power to search and seize without a warrant trespasses on a person's right to privacy and property. However, the committee further noted the objectives of the bill, which include ensuring that police have adequate powers to prevent certain protest behaviour that may place the safety of other people at risk. Having regard to those objectives, the committee made no further comment on the issue. The committee also highlighted that the bill extends the powers available to police officers to give move-on directions in relation to a demonstration, protest, procession or assembly where they consider, on reasonable grounds, that a direction is necessary to deal with a serious risk to public safety.

The committee noted that such powers and the exercise of those powers may trespass upon the personal right of peaceful assembly. The committee considered that such powers should be used only where there are sufficient checks available to ensure they are exercised when required to ensure public safety. The committee referred to the safeguards relating to such powers in the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act, which require police officers to provide information and warnings before making a direction. Given those safeguards and the objectives of the bill, which include addressing behaviour that poses a risk to the safety of others, the committee made no further comment. That concludes my remarks on this digest. I thank the committee staff and members for their input. I remind members that the digest is a useful tool, and I commend it to the House.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [1.06 p.m.]: I make a short contribution to the take-note debate Legislation Review Digest No. 15/56. First, I commend the hardworking chairman of the Legislation Review Committee, the member for Upper Hunter. He follows in the footsteps of other great chairmen. There has been a slight change to the digests in the Fifty-sixth Parliament that in some ways detracts from them. Past digests set out the objects, purposes of the bill, background and issues that were considered by the committee. More importantly, the digests also contained the provisions of bills. The digest is a great tool that is used not only by members of Parliament but also by external agencies. Not publishing the provisions of the bill in the digest detracts from it. Therefore, I suggest to the great, hardworking chairman—chair of the hardest-working committee in this Parliament and the Fifty-fifth Parliament—to the secretariat and parliamentary services that digests should include the provisions of bills.

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) [1.07 p.m.]: On behalf of the Opposition I make a contribution to the take-note debate on Legislation Review Digest No. 15/56. In general, I support the comments made by the chair of the Legislation Review Committee, the member for Upper Hunter, and the member for Myall Lakes. However, I will make a few comments about the committee's report on the Inclosed

Lands, Crimes and Law Enforcement Legislation Amendment (Interference) Bill 2016. On the day the committee met Opposition members moved that the bill be referred back to the Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy, given the committee noted that some elements of it transgressed personal liberties. The motion was lost.

Mr Michael Johnsen: For good reason.

Mr DAVID MEHAN: The chairman says it was for good reason, but I do not think the committee has done its work in relation to that bill, especially when one considers that the Law Society of New South Wales and the New South Wales Bar Association have raised serious concerns about that bill and its ramifications. Given the way the bill passed so quickly through Parliament and given that, in reality, it received less than a moment's consideration from the Legislation Review Committee, I think it is worthwhile. I foreshadow that I will call on the committee to reopen consideration of the bill when we meet again next week. It is important. The community is very concerned about the ramifications of the bill and I do not think the committee considered it in appropriate detail. Having said that, I commend the report and the chairperson's comments to the House.

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

Report noted.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

Report: Examination of the Auditor-General's performance audit reports September 2013-July 2014

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

Pursuant to standing order debate postponed and set down as an order of the day for a future day.

[Temporary Speaker (Mr Lee Evans) left the chair at 1.10 p.m. The House resumed at 2.15 p.m.]

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VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I welcome our guests to the gallery. I hope you enjoy question time. I welcome to the Chamber Audrey Blunden and her group of 30 masters of law students from the University of New South Wales, guests of the Premier and the member for Coogee. I also welcome Alexander and Marianna Petinos, parents of the member for Miranda, and Chrisoula Ganis and Helen Petinos, her grandmothers, who are both celebrating birthdays today, guests of the member for Miranda.

REPRESENTATION OF MINISTERS ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I inform the House that the Minister for Health will today answer questions in the absence of the Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Medical Research, Minister for Women, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault.

ASSENT TO BILL

Assent to the following bill was reported:

Transport Administration Amendment (Authority to Close Railway Lines) Bill.

QUESTION TIME

[Question time commenced at 2.19 p.m.]

NEW SOUTH WALES ELECTORAL COMMISSION

Mr LUKE FOLEY: My question is directed to the Premier. Why was Len Scanlan, a paid consultant to the Liberal Party, appointed to what is meant to be the independent New South Wales Electoral Commission?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The Leader of the Opposition knows that there are processes around such appointments. He is trying to put another smear again. Knock them out. There is no wonder his leadership is under question. He brings that sort of strategy in here, gets his deputy on board and then he demotes him.

Mr Ryan Park: That is smear.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: That is the truth, the member for Kiera.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Keira to order for the first time. I call the member for Keira to order for the second time. I warn members that if they are placed on three calls to order they will be escorted out of the Chamber by the Serjeant-at-Arms and they will remain out for the rest of the day.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: We know that the Leader of the Opposition wanted the member for Strathfield to be the deputy leader. He was not allowed to do that so he demoted his shadow Treasurer. The member for Maroubra is now the deputy leader but he was demoted.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order: It is Standing Order 129, relevance.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier has only just strayed from the question.

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Mr MIKE BAIRD: I am not going to spend much time on this but I note that Labor members come into this Chamber and talk about appointments when their last appointment in Government was Michael Williamson to a board. That appointment was signed by the member for Maroubra. He comes into this Chamber and talks about appointments—you are kidding!

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind members that if they interject they may be escorted from the Chamber. I ask the member for Cessnock to listen to me. When the House comes to order we will move to the next question.

NEW SOUTH WALES ECONOMY

Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH: My question is directed to the Premier. How is the New South Wales economy benefiting from major events?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: What a member the member for Coogee is. He is outstanding. He does a fantastic job. I know that those opposite are not really interested in the economy. I know that when they had their tactics meeting they might have missed the fact that jobs figures have been released. They might not have seen that New South Wales has the lowest unemployment rate in the nation—5.3 per cent. They would have missed that in their tactics meeting. Those opposite do not want to talk about the economy, health or education. Those opposite would have missed the fact that over the last 12 months 143,000 jobs were added here in New South Wales.

They would have missed that entirely. I am sure that they would know that the figure of 143,000 jobs is more than every other state combined. That is great news for New South Wales. I am sure

members on the opposite side of the Chamber would have been pleased if they had discussed it at the tactics meeting. This Government is determined to grow the number of jobs. Part of that is in enabling opportunities to put great events on in this city. They provide attractions for visitors, which help grow the economy. One of those great events is Vivid Sydney.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: We absolutely love it. Yes, the former Government started Vivid Sydney but we made it a success. That is what happened. Normally we clean up what those opposite start but we turned Vivid into something great. We are very proud of that. Indeed, when Vivid started it was hoped that there would be one million visitors. The Minister announced today the great news that last year there were 1.7 million visitors. That is great for the local economy. It is fantastic. In terms of economic benefit visitors spent \$63 million, which went straight into the local economy. That is great news for the city of Sydney.

We are very proud of the program. It was confirmed today as the world's largest festival of light, music and ideas. On this side of the Chamber we have the view that we should be the best in the world. That is exactly what we are doing with Vivid, and we are glad to be doing it. We decided this year, because of the success, to extend it. We have gone from 18 nights to 23 nights. This will be great for the city because it will provide more opportunities for people come and it will provide more opportunities for people to go back and see it again, because we have two new locations. We are very proud of those locations. For the first time the Royal Botanic Gardens and Taronga Zoo are going to be included.

I know the member for Rockdale loves Taronga Zoo. He was a big supporter of Taronga Zoo so it is great to have his support for this side of the Chamber today. What happened to the member for Rockdale? He was the co-chair of the Opposition Wastewatch committee and then there was a reshuffle and he went. What on earth happened to the member for Rockdale? The Leader of the Opposition dumped his deputy and then got rid of the member for Rockdale. Why was that? What did he do wrong?

Mr Luke Foley: Point of order: I will tell you what happened to the member for Rockdale—he thumped you in Rockdale.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the first time. I call the member for Kiama to order for the second time. I call the member for Keira to order for the third time. He will be asked to leave the Chamber if he interjects again.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: That is the Labor way—if you do a good job out you go. If anyone presents a threat they are pushed away. The Leader of the Opposition has done that. Parliament House is going to be part of Vivid as well. That is a great thing; we have great displays. I am trying to think what we could put up in lights. We could put the great friendships of Parliament up in lights. The Leader of the Opposition and his deputy could be there together, arm in arm, because that is one of the great friendships. The member for Wollongong and the member for Shellharbour is one of the great friendships in the Parliament.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra will come to order. The House will come to order. I know it is Thursday, but I will not put up with further interjections. I call the member for Cessnock to order for the first time.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: We are very proud to be delivering this event because it is great for the city, great for the State and great for the nation.

NEW SOUTH WALES ELECTORAL COMMISSION

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: My question without notice is to the Premier. Since the Premier appointed

Len Scanlan to the New South Wales Electoral Commission he has been found to have breached professional standards by CPA Australia for his paid auditing work for the Liberal and Nationals parties. Will the Premier now remove him from the Electoral Commission?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Yet again members of the Labor Party are going to the smear cupboard. They are very happy to do that. They know that there were processes around this appointment. They have played politics with the appointment before and they continue to do that. I remind the member for Maroubra—and those on the other side of the Chamber—that he signed many appointments. Michael Williamson was one, to State Water. That happened on the eve of the election. He was the National President of the Health Services Union. He was that Australian Labor Party [ALP] National President and the Vice-President of New South Wales ALP. He was also a resident of Maroubra.

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That was the last appointment by the member for Maroubra and yet he talks to us about our appointments. We are proud of the appointments we have made. Those opposite have regularly attacked people like Chum Darvall. The people we appoint are making this State even greater, and that is what we are interested in. We run appropriate processes and appoint the best people, and we make no apologies for that.

ARTS AND CULTURE

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA: My question is directed to the Deputy Premier, Minister for Justice and Police, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Racing. How is the Government supporting a vibrant arts and cultural sector?

Mr TROY GRANT: I thank the member for Davidson for his question. I am pleased to inform members that tonight I have the privilege of opening the twentieth Biennale of Sydney at Carriageworks, a performance art spectacular that opens our city to allow challenging art inside our public buildings and spaces and that attracts more than 600,000 people each year. We have a bonanza for our visitors, with \$600 million for upgrades and new cultural infrastructure. We are renovating the Opera House to make it easier for visitors including a new box office, upgraded concert hall and a new welcome centre. Work on the \$202 million stage one renewal has begun. We are also making the Opera House more accessible to everyone than ever before, with free or low-cost outdoor concerts on Australia Day. We have turned it into a spectacular site for visitors from across the world and entertainers including the Wiggles, Prince, Florence and the Machine all draw huge crowds.

We are proud to be upgrading the Walsh Bay waterfront to create a new visitor destination for Sydney. It will offer brand-new performance spaces, new cafes, bars and restaurants, linking the disconnected waterfront west of the Sydney Harbour Bridge to Barangaroo. I note that those opposite committed to redevelopment under then Premier Bob Carr, I believe, in 1995 or 1996. Has any member had a Labor government promise something for their electorate and not deliver? I think that announcement was before the member for Londonderry became Premier Carr's press secretary.

Today I can announce that innovative architectural firm Tonkin Zulaikha Greer—which worked on great heritage buildings, 1 Customs House and Carriageworks—has been selected to design the vibrant \$139 million Walsh Bay Arts Precinct, promised by Labor 20 years ago and delivered by this Government. Our tender process is complete and the architect will work with our greatest arts organisations including Bell Shakespeare, the Australian Chamber Orchestra and very talented Bangarra Dance Company. The firm has great experience in delivering reinvigorated heritage spaces by being sensitive to what makes our heritage buildings special while giving them a new lease on life. A development application is expected to be lodged by the end of the year and if approved, construction will start in 2017. This work will benefit everyone by creating brand-new destinations.

Visitors to New South Wales can see the best of our visual arts, theatre and music on our doorstep. We have had a 40 per cent increase in program funding in Western Sydney arts organisations,

allowing them to tell stories of Western Sydney. This is in stark contrast to the lies told in this place in a recent motion by those opposite. We have launched the Artlands Festival in October with thousands of the best regional artists in Australia showcasing what regional New South Wales has to offer. This Government is making record investments in regional arts. When people think of arts and culture in Australia they will think of New South Wales, from Sydney Harbour, to Dubbo in the west, Byron in the north and Albury in the south. Our visitors only need one ticket to Australia—it is to Sydney Airport and they will be on the doorstep of the nation's premier arts and cultural hub.

LEN SCANLAN

Ms JODI McKAY: My question is directed to the Premier. Apart from his record of breaching professional accounting standards when signing off on the election costings of the Liberal National Party, what special experience and qualifications does Queensland resident Len Scanlan bring to the NSW Electoral Commission?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: What experience does he bring? What about the fact that he was the Auditor-General in Queensland?

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. Is the Premier saying he could not find an auditor anywhere in New South Wales? He had to bring one in from Queensland?

The SPEAKER: Order! That is a vexatious point of order. The Premier is being relevant to the question. I call the member for Maroubra to order for the first time.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Len Scanlan is a former Auditor-General. What skills are required? Those opposite have raised some concerns about the gentleman in question—

[Interruption]

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Those concerns were raised after his appointment. I have been advised that we consulted with the commissioner after the concerns were raised and we asked the commissioner whether he still had full confidence in the appointee. The commissioner said he did. Those opposite come in here yet again and smear a person's reputation and are using question time for political stunts. If that is what they want to do, they must get on and do it. It is no wonder the Leader of the Opposition is under pressure from his own side. How many of the new shadow Ministers have asked a policy question? I tell you how many: none. The member for Kogarah has just been promoted to the frontbench. He is very good at leaks and that is why he has the water portfolio.

Ms Prue Car: You're better than that.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I am about to give the member for Kogarah a big tick because his local paper wrote about him. The member told the reporter that he had been studying his new portfolio and had discovered it was full of interesting policy questions.

Mr Jihad Dib: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. Madam Speaker, I ask you to ask the Premier to return to the leave of the question.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I guarantee that the member for Lakemba's first question as shadow Minister will be a policy question. I would think that those opposite would support the appointment of a former

Auditor-General as he is clearly well qualified for the job. We will continue to look after the interests of the people of this State. We will continue to deliver good policies for this State. We have the lowest unemployment in the country and we are proud of that. We are spending a record amount on infrastructure. We have more roads being built in this State in the next 12 months than all other States combined. This Government is looking after the people of this State and we will continue to do so.

JOBS CREATION

Ms ELENI PETINOS: My question is directed to the Treasurer. How is the New South Wales Government encouraging jobs creation, which in turn helps to ensure our economy continues to outperform the rest of the nation?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I thank the member for Miranda for her question as I know how much she appreciates jobs creation in her community. I take this opportunity to congratulate the member on her outstanding achievements to date. I note the presence of her parents and grandparents in the gallery today and I appreciate how proud of her they must feel.

Ms Linda Burney: You don't even like her!

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

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Ms Linda Burney: You don't even like her.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Even by the standards of the member for Canterbury, that was disgusting.

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn members that they will be removed from the Chamber if there are any further interjections such as that.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I apologise on behalf of the Opposition. As the member for Miranda stated, we have Australian Bureau of Statistics figures hot off the press. New South Wales is leading jobs growth in Australia. Unemployment in New South Wales has fallen to just 5.3 per cent, down from 5.5 per cent. That is well below the national average of 5.8 per cent. The gap between the national average and New South Wales is growing because employment levels are strong in New South Wales. In the past 12 months we have had a 4 per cent growth in employment, which is the highest level for 25 years. As the Premier stated so eloquently, in the 12 months to February last year 143,000 jobs were created in this State. That is more than half the jobs created in the entire nation. It encompasses jobs in regional New South Wales.

Based on data we have received, New South Wales regional jobs growth accounts for two thirds of the jobs growth in regional Australia. We are proud of that. We know that more jobs and security mean more support for families and communities. Yesterday the ANZ Stateometer came out, showing New South Wales is not just leading the States but extending that lead on all key data, including jobs growth. Despite global and national challenges, New South Wales is not only withstanding them but excelling by taking on the opportunities this offers. Another interesting index is the Consumer Sentiment Index, which was released recently. It showed that New South Wales is the only State in Australia where the optimists outnumber the pessimists.

Mr Brad Hazzard: It's about the same in here.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Yes. I thought that was interesting, given the number of pessimists on the other side of the House. I have noticed the facial expressions of members opposite, and they are

not happy.

Mr John Robertson: I am smiling.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Blacktown should take a point of order. He is smiling.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The Labor Party is bucking the trend; they have more pessimists than optimists. Look at the member for Kogarah: He is not happy with his promotion; he wanted to move further up the Opposition front bench. The member for Maitland is upset because her candidate for the deputy leadership was not allowed to run. The member for Maitland is not very happy.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: I refer to relevance. I am keen to know about the economy. I ask the Treasurer to return to the leave of the question.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: If the member for Strathfield is keen to know about the economy she should ask me a question about jobs and the economy, rather than engage in a smear campaign. If the member is so interested in economic policy she should ask me a question.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: There is good news about jobs and infrastructure. A number of reports have noted that this Government's very strong record on infrastructure has created business confidence and certainty that has generated thousands of jobs each month. This is a team effort. The Government is focused on job creation and leaving a strong legacy for future generations.

Pursuant to standing order additional information provided.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Given how well the economy and jobs growth is doing, the Government can take heart from the decisions it has made.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: There will be time to revisit this subject in the future. In stark contrast to the Opposition, the Government is building projects that create jobs and investing in the future. The Government is ensuring that New South Wales is the strongest State in the nation, and getting stronger each the day. Those opposite are pessimists not optimists. Jobs growth is improving but until those opposite—

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind members that interjecting is disorderly at all times. Members who continue to interject will be removed from the Chamber for the rest of the day.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Contrary to Opposition members' lack of interest in the economy, the Government knows that what matters to individuals and families is a stable, strong economy where people can be their best. People need to know that if they want a job, they can get a job; if the community needs an infrastructure project, it will get the project. People want to receive great standard education and health services. A lot of time and energy is spent ensuring we have a strong economy because we know that it matters to the people of this State.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Cessnock will come to order. He may continue to debate the Treasurer after question time if he chooses to do so. He will probably lose, but he can try.

EAST HILLS ELECTION CAMPAIGN

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK: I direct my question to the Premier. Will the Premier explain to the House why, one year after the last election, the Electoral Commission has failed to complete its inquiries into the irregularities that occurred during the East Hills campaign?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Have you asked them?

Ms Tania Mihailuk: Why don't you ask them?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: We have not asked them. If you have some particular questions or concerns, raise them with the appropriate authority. What is your allegation?

Mr Luke Foley: Your bloke smears his opponent as a paedophile.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Cessnock to order for the third time. I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the second time.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Prove it. We see it on a regular basis; yet again those opposite use question time for this. They can do that.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: I refer to Standing Order 129. It is a simple question eliciting information. It has taken more than a year.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra will resume his seat. The Premier has been generally relevant to the question.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I leave it there. Those opposite raise the matter in the House but have not raised it specifically with the Electoral Commissioner. Go and ask the Electoral Commissioner and you can have an answer to your question.

STATE INVESTMENT

Mr MATT KEAN: My question is addressed to the Minister for Trade, Tourism and Major Events, and Minister for Sport. How is the Government attracting investment and growing export capabilities in New South Wales?

Mr STUART AYRES: I thank the member for Hornsby for his question.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation from Opposition members.

Mr STUART AYRES: The member understands how important a strong economy and the capacity for New South Wales to trade internationally are to driving growth across the economy. The Treasurer and Premier said that New South Wales is kicking plenty of goals. It has the lowest unemployment rate, the strongest growth and it is endorsed by the ANZ Stateometer and the Australian Bureau of Statistics, all of which are generating confidence internationally. People see New South Wales and Sydney as a gateway into the new growth markets across the Asia Pacific. This week we have had some impressive reminders that people want to be based in New South Wales. The tech giant SurveyMonkey has opened its Asia-Pacific headquarters in Sydney. It is the company's largest investment outside the United States of America or Europe.

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Just in time for St Patrick's Day, Oneview Healthcare—the first Irish company ever to list on the Australian Stock Exchange—listed today, which shows further investment in our growing health sector. Sydney is a fantastic launch pad to get into the new and growth markets across Asia, and New South

Wales more generally is doing exactly the same thing. Plenty of people want to be based here. We now have companies such as Atlassian, Dropbox, Qualtrics, OnDeck, Google, Salesforce, LinkedIn and Facebook setting up shop in Sydney with head offices or headquarters. This is being driven by the New South Wales Government's strong focus on investment and working with the private sector. That is driving jobs growth and creating the strongest and most vibrant technology sector across the country.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] has released figures showing that New South Wales is now number one when it comes to exports. More than \$70 billion worth of goods and services were exported in 2015. In the December quarter alone, \$18.1 billion worth of goods and services came out of New South Wales. Those exports are coming from all over the State—from Miranda to the Murray and from Bega and Byron, everyone is getting in on the act. The New South Wales Government continues to drive export and investment opportunities across the globe. Recently I travelled to the United States to participate in the Australia United States Business Week, which is a fantastic program set up by Austrade and the Department of Foreign Affairs. The United States is an incredibly important trading partner. It makes huge investments in Australia—in fact, it is the number one investor.

The latest ABS figures show that in the year ending 2014 the United States invested more than \$750 billion in Australia. That is larger than the United Kingdom, Japan and Singapore combined. A significant amount of that money—indeed, the largest sum—is invested in New South Wales. There is no doubt that we live in the Asian century but it is important that we recognise strong economies like the United States and continue to work with them as trading partners. The Australia United States Business Week allowed New South Wales businesses such as Health Language Analytics, ide Group, Johnson & Johnson Australia and OzStar Therapeutics to access some of the leading medtech firms across the United States. I was given the privilege of leading the medtech stream in Boston with businesses from New South Wales and across the country.

Everyone recognised that New South Wales is a place on the move and they wanted to find out how they can access our fantastic universities, look at what we are doing in our hospitals, and particularly tap into the fantastic research that is happening in our great State. A good example of this is AtCor Medical, which is based in Ryde. Its corporate manufacturing and research and development headquarters are located here and it is now exporting to 34 countries. We have also seen growth in other sectors. New South Wales continues to have a thriving defence industry sector. It is not just important to the economy of South Australia; we have some fantastic businesses in New South Wales that are doing great work.

One I will highlight to the House is a regional-based business called Birdon, which is located in Port Macquarie. It recently won a \$259 million contract to supply specialty navy craft to the United States Army. The big thing about this is that it is a small, family business based here and its intellectual property—its own ideas—beat those of a competitive field of multinational businesses to get that large-scale contract. Quickstep, which is located in Western Sydney, is part of the Joint Strike Fighter Program. Once again, it is providing Australian and New South Wales based ingenuity. Those are the outcomes of our programs around driving investment in this State. They are providing high-quality jobs and jobs growth, which is creating new opportunities for people across New South Wales.

HUNTER REGIONAL PLAN

Mr GREG PIPER: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Planning. What consideration has been made for the provision of funding essential to implementing key components of the Hunter Regional Plan over the life of the plan, once adopted?

Mr ROB STOKES: Good afternoon everyone. I thank the member for Lake Macquarie for his question and for his commitment to his beautiful electorate and the incredible region of which it forms a part. To paraphrase the Minister for Finance, Services and Property, there has never been a more exciting time to live in the Hunter region.

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

Mr ROB STOKES: Not only is it home to the second-largest city in New South Wales but also it is home to the largest regional economy in Australia—an economy bigger than the Northern Territory, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory. It is an incredible place to visit, to do business in and in which to live.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will come to order.

Mr ROB STOKES: It is one of the regions for which we are currently preparing a spatial regional plan. As I said previously in this House, we are currently engaged in preparing regional plans for every region across New South Wales.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will come to order. The member for Cessnock will cease inciting disorder.

Mr ROB STOKES: We are preparing spatial regional plans across all of New South Wales. For the first time in New South Wales' history, every part of the State will be specifically planned at a spatial and regional level, including the Hunter. The Hunter will see incredible growth over the coming 40 to 50 years. The Hunter city—that is, the City of Newcastle and its related conurbation—will grow from about 430,000 people today to around 750,000 people over the next 40 to 50 years.

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

Mr ROB STOKES: Getting the planning for the region right will be absolutely crucial. We all know that Newcastle is the largest coal port in the world, but the region is about so much more than just coal. We know that it has some of the finest gourmet food and wine in the world. Recently the Premier and I joined the member for Upper Hunter to visit some of the world's most spectacular thoroughbred studs. We know also that in terms of education and energy innovation both the University of Newcastle and the Newcastle Institute for Energy and Resources, as well as the CSIRO in terms of its renewable energy resources, are a huge part of the growing and diverse Hunter economy. In terms of the visitor economy, the Hunter has some of the finest beaches in the world. The Barrington Tops area has incredible biodiversity and scenery. It is an incredible region and an incredibly diverse economy.

It is so important that we plan not just spatially but also for the infrastructure needs. There is plenty going on in this space already in terms of the \$790 million in funding through Restart NSW, and the Hunter Infrastructure and Investment Fund [HIIF]. Already more than 30 projects have been funded through more than \$400 million provided in the HIIF. An extra \$50 million in the HIIF is currently in the process of being allocated. There are huge infrastructure projects underway in terms of election commitments—more than \$1.5 billion for regional road projects with bypasses of the Pacific Highway, M1 and the New England Highway. An incredible range of health and education projects currently being funded are identified under the plan.

Obviously as the plan proceeds over 20 years there will be a series of funding decisions about infrastructure identified in the plan in the out years. What we are doing now in terms of infrastructure investment is laying the foundations for great prosperity and great growth in the Hunter. We know that crazy things can happen in a democracy. We know, for example, that Donald Trump is leading in the Republican race and, while any sensible person would say the next 20 years will be dominated by the great Baird-Grant Coalition Government, in a dystopian future—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Macquarie Fields will cease interjecting. The member for Prospect will cease interjecting.

Mr ROB STOKES: —who knows? We could be talking to Premier Crakanthorp. In the Crakanthorp Government—if that were to eventuate—he would have an incredible legacy of great infrastructure delivered by the Grant-Baird Government. Minister for Health Aitchison would be able to deliver new wings to the Hunter hospital.

Pursuant to standing order additional information provided.

[Interruption]

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister has been relevant to the question.

Mr ROB STOKES: We are getting on with delivering the new Hunter hospital.

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Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order: It is 73. I think that the Minister is calling into question the ability of the Minister for Health to deliver the Maitland Hospital in a timely fashion.

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

Mr ROB STOKES: In this dystopian vision of the future, health Minister Aitchison is standing in front of a crowd including Jillian Skinner, thanking the current health Minister for the incredible investment she made to get this important health project off the ground and this important piece of infrastructure built. The member for Maroubra, who by that stage will have been promoted to the waste watch committee, will be able to drive on seamless roads through the incredible Hunter on his way to beaches in the—

Mr Michael Daley: You are starting to overact like your boss.

Mr ROB STOKES: And in this dystopian future, the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Kiama, will be able to take back key seats in the Hunter region from the shortly to be ex-Labor Government. Of course we all know that that is not a vision of the future that is going to happen. This Government is going to stay in power for many years and deliver on each and every one of the infrastructure commitments provided in the Hunter Regional Plan.

JOBS GROWTH

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: My question is addressed to the Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy. How is the Government fostering innovation to support jobs and economic growth in New South Wales and related matters?

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I thank the member for Epping for his question and commend him on his keen interest in this issue. As has been mentioned previously, there has never been a more exciting time to be alive in New South Wales. Indeed, Minister Perrottet was telling me how excited he is to continue delivering exceptional levels of customer service to the people of New South Wales. Minister Constance is extremely excited to be delivering the transport infrastructure the people of this State deserve. Minister Piccoli is excited about the record investment in our education system—look how excited he is about building the schools of the future.

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn members that if they do not cease interjecting they will be removed from the Chamber for the rest of the day and will miss all remaining business. I call the member for Fairfield to order for the first time.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: Minister Dominello is incredibly excited about delivering reform and innovation in Government. Minister Skinner, of course, cannot help but be excited about delivering the new hospitals that are opening right across this State. Minister Stokes, who is not usually excitable, is incredibly excited about planning our State for the future. As he indicated earlier this week, all are

welcome into the bountiful bosom of the planning system. And I am really excited about the new age of disruption and innovation bubbling up throughout our thriving economy. Indeed, the New South Wales public service is excited to enact the plans of the Baird-Grant Government. I say to those opposite: Look at all the excitement on this side. Join us. Get excited.

We have worked hard over the past five years to make our State number one again, after it floundered at the bottom for 16 long years under those opposite. As part of our exciting economic growth strategy, we are committed to fostering an innovative and diverse New South Wales economy that drives jobs growth across the State. As members on this side know, innovation improves productivity, creates diverse and high-value jobs, and increases prosperity and social wellbeing for everyone. Innovation is essential if we are to continue to grow and prosper as a State. The future of our economy will be shaped by how we respond to and harness disruptive technology and new business models. This Government has taken the necessary steps to support and develop an innovative ecosystem for business in New South Wales.

I am pleased to inform the House that the Government's exciting \$1.7 million Knowledge Hubs Initiative establishes New South Wales as a focal point for industry and business collaboration. For New South Wales to be innovative we need to view disruption as an opportunity to improve productivity, create employment and increase consumer choice. It gives me no pleasure to inform the House that the word "disruption" has a very different meaning for those opposite. For those opposite, disruption means sacking one of the finest members of this Parliament on that side to make way for a B-grade opposition leader. I send a big cheerio to Barb. We all remember Barb. Bring back Barb. We miss Barb. For those opposite, those whacky funsters over there, disruption means promoting the member for Maroubra one day then backtracking and sacking him the next day—he is the only guy who can read a balance sheet and one of only three people with opposable digits and they sack him. For those opposite, disruption means walking into this Chamber each day and slinging unsubstantiated smear.

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order: Standing Order 129. This is entirely irrelevant to the question.

The SPEAKER: Order! What was the question? I take it the member for Port Stephens does not know. How is it irrelevant to the question? If members wish to raise a point of order they should listen to the question. The question included reference to "related matters". The member for Port Stephens will resume her seat. There is no point of order.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: On this issue as with all others, the Opposition has been found desperately wanting. I get the feeling, as someone who understands disruption and can see it throughout the economy, that there is some disruption yet to come in the leadership stakes for those opposite. Let us keep a close eye on this.

Pursuant to standing order additional information provided.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: There is a great feeling of joy, happiness and excitement in New South Wales. I say to those opposite: Turn those frowns upside down. Do not let your overlords dampen your spirit with their lifeless strategies and their mundane, cheap political slander. Get motivated, get excited and join us on this exciting journey. There is so much to look forward to. We want you to be a part of that as we move forward in ensuring that this great State becomes even greater. On related matters, as an aside, we have seen a few photos thrown around this week. Everyone has photos.

Ms Noreen Hay: Get over yourself.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: Noreen, that is great. We have a few photos of you. So have some law enforcement agencies—the kebab shop. But there is one great photo with some excited people in it.

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

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: In fairness to the Leader of the Opposition, he did not look terribly excited in this photo. Here is a nice one with Salim taken a couple of weeks ago.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will not use a prop in the Chamber. The Minister for Family and Community Services will put down the prop.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: Standing Order 129 and further to your earlier ruling. I am sure that if I look for the definition of "related" in the dictionary, notwithstanding the width of your definition, the answer given by the Minister cannot be related.

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

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: In fairness to the Leader of the Opposition, he is not looking terribly happy in the photo. I wonder what they would talk about at the table—cars or life after politics? That was probably the big one. I am sure it was an enjoyable lunch. [*Time expired.*]

Question time concluded at 3.08 p.m.

TRIBUTE TO LARRY MCGRATH

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations) [3.08 p.m.]: I seek the indulgence of the House to pay tribute to my chief of staff, Larry McGrath, who started with this Government from day one and has been on our team for five years. He made an outstanding contribution in Transport and Treasury. I wish him well for the future.

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PETITIONS

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

Wild Horse Cull

Petition requesting the Government to enact legislation to prohibit the aerial culling of wild horses on public lands in New South Wales, received from **Mr John Barilaro**.

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

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

Powerhouse Museum Ultimo

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

South Coast Rail Services

Petition requesting an hourly service from Kiama to Bomaderry station connecting with trains to Sydney, received from **Mr Gareth Ward**.

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**.

Local Government Amalgamations

Petition opposing the proposed amalgamation of the Shellharbour local government area with Wollongong City Council, received from **Mr Gareth Ward**.

Local Government Amalgamations

Petition opposing the forced amalgamation of the Kiama local government area with any other local government area, received from **Mr Gareth Ward**.

Pet Shops

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

Flying Foxes

Petition requesting the removal of flying foxes behind Barcoo Court, Toormina, received from **Mr Andrew Fraser**.

INCLOSED LANDS, CRIMES AND LAW ENFORCEMENT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (INTERFERENCE) BILL 2016

Consideration in detail

Consideration of the Legislative Council amendments.

No. 1 Police powers to give directions to persons in public places

Page 5, schedule 3 [2], proposed section 200 (2), line 37. Omit "Except as provided by subsection (3) or (4), this". Insert instead "This".

No. 2 Police powers to give directions to persons in public places

Page 5, schedule 3 [2], proposed section 200 (2), line 41. Omit "assembly.". Insert instead:
assembly,

except as provided by subsection (3) or (4).

No. 3 Police powers to give directions to persons in public places

Page 6, schedule 3 [2], proposed section 200 (4), line 13. Omit "assembly.". Insert instead:
assembly, and

(c) the direction is limited to the persons who are obstructing traffic.

No. 4 Review of amendments

Page 6, schedule 3. Insert after line 13:

[3] Schedule 5 Savings, transitional and other provisions

Insert at the end of the schedule with appropriate Part and clause numbering:

Provision consequent on enactment of Inclosed Lands, Crimes and Law Enforcement Legislation Amendment (Interference) Act 2016

Review of amendments

- (1) The Minister is to review the amendments made by the *Inclosed Lands, Crimes and Law Enforcement Legislation Amendment (Interference) Act 2016* to determine whether the policy objectives of those amendments remain valid and whether the provisions, as amended, remain appropriate for securing those objectives.
- (2) The review is to be undertaken as soon as possible after the period of 3 years from the commencement of that Act.
- (3) A report on the outcome of the review is to be tabled in each House of Parliament within 6 months after the end of the period of 3 years.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy) [3.11 p.m.]:
I move:

That the House agree to the Legislative Council amendments.

The Government supports the amendments as moved by the Shooters and Fishers Party in the other place. The amendments to the move-on powers contained in this bill clarify the Government's intent that those powers apply only to those who are obstructing traffic as opposed to a general direction to a group that is not involved in obstructive behaviour.

Amendment Nos 1 and 2 clarify the intent of the bill. They go to matters of construction only and simplify the bill. Amendment No. 3 reinforces that police will only give a direction under section 200 (4) where the person or persons to whom the direction is given is the person or persons obstructing traffic. This new requirement builds on existing protections and safeguards to the use of the move-on powers for a person or persons obstructing traffic while a part of a demonstration, protest, procession or assembly.

The bill is intended to address safety concerns created by any obstruction of traffic caused by protesters, and it is not intended to create a general power for police to give move-on directions unless required to remove a traffic obstruction. The inclusion of the amendments from the Shooters and Fishers Party reinforces the Government's intention. This amendment means that only those who are directly involved in obstructing traffic or other dangerous behaviour will be affected by the new laws. I reiterate to the House that protestors who engage in peaceful protests that do not endanger safety or obstruct legitimate business will not be affected by the laws.

The Government also supports amendment No. 4, which inserts a three-year review of these laws into the bill. The review will be undertaken by the Minister and must be tabled in both Houses of Parliament. It is appropriate to check that the changes introduced by this Government are having the

desired effect. I commend the amendments to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Legislative Council amendments agreed to.

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

Consideration in detail concluded.

BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS

Financial year 2015-16

Debate resumed from 16 March 2016.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) [3.13 p.m.]: I speak to the 2015-16 budget. It will come as no surprise that this year's budget has once again forgotten the residents of Fairfield. Minister Berejiklian made promises far and wide in the 2015-16 budget and said that cranes were visible on the city's skyline and across the regions. She also made grandiose proclamations that the Government would be delivering billions of dollars for infrastructure, which would deliver change for future generations. I will give the Treasurer the benefit of the doubt. It appears that Fairfield is nowhere in the Government's sights, given its distinct lack of plans for development or new infrastructure in my electorate. In light of this revelation, I can say with absolute certainty that the Baird-Grant Government is undoubtedly consistent. Last year in my speech on the budget I noted that I was mildly optimistic that the Government would listen to the concerns of residents in my electorate and would finally start delivering the infrastructure and services they need. My mild optimism was quashed when this year's budget was handed down because, yet again, the biggest issues in my electorate were ignored.

Last year the only project Fairfield received was the relocation of the Fairfield fire station out of the central business district, for which the Government had made a recurring commitment each year since 2011. Although additional contractors were needed to bring its construction up to speed after a series of ongoing delays, the newly constructed fire station has finally opened this year. The greatest highlight in this year's budget is the relocation of the Rowland Hassal School from Parramatta to Old Guildford. The school would have been an outstanding addition to the electorate, but it is not in the Fairfield electorate. After the last redistribution, the eastern side of Woodville Road falls in the Bankstown electorate. That was a nice try from the Government; it almost had us. We are back to square one and there is nothing notable for Fairfield in this year's budget.

Fairfield has the highest demand for social housing in the State and the applicants are on one of the longest waiting lists, which has several thousands of names, and there is no reprieve in sight. With so many struggling families on the waiting list, it is hard to understand why the Government refuses to acknowledge this problem and take action. The Kamira Court site at Villawood is still sitting empty. The only visible infrastructure is the chain wire fences bordering the vacant land. While we have inaction on one front, the social housing tenants in Fairfield are coping the brunt of this Government's penny-pinching methodology. They are left banging their heads against the wall when it comes to repairs and maintenance because the backlog is now worse than ever. So many social housing issues must be addressed not only in my electorate but across the State. I am sure this will be the topic of debate for another day.

The residents of Fairfield have been quite vocal about the lack of mobility access to some of their local train stations. Although this issue has been debated in the House, this Government has blatantly

ignored it time and again. There is no provision in this budget for the installation of mobility access upgrades to facilitate the needs of residents who wish to utilise their local train stations in Yennora, Villawood, Carramar or Canley Vale. I have spoken recently with patrons of the Villawood Senior Citizens Centre who have expressed how troublesome and onerous it is for elderly residents to use the rail network because of the distinct lack of easy access to and from the platforms. I note that some private development is happening on the old Franklin site, which will increase the number of residents in the area, yet the Government still has not addressed easy access to train stations.

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Without going to extreme lengths, elderly and mobility impaired residents in the area have no options available to them when they wish to undertake day trips. The fact that this Government voted down and amended my motion to take action to meet the needs of residents who cannot access these local stations speaks volumes about this Government's commitment to the needs of residents in the Fairfield electorate.

I would also welcome the Government dipping into its pockets and investing a bit of money to enhance the sporting infrastructure in my electorate with the aim of promoting healthy lifestyles and attracting more competition to the area. Endeavour Reserve is a perfect example of the Government's neglect. There has been a demand to enhance the netball courts there to bring them up to standard and return them to the glory days when netball State championships were played there. There is a great need for the courts to be resurfaced and for the drainage to be improved, and there are a number of subsequent maintenance requirements. If this work was done it would raise the bar and have the courts ready, once again, to host events such as the netball State championships.

Paying attention to projects in suburban grounds around the State may yield great benefits for a number of regions. Given the ever-increasing popularity of a number of sports and the subsequent demand for appropriate facilities, some real investment in suburban grounds across the State is crucial to the success of revitalising sport in New South Wales. I for one would love to see the New South Wales netball championships brought back to Fairfield.

We can all agree that the promotion of healthy living and disease prevention is incredibly important, and I commend the Government on its contributions and commitments towards this endeavour. However, we are all aware that much more can be done. As of the last census, the prevalence of diabetes among Fairfield residents was approximately 34 per cent higher than the New South Wales State average and the rate of hepatitis B notifications was 428 per cent higher than the State average. These figures are astronomical and alarm bells should be ringing to alert the Government that something needs to be done to tackle these issues head on.

The rate of type 2 diabetes has been increasing across the State. That indicates that we need to get more involved in promoting healthy lifestyles and ensuring that information on healthy lifestyles becomes common knowledge throughout our communities, particularly the culturally and linguistically diverse communities of the State, such as Fairfield. Given that type 2 diabetes is preventable, this would have a strong impact on the prevention of this disease. While I am on the theme of healthy living and the importance of raising awareness, it would be remiss of me if, as the patron of Fairfield Relay for Life, I did not mention the amazing contributions members of this Parliament make to promoting the Cancer Council New South Wales and the outstanding advocacy and the support services they offer to those who are affected by cancer.

I was surprised to see no funding in this year's budget for upgrade works at Fairfield Hospital, especially given the claims by the former member for Smithfield, Mr Andrew Rohan, that the Government was doing an amazing job and had grand aspirations to revitalise health in New South Wales. Fairfield Hospital frequently experiences crowded emergency departments and we have called for the installation of a separate waiting area for children. Fairfield Hospital, much like many others throughout our area and throughout the State, is severely crippled by bed block, which results in patient wait times blowing out, leaving the influx of patients stranded in pain or discomfort for long periods of time.

Sick or injured residents should not be forced into such situations, especially since the Minister for Health has told us, time and again in this Chamber, how great things are here in New South Wales when it comes to health. Can members imagine how it feels to be taken to your local hospital by an ambulance and placed on a trolley and left stranded in a corridor for what feels like countless hours as you wait for a doctor to pay you a visit? When someone calls for an ambulance to take them to hospital, there is a very good chance that that person is in urgent need of medical assistance and would like to get to their nearest hospital as soon as humanly possible.

Not all that long ago, I was taken to hospital after suffering a bad fall. I can tell members that when you are sitting in a waiting room in agony for hours on end to receive treatment, you really start to wonder who is to blame for keeping you in pain for a prolonged time. You begin wondering if it is due to the staff or management. As a local member you wonder if it is due to budget constraints or if the hospital simply has not allocated enough resources to deal with the volume of people it services. You only have to look around once you are taken through those magical doors to where they hide all the doctors, to realise that the doctors, nurses and support staff are running at 110 per cent. They are simply being stretched to their limits.

Mr David Elliott: Stop criticising them.

Mr GUY ZANGARI: I note the interjection from the Minister, the member for Baulkham Hills, regarding doctors and supporting staff. I do not criticise them. They are working with the budget that the Government has given them. At Fairfield Hospital trolley block is the number one issue and I invite the Minister for Corrections, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Veterans Affairs to come to Fairfield Hospital and see for himself what happens in the waiting rooms and to see the appalling conditions. The only pieces of infrastructure that this Government has put into the hospital over the past five years are the shiny new boom gates and the ticketing machine in the waiting area.

My experience is just one example of those he would hear from the many locals who have needed to utilise our local hospitals over the years, and the situation is getting worse. I have to put that on the record: It is getting worse. I sincerely hope this Government takes a thorough look at what is going on in our hospitals and finally takes some action to facilitate the needs of the communities. It is clear that waiting times to receive treatment in our hospitals are at unacceptable levels. We know that from the statistics that have been released this week. The residents of New South Wales deserve far better than this. The residents of the electorates of Fairfield, Cabramatta and Prospect certainly deserve far better than this.

Another contentious issue in my electorate is education. Quality education is one of the most important aspects in life for the vast majority of my constituents. There has been a lot of concern over the Government's cuts to TAFE NSW and the enormous impact this has had on young adults wishing to get a qualification, those who are attempting to retrain and those who wish to further their skills. As a direct result of fee hikes, course closures and the removal of particular courses from a number of TAFE campuses, many local residents have been left stranded as they are no longer able to continue their studies and find or remain in suitable employment.

The Smart and Skilled reforms the Government has implemented have not resulted in smarter or more skilled communities. I fail to see the logic behind offering fewer courses, fewer options and higher fees and how that could benefit any person who wished to study at TAFE NSW. The backlash following these drastic changes from students and teachers alike, right across the State, should have made Government members stop and think about what they were doing—perhaps even to take a moment to think about whether this was really going to benefit those in need or just completely decimate the system.

That is what we are seeing at the moment—the decimation of TAFE as we know it. Perhaps the Government simply does not care. What does the Government propose we should tell the youth of Fairfield who want to get a qualification through TAFE? Should we simply say: "Best of luck; I hope you

<31> get a good job so that you can afford the onerous fees."

Do we say, "I hope that your local TAFE offers you what you would like to study"? Is that what we do?

Mr David Elliott: Labor introduced HECS, mate.

Mr GUY ZANGARI: This situation is clearly absurd and TAFE is no longer the institution we remember. I note the Minister's interjections. Under the Carr Government I had the opportunity to retrain as an industrial arts teacher to teach vocational education and training [VET] courses.

Mr David Elliott: You should get your money back because you did not get educated.

Mr GUY ZANGARI: I note the Minister is deriding TAFE and the reforms of the Carr Government. I admire the TAFE teachers who assisted me and other teachers to retrain in order to deliver vocational education and training courses in schools. For the longest time TAFE has been the cornerstone of trade skills and furthering one's professional development. Then, of course, as with all good things, as soon as this Government had the chance, it took an axe to TAFE and hacked away at all the features that set TAFE apart from any other institution. I note that Minister Elliott is sighing. This Government has killed a remarkable educational institution in New South Wales. With unemployment figures in my electorate soaring higher and higher, it is no wonder so many residents are finding it hard to get a job.

When people are not given the opportunity to gain the necessary skills to do undertake the work that is available in the region, you really have to look at the training options available and realise they are now a mess. This Government is offering nothing for the number of disadvantaged residents in my electorate who are doing it tough and trying to get ahead. It is a damn shame, and the Government should take a long, hard look at its policies and their impact on people's day-to-day lives. I do not know whether the Government is incompetent, complacent, or both. But I do know the Government has neglected the people of Fairfield for far too long. This Government is now in its sixth year and has delivered its second budget. With another budget down, it is no real surprise that we have been duded yet again with nothing to show for it. I suggest Minister Elliott look at the budget papers to see how the budget affects the Fairfield electorate. He may need the home reader number 5 version, which is a little simpler—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Marshall): Order! The member for Fairfield should not incite interjection.

Mr GUY ZANGARI: The budget is what it is. I had sincerely hoped that this budget would provide some new infrastructure, deliver on new or enhanced services or even have some funding for one of the many areas in need in the Fairfield electorate. But the residents out west know all too well the stale taste of being let down by this Government, and it never seems to fade. I believe it is time for change and, unluckily for this Government, the residents of Fairfield are starting to realise that too. They realise that under the Baird-Grant Government the Fairfield electorate is worse off.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Marshall): I call the member for Port Stephens.

Mr David Elliott: I wish you wouldn't

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) [3.33 p.m.]: Thank you, Mr Temporary Speaker. That is a lovely start. Thank you, Minister.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Marshall): Order! The member for Port Stephens has the call.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: The 2015-16 budget was a mean budget and its effects are still being

felt by residents across New South Wales, including in my electorate of Port Stephens. As we approach the end of the financial year we can look back at the effect this budget has had on the people of New South Wales, on the services they use and on the support they rely on in times of crisis. The impacts are very real and are being felt. I will share the true story of a mum living in Port Stephens who came to see me because she was desperate. Like so many people who come to see their local members, she did not know where else to turn: She had hit a wall everywhere she had sought help. The mum is a caring, responsible woman, with children completing their education and exploring post-school options. She cares so much that her heart is breaking.

One of her sons is now in prison. She knows he deserves to be there and she does not blame anyone else for his situation. She asked me if I could help her gain some support for her son whilst he is in prison. What support does she mean? She means the kind of support that the judge ordered her son to have before he leaves prison—drug and alcohol support. Why did she want this support? She wanted it because his ice addiction is the reason he is in prison. He has committed crimes whilst on ice-addicted frenzies. The mother is mortified by the impact her son has had on other people. She is living in a world of guilt and shame.

But unlike many mothers in her situation, she has not abandoned her son. Since being put in prison he had been moved to five different prisons in just six months. At each prison, he was unable to access any rehabilitation courses. His mum had to travel long distances to visit her son, including down to the South Coast, a trip she could not afford both in terms of money and time away from her other children. Her deepest concerns were about his future. What sort of future is he likely to have? If he returns to Port Stephens, there is no support for him to tap into. There is no drug and alcohol counselling or services, there are no mental health services and a rampant ice epidemic continues to rage. He will return to a community where youth unemployment is sitting at 21 per cent, domestic violence rates are 2½ times the State average, many people are waitlisted for social housing and one in seven children is living under the poverty line.

Port Stephens residents have minimal access to vocational training, no local TAFE and ineffective public transport, which makes it is unrealistic to enrol elsewhere. I share my constituent's concerns about the future of her son. How can he have any hope for a brighter future? These are the very real impacts of a mean, short-sighted budget. The Government does not seem to understand the impacts of its decisions. Increasingly I am of the view that this Government just does not care. When I sit in this place and I hear Government representatives constantly spout about the Government's commitment to rural and regional communities, and jobs growth in rural and regional New South Wales I shake my head in wonder. This view of the world is so different from reality, so out of touch, that it concerns me.

I am concerned that government members might actually believe what they are saying. If they believe it, what are the chances of rural and regional communities getting the support they need to stop their communities from falling apart? I have lost count of the number of times I have met with community groups that are delivering services to our community, who are kicking goals and whose funding is at risk. There are also groups operating without any funding at all, such as the humpy homelessness program that provides support to homeless Aboriginal people. This group comprises a small network of women and it is kicking goals finding homes for homeless Aboriginal people. Yet it has no funding at all. It operates on the smell of an oily rag, and the energy and goodwill of good local Aboriginal women.

The statistics do not lie—21 per cent youth unemployment in the Hunter outside of Newcastle and domestic violence rates at 2½ times the New South Wales average. The Government's view of its actions in rural and regional communities is disingenuous at best. Is it not common sense that investment in local, grassroots services and supports will result in a reduction in acute presentations for mental health issues at hospital? Recently, a local health insurer questioned why so many people who present to hospitals with mental health issues return within a matter of months.

It is a no-brainer. In my community, there is no access to public mental health support. Instead,

community psychology services were ripped out of our community by this Government with no replacement services. By failing to provide adequate—or any—local services and supports, this Government is spending more on hospital services. It costs less to support people outside of hospitals. It is no wonder our hospitals are at breaking point. Hospitalisations will only increase with an increasingly older population with associated co-morbidities while ever there is no access to local services and supports. This Government has a short-sighted focus on edifices as opposed to people and the services they need.

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It is costing the Government in terms of health, prisons, and increased suicide rates. In Port Stephens alone amphetamine arrests have increased by 70 per cent. I will tell the House what my community would have liked to have seen in the budget, and it is something that is near and dear to me, a Medowie high school. Every day in my community about 1,000 children get on buses to access a secondary school. Every day children are starting their days at 6.30 a.m. so that they do not miss their bus. They sit on buses for two hours just to get to and from school. The buses they travel on do not have seat belts. The children sit three to a seat and often some of them have to stand because of the logistics of removing so many children from the community each day.

Families in the community of Medowie and the outlying suburbs of Tanilba, Karuah, Swan Bay, Salt Ash and Williamstown would accept that their kids have to be bussed to school if we did not have the numbers to support a local high school, but we do. This Government has opted, yet again, to reject the pressing need. By failing to commit to funding a high school in Medowie this Government is failing our community and, most importantly, the kids. In 1983 the Government purchased land in Medowie for a high school. What has happened on that site since is a big fat nothing. It is perfectly placed beside a 580-student primary school.

The Minister for Education has visited the site. He knows of the proposal because he has posed for photos in front of the bushland site that is flagged for a high school. Prior to the 2011 election the Minister committed that if he was part of the Government the land would be made shovel ready for a high school. What did this Government do when it won the 2011 election? It broke the promise it made to my community, to the kids who travel each day on buses when they could and should have a secondary school nearby. Every year that this Government stumps up another budget without an allocation for a high school in Medowie, it is another broken promise to the community.

I thought it would be worth looking at what the Government does spend money on in our region. Documents have been created that purport to be planning documents, but really they are nothing more than vision statements without any vision. The long awaited Draft Hunter Regional Plan, and its accompanying draft plan for growing Hunter City, are staggering in their lack of detail and lack of thought. At a recent Hunter Property Council event, a local leading planner described the documents as reminiscent of something produced in the satire, *Utopia*. Apart from the devastating lack of future thought, the plans are entirely inconsistent with the Government's proposed council amalgamation process. This Government is spending money on an amalgamation that no-one wants.

The 2015-16 budget is neo-liberal ideology hijacking common sense and common decency. It pays homage to cranes, and lets social infrastructure crumble and collapse. This is a high-taxing budget from a Premier who has since come out in support of further tax increases that disproportionately target working people and those on low wages. The Government will take \$7.5 billion more in taxes in 2015-2016 than when Labor left office, yet at the same time it is cutting services and selling off assets. This Government is addicted to stamp duty. It surely must be an addiction because only an addiction could explain the self-delusion that stamp duty will continue to grow every year for the next seven years. It will be the community that pays the price when the inevitable withdrawal symptoms begin as the housing market cools.

The deep structural problems confronting New South Wales have been fudged over with accounting tricks and slick spin. There are four more years of cuts to services such as education and

health to come. This budget is built on a bed of sand, and unfortunately it will be the people of New South Wales, and those in my community, who feel the effects when these accounting tricks are no longer enough to convince people of the soundness of this budget. On page 2 of the Treasurer's electorate report for Port Stephens, with its lovely blue official letterhead, next to "Transport Portfolio—total for Port Stephens" is a big round zero—zero dollars, zero cents. From the Treasurer's own documents there is not one dollar for transport services in Port Stephens in this budget.

Transport services throughout the Hunter have suffered under a Government that is obsessed with a 2.5-kilometre stretch of light rail it is while ignoring all other transport in the Hunter region. While the Federal Labor Government delivered initial funding to the Lake Macquarie Transport Interchange at Glendale the Government has been unwilling to commit any funding to deliver a rail station at this growth centre. This project was identified by Hunter councils as the number one transport priority for the region. The Government refuses to listen to those on the ground and instead makes Sydney-centric decisions that leave the locals to deal with the fall out. The most common complaint that I hear from residents is that transport services in the Hunter are not integrated or that they do not exist. Buses from Port Stephens do not connect with buses to Newcastle, the buses do not connect with trains and train signals do not line up with traffic lights.

Labor proposed a Hunter Transport Authority, taking transport decisions out of Sydney and establishing a local office to oversee transport planning. This Government proposed selling off a small part of the transport system in the hope that would make it better. It has sold off everything that is standing still, so now it has to sell off the things that move. Locals are not convinced that this will improve services. They predict higher fares and less frequent services, and in my community that is a dire landscape. Unemployment in my electorate has almost doubled under this Government, climbing from 5.8 per cent under the last Labor Government to more than 10 per cent throughout 2015. The Hunter region has been one of the most seriously affected regions of rising unemployment. Youth unemployment is even worse. Youth unemployment in Port Stephens rose to more than 20 per cent. It is the highest rate in New South Wales, with one in five young people unable to get a job. How can we expect young people to reach their potential?

What has been the Government's response to the growing level of youth unemployment in this region: massive cuts to TAFE and vocational training, sacking of more than 2,000 TAFE teachers and support staff, and wasting hundreds of million, possibly billions, on a new TAFE computer system that does not work. This Government has been so desperate to claw back some money from TAFE that it has started selling off campuses in regional areas. Across the State TAFE enrolments have fallen by more than 43,000. Is it any wonder that the number of school leavers who are participating in education, training or employment has reached a three-year low of 69.4 per cent—well short of the Government's target of 90 per cent. Whilst we are speaking of vocational training let us look at Smart and Skilled. It was a beautiful policy but it failed to fund vocational training in a community college for aged care and child care—two areas in which there is a skills shortage in our community. It makes no sense at all. Employers and youths have been affected and pathways lost. It was one of the few pathways available in our community.

It was a short-sighted cruel policy. If this Government continues to price young people out of vocational education then this destructive level of youth unemployment will continue. Although it is hard to fathom, it could rise. It is not just vocational education where budget cuts are impacting services. This Government has a chronic record of underspending the early childhood education budget. When spending on pre-schools makes up only 2 per cent of the education budget it is essential that every dollar is spent. The Government's own documents show that the early childhood education budget has been underspent by more than \$300 million in the last four years. It is inconceivable that a Minister could be aware of parents crying out for preschool places or relief from the highest preschool fees of any State or Territory and decide to not fully spend the early childhood education budget.

Pre-primary education provides the best return on investment of any time students spend in the

education system. That is widely known and accepted in all circles. It is vital that the Government grow its investment in early childhood education. When I say "grow its investment" I do not mean claim to be increasing the budget, but actually cut it. There must be an increase in the budget and then an investment in early childhood education. I can only hope that with the creation of a position of Minister for Early Childhood Education there will be additional oversight of this important area and the Government will fully utilise every cent of its budgeted funds.

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It is not just young people who are left worse off by this budget. I am proud to represent an electorate with an aging population. Port Stephens is a wonderful place, and it is a place that many retirees choose to call home. Port Stephens is also a regional electorate and I am fully aware that the needs of residents in regional areas are distinctly different from the needs of those living in metropolitan Sydney. This Government has been silent in the face of the Abbott-Turnbull Government's billion dollar cuts to the New South Wales health system. I note that the Minister for Education has had the courage to criticise his Federal counterpart for cuts to education across the State and to stand up for students in regional areas. But where is the Minister for Health when the Abbott-Turnbull Government cut billions from hospitals and put Medicare on the chopping block? We do not hear a peep.

My electorate has a number of high-density areas with a significant number of aged care facilities, which amounts to a community that has significant health needs. Perhaps one could even say that the health needs are somewhat greater than in other areas, and yet the local Tomaree Community Hospital has no x-ray capacity and no ultrasound. It has no ability to diagnose patients when they present to the emergency department. X-ray services are not very far away, but access to those is pitiful. With the next nearest hospital almost an hour's drive away it is clear why local residents are agitating for and demanding better health services in the area.

According to the latest figures, just over 20 per cent of Port Stephens residents are aged 65 and over. In other words one-fifth of the Port Stephens population is of retirement age. The figure becomes more interesting when you go further north of Port Stephens. Almost 40 per cent of people living in Hawks Nest, Tea Gardens, Pindimar and North Arm Cove are 65 or over. This compares to 15 percent of people across New South Wales. Many of the electorate's older residents have lived in the community for a long time; others join us later in their lives. Retirement brings many new opportunities. However, with the onset of poor health or diminished capacity it is essential that health services are easy to access, and in my community that is just not the case.

In these isolated areas ambulance response times are particularly important. It is vital that the community has confidence that help will be on hand if they fall ill or are injured. Under this Government ambulance response times are in crisis. It was recently reported that a family in my electorate living at Bob's Farm was forced to wait 43 minutes for an ambulance to arrive whilst their two-year-old son suffered seizures. I have had so many people come to my office to raise their concerns about the waiting times for an ambulance when there was in crisis. It is something that our community needs to see turn around as soon as possible.

This Government's disdain for the public health system extends to the disability care system and the provision of Aging Disability and Home Care services. Parts of the Hunter are fortunate to be within the launch sites for the National Disability Insurance Scheme [NDIS]. Port Stephens is yet to be made part of the roll out. I look forward to a time when Port Stephens can enjoy the benefits. Alongside this is the very unwelcome privatisation of the jobs of those carers who have delivered services in disability services for so many years and the undervaluing of them in that transfer of employment process is something that continues to appal me.

A budget gives a Government an opportunity to showcase its priorities. When the Premier decides that spending \$1billion on sports stadiums in Sydney is more important than TAFE or health services in regional areas then it is clear what the priorities of this Government are. In New South Wales 13.8 per cent of children live in poverty. In my electorate that number grows to 16 per cent. That is more

than 2,000 children in my electorate whose families struggle to provide appropriate food, housing, clothing and medical attention. These are also the children most at risk from the effects of regressive economic steps taken by this Government. I urge this Government to consider families and children living in rural and regional areas.

[Business interrupted.]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Divisions and Quorums

Motion by Mr DAVID ELLIOTT agreed to:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to provide that for the remainder of this sitting no divisions be conducted or quorums be called.

BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS

Financial Year 2015-16

[Business resumed.]

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Corrections, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) [3.54 p.m.]: I speak on behalf of the people of Baulkham Hills in reply to this wonderful budget handed down by the Baird Government. This budget is welcomed by all Western Sydney members of Parliament, particularly the Government members of Parliament, and I know I speak for so many of my colleagues who have identified this budget as the freedom budget—I will come back to that. It is the freedom budget because this budget confirms the freedom of liberalism, the freedom of economic reform, the freedom that is only provided when we have Liberal members on the Treasury benches.

I heard some of the fallacies and fairytales offered by Opposition members in their replies, and in my 45 years on this earth I have spent 30 of them as a member of the Liberal Party, having joined Bankstown Young Liberals on my sixteenth birthday. Bankstown is not an area known for liberalism—although I do note we have Liberal members from the Bankstown local government area, both at a Federal and State level these days, so they have obviously wised up a little bit since I left. I remember in my time as a young Liberal in Bankstown the reckless and disgraceful economic management of Labor governments, both here and in Canberra. I think it is important when we are talking about the 2015-16 Baird-Berejiklian-Grant budget that we set the parameters around exactly what a good budget is. We highlight, compare and contrast what Labor does in government.

One thing that motivated me to join the Liberal Party all those years ago was my local member in Bankstown, a man named Paul Keating. He galvanised my views on liberalism because Paul Keating was nothing short of an economic wrecking ball. Members of this House who are old enough would recall the recession that we had to have. That was a catch cry for Mr Keating because he thought he could get away with his poor economic management by way of press release and slick spin. What Mr Keating did as Treasurer was force one million people on the unemployment heap; that is one million people without livelihoods. That was an unemployment rate averaged right across the nation of more than ten per cent. Can you imagine the Baird Government waking up and having to explain to the people of New South Wales that overnight the unemployment rate in this State had gone to ten per cent? It is unfathomable.

In my position as both the member for Baulkham Hills and in my ministerial role, whenever I speak to young people I remind them about how good they have it in 2016 with a Baird-Grant Government because I remember vividly growing up in Bankstown in the 1980s what that unemployment rate did to families. What it did to families is to deny them home ownership. Not only were they

unemployed, thanks to Keating's reckless policies, but those who were employed, those who had a job had to fight a record 17 per cent mortgage interest rate. Again, can you imagine the good people of Western Sydney being forced to pay that sort of mortgage interest rate? It was a disgraceful time for Labor. It was a disgraceful waste of money and certainly wasted opportunity when this nation should have been dancing on the economic prosperity that we so richly deserved. Thankfully—as Paul Keating reminds everybody—in March 1996 the Australian electorate was waiting for Mr Keating with the proverbial brick bat. He had to face the polls and was resoundingly defeated by John Howard.

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There is a stark contrast between the economic vandalism of Keating and the actions of John Howard and Peter Costello. Within a very short time from a political point of view, John Howard and Peter Costello not only had this nation facing record low interest rates and had the unemployment rate down to around 5 per cent—half of what Keating thought was acceptable—but they also paid off debt. That is what this Government is all about. That is what the Treasurer Gladys Berejiklian and the Premier are committed to doing. They are committed to repaying Labor's debt. That is what happens in Australian politics in modern times.

It goes without saying that Coalition governments are the economic managers and Labor governments are the economic wreckers. I could spend my entire time in this Chamber reminding members on both sides what an appalling situation this Government faced when it was elected in March 2011. New South Wales was at number eight on every single economic indicator. There was no business confidence. There were no employment opportunities for young people. There was no housing boom. What we had in New South Wales was akin to what we saw in Victoria at the end of the Kirner Government. It was depression—not just economic depression but depression because there was no opportunity. Thankfully, the people of New South Wales woke up in April 2011 and were treated to Mike Baird as their new Treasurer. He has worked tirelessly not only to improve economic growth and opportunity but also to improve the livelihoods of those individuals whom the Liberal-Nationals so passionately embrace when it governs.

I place on record my gratitude to the Treasurer and the Premier for finally agreeing to put a railway through north-western Sydney. I moved to the Hills district having discharged from the Army at the end of 2002. It was an easy decision because my wife, Nicole, and I wanted to bring up a family in an area that was full of like-minded people. It was an easy decision because it was a suburb in a shire that reflected the values, hopes and aspirations that my wife and I, who are both first-generation university graduates, wanted to provide for our family. It was an easy decision because the area provided choice between good public schools and good private schools. It was an easy decision because it was an area that offered the types of services that we find in Parramatta and that are required for young families.

But what I missed when I moved to the Hills district was public transport. Having grown up in Bankstown, I was accustomed to using public transport. I foolishly believed the Carr Government when it said upon its election, and consistently and repeatedly after that, that it was going to build a railway to north-western Sydney. An article about my electorate that members may find quite amusing, if not depressing, is from the *Hills News* dated 1985. The then Labor planning Minister had come to the Hills district with grandiose designs and a great deal of promise and said that north-western Sydney was going to get its railway. That was in 1985 and the then planning Minister was none other than Bob Carr. Not only did he fail to deliver it when he was a member of the disgraceful Wran-Unsworth Government—another government that was thrown out with little ceremony—but also he failed to deliver it in the 10 years that he was Premier. In the six years after he passed on the baton to the conga line of Labor Premiers we failed to see the north-west rail.

As chief executive officer of the Civil Contractors Federation, I vividly remember the fourth attempt at that announcement. The Labor Party had the audacity to ask me to find some earthmoving equipment to move into the showground at Castle Hill. It wanted a photo opportunity because the north-west rail was going to be built—as if a bobcat was going to start that job. That is the sort of shallow, government-by-press-release, basket-weaving, muesli-munching government we had under that Labor

Administration. But now we have our railway. Not only is it ahead of schedule; it is also under budget. We have to give accolades to the Premier, the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure and the former Minister for Transport, now Treasurer, for that wonderful opportunity.

The people of the Hills district have embraced the north-west rail like a long-lost relative—like new service, and the promise and the hope that we get whenever a battle is finished. It is probably appropriate that the north-west rail has received so many accolades locally by way of visitations from communities and children. Not only are we blessed in the Hills district because we are finally getting that railway that was denied us for so long by those opposite but also we are enjoying security and safety and record levels of spending on our emergency services. For too long Labor destroyed the emergency services budget because any growth went to wages to pay off its union mates. The people of New South Wales were denied the important capital that is necessary for a world-class, efficient emergency services fraternity.

I am thrilled that when the men and women of New South Wales look around the fire brigade today they see not only modern and technically advanced apparatus but also things like brand-new safety helmets, which are being rolled out to fire stations in New South Wales. There are also wonderful subwoofers on the bottom of fire engines so that those young people who walk around wearing headphones can feel the approach of a fire engine rather than rely on hearing or seeing it.

Not only am I enjoying the record amount of spending on emergency services and the \$8 billion investment in the north-west rail, there is something very special coming to the Hills district. I am delighted to report that the Hills district has one of the highest populations of school-age children in the State. That is why we call it "Nappy Valley". That is why Kellyville is often called "Kiddieville". We love our children in the Hills district. We also love making sure that they get an education. I am blessed with a large number of schools in my electorate, both public and private. I am blessed that so many in the Hills district have been given economic opportunities by Coalition governments that allow them to make fair and reasonable decisions about whether their children will go to a public or a private school.

Just before the last election I was delighted to share the stage with the Minister for Education, who took time out of his Sunday afternoon, and the then candidate and now member for Seven Hills to announce a brand-new school at Bella Vista. This is what Coalition governments are about: getting the management of our economy correct, seeing where the services are needed, and planting them fair and square in the community. I am thrilled about and very much looking forward to the new Bella Vista school because in the Hills district we thrive on opportunity and education. As I said, this is the freedom budget. This is the one that Coalition voters and members can dine out on. This is the budget that is providing uber opportunities—more jobs, better services and stronger communities.

More importantly, I know from my experience in the business community that it is all about confidence.

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Residents of the Hills shire are fortunate that their shire borders the wonderful city called Parramatta—and Parramatta residents are lucky to be our neighbours. Parramatta is this nation's oldest settlement. It is the home of one of the great rugby league teams, some this nation's oldest and greatest schools, and sporting greats like Richie Benaud. Parramatta is a suburb that people can aspire to live in. It is a fantastic and advanced city that provides services above and beyond those that we received when the Labor Party was in office.

Any question about the Coalition Government's commitment to Western Sydney will be put to sleep by any reckoning when one considers the investment that the people of Parramatta will be receiving. They will get brand-new stadiums, billions of dollars will be invested in Westmead Hospital, and a wonderful new museum will be built. Those opposite—in their inner-city, sandal-wearing way—have campaigned against the new museum. The people of Parramatta deserve that wonderful museum and they are looking forward to their light rail. It is embarrassing when one considers the many public

transport services in Parramatta. People can catch a ferry from Parramatta wharf to the city or to Manly; they can catch a bus anywhere in the Parramatta local government area to the city; they can catch a train from Parramatta and get to the city in under half an hour; and Parramatta has wonderful opportunities for those who enjoy walking and cycling.

I conclude by saying a hearty thank you to the Treasurer and the Premier for the Community Building Partnership program. It allows members to identify exactly what is needed in their electorates and where government support should be directed. I am thrilled that funds were given to the Girl Guides in Baulkham Hills. They graciously asked me to be their patron, and I accepted humbly. Funding has been allocated to schools to provide shaded areas. We are working with local government to ensure that the services being offered to the people of Baulkham Hills are well received. I am delighted that we have a Premier and a Treasurer with real corporate experience, unlike those opposite who recruit and promote only those with links to unions. I am delighted we have a budget that has made New South Wales number one. I am delighted that over the past five years the economic indicators show that New South Wales has gone from number eight to number one. I am delighted to be a member of this Administration because it represents everything that is great about liberalism.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) [4.13 p.m.]: It is a pleasure to see some passion in the House such as that displayed by the Minister for Corrections, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Veterans Affairs. The derisory laughter from our opponents demonstrates their unfortunate lack of numeracy skills. I am delighted to be speaking on behalf of my electorate of Ku-ring-gai about this year's budget. In my inaugural speech I addressed many economic matters such as GST reform, tax reform and competition policy reform. I am pleased to see that since then some of those matters have come onto the national agenda. It is important to reflect on the necessity for tax reform because the budget forward estimates reflect the concerns that everyone in our State and around Australia has about hospital expenditure.

Tax reform was placed on the national agenda by our Premier, who is an outstanding national leader. Our GST rate in Australia is lower and has a more narrow base than comparable countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Canada and many European OECD countries. It is important that both sides of politics come to grips with the catastrophe of looming health costs in our budget forward estimates. There is a degree of urgency. The budget demonstrates that too much of our revenue is based upon stamp duty revenue, which is of course susceptible to the rise and fall of the property market. Many people in Ku-ring-gai have high property prices and they are shouldering the burden of indirect taxes. Tax revenue should not be collected only from people's once-in-a-while purchase of a family home. It should be spread around many more smaller transactions so that important services such as health, education and others can be funded properly and more consistently.

In my inaugural speech delivered less than 12 months ago I also spoke about the importance of small business to the national economy, to the State economy and, more importantly, to the local economy of Ku-ring-gai. I spoke about competition policies and competition laws, and the need for reform. I was happy to read that the Federal Government has put competition policy reform back on the agenda. There is a necessity to change the current test under the old section 46 of the Trade Practices Act, which covers the misuse of market power, to give it a much more powerful basis. Challenging uncompetitive conduct should be applauded in New South Wales because it will assist our economy to grow and it will improve the strong budgetary fundamentals that were announced by the Treasurer in the budget.

It is important to note the things the Treasurer drew attention to in the budget that are important to the people of Ku-ring-gai. The Treasurer announced a strong budgetary surplus of \$2.1 billion. That was an important surplus that did not take into account any revenue that will accrue to the Government as a result of its policy to recycle assets, such as the lease of electricity poles and wires.

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That \$2.1 billion surplus did not take into account the recently announced \$10 billion windfall that accrued

to the State coffers under the first tranche of the electricity asset recycling policy. That is very important because it means the budgetary position is even stronger than the \$2.1 billion surplus announced by the Treasurer. That \$2.1 billion surplus was driven largely by changes to Commonwealth grants, stamp duty revenue and GST payments. The surplus was on the back of a budget that did not squander revenues through wasteful spending. The Treasurer should be commended for the spending restraint in the budget because it is important not to spend stamp duty windfalls produced by a property boom. It is important to behave responsibly so that structural spending increases that cannot be funded through a more evened-out revenue stream are not built into the budget.

The budget revealed that economic growth in New South Wales was faster than in any other State over the previous year. Economic activity in New South Wales was robust. Rising wealth boosted household consumption. There were record low interest rates. A big driver of the fast growth that had been experienced in our State was the Government's investment in infrastructure. That investment triggered a massive investment in the construction of new dwellings. As the Treasurer announced, the State is buzzing. We all get the benefit of that, including people in Ku-ring-gai. It is important to remember, in this context, that business conditions and confidence in New South Wales is better than in any other State. We have great confidence; there is a buzz in the State, and that is the context in which the Treasurer delivered the budget.

The Government is coming up to its fifth anniversary. The budget delivered at the fourth-year anniversary was able to take advantage of the hard yards that had been done in the first term of this Government—the setting up. The great investment in infrastructure created a virtuous circle of business confidence and greater investment in housing. That all came together to deliver that very sizeable \$2.1 billion surplus. I would like to talk about jobs because the Ku-ring-gai electorate is blessed with young people. The electorate has some absolutely fantastic schools. People love to come to Ku-ring-gai to raise families, educate their children and live in one of the great parts of Sydney and this State.

The Treasurer announced in the budget that New South Wales was, on another economic indicator, leading the country in jobs growth. The latest Australian Bureau of Statistics figures showed that 15,300 jobs were created in New South Wales in May of last year alone—the month when the Treasurer delivered the budget. It is important that as teenagers are working towards their Higher School Certificate they have an optimistic environment in which they can see employment opportunities on the horizon. That is a very strong motivator for our youth. It is a very strong part of the environment that has been delivered in New South Wales by this Coalition Government for the people of New South Wales.

The Treasurer announced a small business employment incentive scheme, which gave employers up to \$2,000 per new employee for businesses that do not pay payroll tax. Shortly after the budget was announced, legislation was passed to deliver on that commitment. The Government's announcement is significant in the context of what I have just said about the importance of employment incentives for youth. There is an expectation that the scheme will create many new jobs, which is very desirable. The Treasurer also announced an investment of \$2.3 billion during 2015-16 to reform vocational education and training. That is also incredibly important for our youth. It is vital for them to have training to skill them for the sorts of jobs that they hope to engage in after school.

I would like to talk about housing, which is also important for youth at school and beyond. Housing affordability remains an important issue within the community. Dwelling investment increased by 7.8 per cent over the year to the March quarter leading into the announcement of the budget. That contrasted with the significant underinvestment by the previous Labor Government. Through the four years of Coalition Government an environment was created in which dwelling investment picked up significantly. Supply was constrained during the Labor years, particularly because of the Labor policy of not expanding the housing supply in Western Sydney. Bob Carr trumpeted that as one of his great achievements as Premier of New South Wales, but it ensured that young people in Sydney were not able to purchase their own homes.

Economics 101 says that if the population increases and the supply of housing stays the same or does not increase at the same rate, housing prices will go up. The constraint on the supply of housing had a direct impact on housing affordability. An increase of 7.8 per cent over the year to the March quarter in dwelling investment helped housing affordability, which had been so damaged under Labor.

Mr Edmond Atalla: Stick to law.

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Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: I have an economics degree as well, do you? Homeowners purchasing a new home or building their own home were offered a \$15,000 grant in the budget under the First Home Owner Grant. In 2014 the Government provided almost 8,000 First Home Owner Grants for new homes, an increase of 25 per cent on the previous year. Since the budget we have been delighted by the social housing announcement by the Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Social Housing, Brad Hazzard. The idea of recycling property held as public housing into more social housing is an important development to increase the supply of housing in New South Wales. It is an important development for less well-off people in our community and it should be applauded by those opposite. They were unable to increase the supply of housing when they were in government.

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

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

SYDNEY HARBOUR NATIONAL PARK DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

Discussion on Petition Signed by 10,000 or More Persons

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse—Attorney General) [4.30 p.m.]: I welcome Watsons Bay residents to the public gallery today. In particular I welcome Roger Bayliss, Louise McElvogue and Julie Bayliss who are strong advocates on behalf of the Watsons Bay Residents Association. I fully support this petition and I am pleased to address the important issues raised by those who signed it. Before going into detail of the proposed development and why I share the community's concern about its impact, let me emphasise that Watsons Bay is a peninsula of unique natural beauty in my electorate. Watsons Bay is a destination suburb and peninsula. It is a tightknit community and quiet residential neighbourhood that generously shares their home with visitors, both local and international.

As well as being one of the most picturesque places in Australia, Watsons Bay has a very special place in our nation's history. Aboriginal Australians from the Cadigal community camped, fished and collected shellfish around what is now Watsons Bay, and there are numerous carvings of animals, fish and people on the rocks overlooking the beautiful ocean and harbour. The first European landfall in Sydney Harbour occurred in Watsons Bay on 21 January 1788, when Captain Phillip and his party came ashore and camped overnight at Camp Cove on their way to settling the site for what is now Sydney.

Today, South Head is known for its sheer ocean cliffs, dramatic scenery and rich military history. Watsons Bay is Australia's oldest fishing village and it remains a thriving local inlet that is popular for scuba diving, snorkelling, boating and swimming. With stunning views along Sydney Harbour and gorgeous beaches, Watsons Bay is a special place to experience some of Sydney's finest harbour and coastal scenery.

At Watsons Bay is the Pilot Station, which is now converted into a boating safety education centre that was opened last year. The Pilot Station has existed since 1959 and it replaced a lifeboat station that was at the same site from 1907. This place has a long history of helping save lives at sea, and so the conversion of this heritage building into a centre for boating safety education was entirely appropriate. It is a unique and respectful way of honouring the important heritage of Watsons Bay and the Pilot Station.

I am uncomfortable with the Gap Bluff proposal, which has a plan for six buildings owned by National Parks and Wildlife to be refurbished and fitted out by Gap Bluff Hospitality for use as function centres, short-term accommodation and a restaurant. The residents and I share strong concerns that this proposal substantially increases the intensity of use for Gap Bluff, Camp Cove Beach and Green Point Reserve. This proposal, especially the restaurant planned for 32 Cliff Street near Camp Cove Beach, would negatively impact on the amenity for local residents and alter the local community atmosphere that has historically been identified in this very special area of Sydney, New South Wales and Australia. Among other things, there will also be inevitable increases in traffic in an area that already generously struggles with the impacts of visitors each and every weekend.

I strongly commend Roger Bayliss, leader of the Watsons Bay Residents Association, for his and others' tireless efforts in bringing the Watsons Bay community together and articulately, generously, respectfully and forcefully representing their views. I also thank my colleague the Minister for the Environment, and the Minister for Heritage, the Hon. Mark Speakman, for meeting my local residents on a number of occasions to discuss their concerns, hear their concerns, and for taking the time to visit them and inspect the Watsons Bay area. Watsons Bay is a truly unique part of Sydney, the State and the nation. I will fight so its unique character and beauty are never compromised.

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) [4.35 p.m.]: I support this petition all the way from the Blue Mountains and I appreciate the Attorney General outlining her reasons for supporting it. It has to be said that there does not seem to be a patch of grass or building in Sydney that the Premier does not want to commercialise or sell off, and that includes our precious national parks. The Gap Bluff proposal for Watsons Bay in South Head National Park is just one of many. I understand there was little consultation with the local community in the early stages of the proposal. These historic buildings have been used for a variety of purposes including staff accommodation and they have been vacant since March 2014 as the Office of Environment and Heritage has looked at ways to commercialise these assets.

It is not the role of our national parks to be used primarily as wedding and function venues. It should not simply be up to the Minister for the Environment, who is supposed to be the champion of national parks, to approve such major changes to the use of our national parks. There are models of adaptive reuse for buildings within national parks that preserve heritage while allowing for some commercial activity without destroying the amenity of the park or surrounding areas. That is what we must strive for in this case. I love national parks and I am very fortunate to represent the beautiful Blue Mountains. I live within a World Heritage listed area and concur with the Save Watsons Bay group in its request for the Minister and the Premier to undertake investigations for alternative uses for national parks properties in the South Head National Park that are sympathetic to the natural environment and contribute to the preservation of the peace and tranquillity of this area of Sydney Harbour's foreshore.

The Auditor-General's report into the management of historic heritage within national parks recognised the potential to lease heritage buildings to the private sector. However, the report also stated that the agency should harness opportunities for low-impact corporate sponsorship and community involvement in the management of historic buildings. The report also stated that the agency has recognised the importance of the adaptive reuse of heritage assets to support their longer term viability and has directed targeted funding to this purpose. The aim is to deliver good heritage outcomes together with social and economic benefits.

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I note the commitment that a variety of individuals and parties were asked to make. It was a commitment sought by the Blue Mountains Conservation Society. They asked that commercial development not occur inside national parks in the Blue Mountains region. I was happy to support that request during the 2011 election period. The National Parks and Wildlife Amendment (Visitors and Tourists) Act 2010 allowed new exclusive commercial operations in national parks to flourish and for proposals to be put forward that looked at commercial operations. What my conservation society sought was assurances from their representative that any such proposals would not compete with restaurants,

cafes, guest houses and other tourist facilities in the townships of the Blue Mountains. I am pleased that I live in such a beautiful place where we have amenity outside our national park. It is important to see well managed national parks that attract people. I support the petition.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Heritage, and Assistant Minister for Planning) [4.40 p.m.]: As Environment Minister, I understand and hear the various community voices in this petition. In October 2014, the Office of Environment and Heritage [OEH] publicly released an expression of interest inviting proposals to retain and adaptively reuse up to nine buildings at Gap Bluff and South Head in Sydney Harbour National Park. The objectives for the Gap Bluff area within the park were outlined in the expression of interest. These included: providing sustainable visitor experiences—in this context sustainable means considering the social, cultural and economic impacts as well as the environmental impacts—providing high quality and diverse visitor experiences; ensuring that the operations conducted are economically and financially viable and sustainable; that OEH obtains an appropriate financial return; and ensuring that the operation, management and marketing of the operations are consistent with and satisfy the objectives of the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974, the Sydney Harbour National Park Plan of Management 2012 and relevant conservation management plans.

The expression of interest outlined that the Government sought to develop community and commercial partnerships to provide the best possible public use and presentation of these unique properties. Properties the subject of the expression of interest were formerly used for short-term accommodation, weddings and functions, and staff accommodation. Bearing this in mind, and through the public market exercise, OEH identified Gap Bluff Hospitality as the preferred respondent. OEH entered into negotiations based on Gap Bluff Hospitality's proposal to adapt and lease six of the buildings, namely, the armoury, officers' mess, constable's cottage and houses at Green Point, Cliff Street and Gap Bluff cottage.

As part of the proposal Gap Bluff Hospitality submitted a review of environmental factors. Preparation of and consultation on the review of environmental factors is one of the steps required in the planning assessment process and must take place before any approval decisions are made. Public exhibition of the concept plans and review of environmental factors closed in November 2015. I thank all the residents, park users and the wider community for feedback on the proposal. OEH received around 165 public submissions and is collating this feedback. Today's petition responds to the concept plans and review of environmental factors proposal from Gap Bluff Hospitality. I acknowledge the petition and understand that it is essentially seeking a rejection of the review of environmental factors proposal. The National Parks and Wildlife Service aims to deliver exceptional visitor experiences through imaginative reuse of historic buildings and the development of new tourism, hospitality and visitor services.

Benefits in seeking private sector partnership include: the provision of services to the public that the Government is not well placed to deliver; improved public access to and enhanced public enjoyment and appreciation of sites; and significant investment in, and maintenance of, important heritage assets. Under the National Parks and Wildlife Act the Government is legally required to invest any revenue from rent or licence fees back into park management activities, including fire, pest and weed management activities as well as threatened species programs. The money does not return to the New South Wales budget. Gap Bluff Hospitality will have an opportunity to consider the issues raised in submissions during public exhibition of the review of environmental factors and this petition and provide a response to OEH. This may include seeking changes to the proposal. I thank the member for Vaucluse for her advocacy and everyone who signed the petition.

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Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) [4.44 p.m.]: I speak in support of the petition tabled by the Attorney General and member for Vaucluse. I thank the many people in the gallery for joining us today. The core function of a national park is to conserve flora, fauna and heritage and to provide the community with opportunities to experience nature. The Sydney Harbour National Park is adjacent to my electorate and hosts ocean cliffs, military history, stunning lookouts, secluded beaches and a national park. There are few natural and heritage havens in inner Sydney that remain untouched and we must protect those

that are left.

Many of my constituents have contacted me, alarmed about plans for the Gap. Indeed, people across the city and country are concerned about the plans to commercialise this region. The petition we are debating was signed by more than 12,000 petitioners and I understand that this was achieved in around six weeks. Woollahra Council also objects to the proposal. The proposal is to upgrade six buildings for private function centres, restaurants and visitor accommodation. This could bring up to 1,000 visitors to the peninsula each day and will privatise the function of buildings. A new path will be created for a minibus to transport guests to and from the function centres. The proposal must be rejected. It will destroy the tranquillity of the national park, commercialise its function and impact on the natural environment.

The proposal will spoil the experience of most park users. The majority of visitors come to the park to escape the hectic city and appreciate the park's natural environment and heritage values. Their experience is one of passive recreation, an experience needed by city dwellers, whose day to day lives involve traffic congestion, city noise and work, and family pressures. The hundreds of visitors who will be drawn to the park to attend functions with amplified music and alcohol will disturb the peace that the park users seek. Visitors attending functions such as weddings will be there for that purpose and not to enjoy the park. The impact of the changes will be felt by those who visit the park to enjoy the natural environment.

The Watsons Bay Association's submission to the proposal highlighted that a solution that helps maintain the heritage buildings through private partnerships can be found by working with local communities, as occurred at Chowder Bay and the Quarantine Station. Leasing to a private commercial functions operator is not the only option. No grassroots process has occurred but there is still time. I join more than 12,000 petitioners—people in my electorate and across the city and the country—to call on the Minister for the Environment to prioritise conservation of this pristine, small, fragile ecosystem and historic park and to reject the proposal to turn it into a commercial function precinct. I support the petition.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) [4.46 p.m.], by leave: The Greens support this petition which calls for a rejection of the proposal by Gap Bluff Hospitality. It calls for an investigation into alternative uses for the properties in the Sydney Harbour National Park that are sympathetic to the natural environment and contribute to the preservation of the peace and tranquillity of the area of the Sydney Harbour foreshore. I acknowledge members of the Watsons Bay Association in the gallery today and thank the residents and community members who have worked hard to obtain over 10,000 signatures—from what the member for Sydney said there were more than 12,000 signatures—on the petition.

Watsons Bay is an important heritage conservation area. As the member for Blue Mountains said, Sydney's green space is under attack. We are seeing our urban sanctuaries, our urban canopies, our precious public open green space, under attack from a variety of sources. This is unacceptable. Outrageous plans are made for function centres at South Head, proposals for spaghetti junctions taking 3½ acres off Sydney park, and the attempt to build stadiums on Kippax Lake in Moore Park. It must be stopped. We should respect our parks, our green space and our national parks. They are sanctuaries for people, especially inner city residents who value them as a space to think, ponder and relax, but also as areas that are the lungs of, and give life and vibrancy to, our inner city areas. The plan of management for the Sydney Harbour National Park clearly states:

Private activities and events that impact on the park's values and accepted customary visitor enjoyment will not be permitted.

For the benefit of the visitors to the gallery, it is a privilege to have had two Ministers speak in debate on the petition. I hope that those Ministers take our concerns back to the Cabinet and put an end to this outrageous plan to build a function centre in the beautiful South Head area. The Watsons Bay community must not be destroyed by encroachments on this national park.

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An important factor that has not been mentioned is the significance of the Aboriginal heritage of the area. The Gadigal people have not been acknowledged or recognised anywhere in the proposal. The importance of that recognition is continually overlooked. In acknowledging the value we place on our national parks and green spaces we must also acknowledge their value to the first Australians, who have a connection to country that goes back much further in time. The Greens stand strong on this issue. We do not want any communities to lose open green space, whether to spaghetti junctions and polluting tollways in my electorate of Newtown or to function centres on South Head or to the proposed stadium on Kippax Lake. The Greens support the petition. We stand with the community in saying that green space is precious. [*Time expired.*]

Discussion concluded.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Melanie Gibbons): I thank visitors in the gallery for attending the debate. You are more than welcome to remain for the next debate.

Pursuant to sessional order community recognition statements proceeded with.

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION STATEMENTS

PETA BAKER RETIREE

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [4.50 p.m.]: I thank, congratulate and wish good luck to Peta Baker, who recently retired after 20 years employment with Cuddlepier Early Childcare Learning Centre in Wingham. Apart from a stint in Sydney for a few months, Cuddlepier is the only place Peta has worked. As a student at Wingham High School her year 11 work experience placement was at Cuddlepier. She gained her accreditation at Taree TAFE. Peta says that child care has always been her passion. She says that working with children and watching them grow has been a blessing. She has watched children, and years later their children, achieve early childhood milestones. Some of the children who helped Peta celebrate on her last day were Mitchell Cole, Cooper Rasmussen, Harley Buddle and Indiella Spriggs.

PUNCHBOWL RAILWAY STATION

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) [4.51 p.m.]: On Saturday 12 March I was proud to speak at a public meeting in Punchbowl to highlight the increasing concern of locals about the lack of easy access at their railway station. I was joined by the mayors and councillors of Canterbury and Bankstown councils. I thank them for their support. I thank 2016 NSW Local Woman of the Year Pauline Gallagher from Riverwood Community Centre for her leadership in setting up the meeting and for her engagement of a broader team to escalate the campaign. The meeting was exceptionally well attended and highlighted the genuine concern of the community.

I acknowledge in particular the hard work of three students from the University of Western Sydney who are currently on placements at the Punchbowl Community Centre. The students, Anil Sami, Tochukwu Nwosu and Peter Batty, assisted by Olive Tongiahoe from Riverwood Community Centre, immediately saw the community need and threw their energy into the campaign. I commend them for their commitment and strong community focus. I look forward to the day when there is easy access to Punchbowl railway station.

WORLD'S GREATEST SHAVE

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Heritage, and Assistant Minister for Planning) [4.52 p.m.]: Each year Australians are asked to show their support for the Leukaemia Foundation's most important fundraiser, the World's Greatest Shave. More than 150,000

people took part in this year's event, held from 10 to 13 March, with volunteers shaving, waxing or colouring their hair in support of this worthy cause. Each day 34 Australians are diagnosed with leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma. Money raised from the World's Greatest Shave helps the Leukaemia Foundation to fund life-saving research and provide families with the support they need.

I am particularly delighted to acknowledge the remarkable efforts of Kirrawee High School in raising \$34,447 for the World's Greatest Shave. The response from the students, staff and school community has been extraordinary. Kirrawee High School raised the most funds of any team in New South Wales and was ranked ninth in Australia. I commend everyone who supported this vital fundraising campaign and thank them for their magnificent contribution.

PROSPECT ELECTORATE CATHOLIC EDUCATION FACILITIES

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) [4.52 p.m.]: On this St Patrick's Day I recognise the incredible contribution of the principals, teachers, staff, nuns, brothers, reverend fathers and other members of religious orders to Catholic education in the electorate of Prospect. There are two Catholic education officers in Prospect, one from the Archdiocese of Sydney and one from the Diocese of Parramatta. I acknowledge Nagle College and St Michael's Catholic Early Learning Centre, Blacktown; St Anthony's Primary School, Toongabbie; St Paul's College and Our Lady Queen of Peace Primary School, Greystanes; Mary Immaculate Primary School, Bossley Park; and St Gertrude Catholic Primary School, Smithfield. They are all great institutions. I thank them for caring for and educating our children.

ALBURY WODONGA BRAVE HEARTS DRAGON BOAT CLUB

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) [4.53 p.m.]: I congratulate all the paddlers, coaches and organisers from Albury Wodonga's Brave Hearts Dragon Boat Club. The crew of 15 members aged in their fifties and sixties has qualified, for the first time, to compete in the Club Crew World Championships, to be held this year from 1 to 7 April at the A. M. Ramsay Regatta Course in Adelaide. The purpose of Albury Wodonga's Brave Hearts Dragon Boat Club is to provide an outlet for those affected by a cancer diagnosis, whether directly or indirectly. I wish the team every success for its debut appearance at the world titles.

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WORLD'S GREATEST SHAPE

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) [4.54 p.m.]: I recognise the West Hoxton World's Greatest Shave party held on Sunday 13 March 2016 at West Hoxton Shopping Centre. The World's Greatest Shave is held annually to raise funds for the Leukaemia Foundation to enable it to continue its work. The West Hoxton event featured entertainment and contributions from a range of community groups and members. The official opening ceremony commenced with Chinese lion dancers. The Leukaemia Foundation was represented by Sarah Hozsack. The chief organiser of the West Hoxton event was Elaine Su. She should be warmly congratulated for her efforts as should those who helped her. It took an extraordinary amount of organisation for the event to occur and the credit for that belongs to Elaine Su. Also present at the event was the centre owner, Tony Noisi, and my colleague from the other place Ernest Wong.

FLETCHER PILON, AUSTRALIA'S GOT TALENT WINNER

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) [4.54 p.m.]: Congratulations to Fletcher Pilon from Wamberal on the Central Coast in the electorate of Terrigal who was crowned the overall winner of *Australia's Got Talent* this week. The Terrigal High School student was voted the top performer in Monday night's grand final. At just 14 years old, Fletcher performed his audition piece *Infinite Child*, which he wrote for his younger brother, Banjo, who died tragically at the young age of 10 in 2015 while skateboarding near his home. Fletcher joined thousands of entrants at the auditions for *Australia's Got Talent* to break through and join just 30 for the semi-finals. He was then one of the top five contestants to be voted by the public to go through to the grand final. Fletcher, who is in year 9 at Terrigal High School, is quite an inspiration to his many friends and fellow students. Along with everyone else on the Central Coast, I congratulate him on his fantastic win and wish him well in the future. Well done, Fletcher.

TRIBUTE TO BILL JAMES

Ms NOREEN HAY (Wollongong) [4.55 p.m.]: Today I acknowledge the sad passing of Bill James, a volunteer in policing who worked with the Lake Illawarra Local Area Command. Bill started out as a volunteer in policing [VIP] in 1996 at the then Warilla Police Station, which is part of Lake Illawarra Local Area Command. Bill had retired and at the suggestion of his wife he applied for a VIP role. He spent 20 years assisting Lake Illawarra Local Area Command in an administrative role. He was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia on 10 June 2002 for his service to the community, particularly through sport on the New South Wales South Coast. In 2011, after 15 years of service, Bill was awarded the Rotary Clubs of New South Wales Volunteer in Policing Volunteer of the Year Award. This was very much deserved. Bill has been described as "one of the good guys" and "a good man with a big heart". I extend my condolences to Bill's family, friends and colleagues at this sad time, and especially to his wife, Carmel, and his son, Adam.

NSW TOUCH FOOTBALL JUNIOR STATE CUP

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie—Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education) [4.56 p.m.]: The NSW Touch Football Junior State Cup is the premier weekend event on the touch football calendar with no fewer than 210 teams converging on Port Macquarie for this legendary event. Thousands flocked to Port Macquarie regional stadium and surrounding sporting fields of Tuffins Lane to witness some top quality junior touch football. Congratulations to the Nicole Williams coached 10s girls team who made the top eight in the state and the Bec Howard coached 10s boys who also made it to the top eight, with the assistance of Anna Gleeson and Michelle Marino. The under 16s girls coached by Toni Gibson won two matches in the tournament to finish fifth in their pool. Their counterparts in the boys finished third in the State. Special congratulations go to the 14s girls team, capably coached by Cath Eichmann, who made it through to the semi-finals.

GERALDINE DEAN CAMPBELLTOWN WOMAN OF THE YEAR

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) [4.57 p.m.]: I ask the House to acknowledge the 2016 Campbelltown Woman of the Year, Geraldine Dean, for her outstanding commitment to the Campbelltown community. Geraldine was nominated for the award for her work with Youth Solutions. She has been involved with Youth Solutions for 13 years, including the last five years as chief executive officer. Youth Solutions provides health promotion services along with drug and alcohol prevention to young people in the Campbelltown region. Geraldine and her team have worked tirelessly to ensure that young people in the Campbelltown region get the best out of life. I cannot think of a better person for this award than a passionate community services worker and mother of two beautiful children who has been a leader to young people in the Campbelltown community. She is well respected. Geraldine has done an amazing job with Youth Solutions. I ask the House to join me in congratulating her on being named the Campbelltown Woman of the Year for 2016.

SERVANTS OF JESUS

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) [4.58 p.m.]: Last week I had the pleasure of visiting the Servants of Jesus in Seven Hills. They do fantastic work in their Hope Outreach—Food Parcel Service program. An authorised agency for Foodbank NSW, it distributes weekly food parcels in a relaxed family-friendly environment around a sausage sizzle and refreshments. This service has been provided to local recipients of Centrelink benefits since 2009. It does amazing work in our local community. Its current services include weekly food parcels that include varying additional items for families with children under five years of age including nappies, wipes, formula and baby food as well as morning tea and engagement with volunteers. It also provides annual school supplies packs tailored to primary and high school needs. I thank this fantastic community group for its contribution to the betterment of our local area

and our society as a whole.

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JASON HOOPER, WORLD MASTERS GAMES 2017

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) [4.59 p.m.]: Tonight I recognise disabled athlete Jason Hooper as he prepares to compete at the World Masters Games in 2017. Jason, who was born with Aped syndrome, has been swimming competitively for more than 26 years. In that time he has won more than 100 gold medals. Next month he will take on the New South Wales multi-class swim meet with the intent of securing a spot at the games. In 2009 Jason won the silver medal at the World Masters Games held in Sydney. He is training hard to win gold at the 2017 games. I wish Jason all the best in his endeavours as he once again makes Mount Druitt very proud.

TRIBUTE TO JEAN POWELL

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) [5.00 p.m.]: Tonight I recognise Mrs Jean Powell, who has recently retired from her position of Director of the Before and After School Care centre at Sylvania Heights Public School. For over 23 years Mrs Powell has nurtured positive educational outcomes for the students of Sylvania Heights Public School, ensuring that their education did not stop when the bell sounded at 3.00 p.m. Known as "grandmother" to many children at the school, Mrs Powell has enjoyed watching the local children grow up.

Mrs Powell has been a strong role model and much-loved member of our local area. Her devotion to the youth of our community is admirable and her presence at the school will be missed. Before and after school care centres bring together teachers, childcare workers and the community and play a pivotal role in ensuring the positive development of our children throughout their education. I again publicly acknowledge Mrs Powell's extensive contribution and wish her well in her future endeavours.

RONDA HOPKINS MEMORIAL SEAT

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) [5.00 p.m.]: I recently participated in the unveiling of the Ronda Hopkins memorial seat in St Marys. This memorial seat will serve as a symbol of Ronda's contribution to our community. Ronda was dedicated to the betterment of our society, especially for those with a disability. Her dedication was evident by her contribution to the Penrith City Council Access Committee and her involvement with the Penrith Disabilities Resource Centre, most prominently as the chair of the resource centre's fundraising committee.

Ronda's own experience of becoming wheelchair bound after a stroke enabled her to see the issues many members in our community and throughout the State face due to a lack of vital services and facilities, specifically in regards to mobility. To this end, Ronda worked hard to see the accessible pathway built between Penrith and St Marys. It is testament to her proud legacy of disability advocacy. I was proud to participate in the unveiling of this memorial seat, which is an enduring symbol of Ronda Hopkins and all the work she did to improve our community.

LEE FURNESS, WOMEN IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AWARD

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.01 p.m.]: I congratulate Lee Furness from Shellharbour City Council on receiving a highly commended award in the New South Wales Government's Awards for Women in Local Government. In her role as director, Mrs Furness is the most senior woman at Shellharbour City Council. Mrs Furness has led many of the council's major projects over the past four years and has inspired her staff to help transform the council into a customer-focused organisation.

Mrs Furness has overseen the overhaul of council's information technology and associated processes. This has included the upgrading of the network, implementation of an enterprise budgeting

module, managing payroll and assets, rating development applications and implementing a customer service model. Mrs Furness has been instrumental in encouraging women to apply for and be successful in jobs that traditionally have been male-dominated positions. Currently two out of three new engineering cadets are women.

Mrs Furness has facilitated flexible working hours and the ability to work from home for staff who have care responsibilities for children. She has assisted a number of women to undertake tertiary studies and professional development. She also has been the officer in charge of council liaison for the \$550 million Albion Park Rail bypass project. Mrs Furness provides strong leadership with the utmost integrity and is an outstanding role model to younger women in local government to reach their full career goals and potential. I congratulate Mrs Furness on her highly commended award and thank her for her distinguished and ongoing contribution in the Shellharbour community.

BARRIO PORTUGUESE FOOD AND WINE FESTIVAL

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) [5.02 p.m.]: I was proud to attend the thirteenth annual Barrio Portuguese Food and Wine Festival last Sunday. Petersham, in my electorate, has the largest concentration of Portuguese migrants in Australia. In fact, Portuguese is one of the most commonly spoken languages across the inner west. Barrio showcases the very best of Portuguese culture and cuisine. At the Barrio festival the air is filled with the wafting smells of charcoal, chicken and chorizo and the streets are packed with colour and dancing. I congratulate Marrickville Council on again staging this fantastic event and thank the Sydney Portugal Community Club and Portugal Madeira Club for their ongoing leadership and tireless support of the community.

I also acknowledge the beautiful and important mural by Luis Geraldese, which has been saved by Marrickville Council. Made of 8,000 traditionally hand-painted tiles, the mural is a colourful depiction of the Portuguese community in Sydney. The future of the mural was uncertain after the building it was located on was sold. The council, in partnership with the Portuguese community, in particular local Antonio Cerqueira, stepped in and successfully relocated the mural. I am thrilled that the community can continue to enjoy the mural in its new home as a grand gateway at Petersham. I warmly thank everyone involved in the Barrio Portuguese Food and Wine Festival and congratulate Sydney's Portuguese community.

LAUREN PARK, NATIONAL HISTORY CHALLENGE AWARD

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.03 p.m.]: The National History Challenge fosters inquiry-based learning about the past amongst primary and secondary students. I commend an outstanding Pymble Ladies College student from my electorate, Lauren Park, for her 2015 entry in this competition. Her exemplary essay on Gough Whitlam's leadership and legacy won both national and State awards in the democracy category. Lauren travelled to Parliament House in Canberra to receive her medallions and prizes at a ceremony hosted by the Federal Minister for Vocational Education and Skills. Lauren's thoughtful reflections demonstrate an admirable readiness to engage with history, politics and current affairs. I applaud Lauren's example of youth political engagement and wish her all the best in her future endeavours.

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EAST MAITLAND COMMUNITY MEN'S SHED

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) [5.04 p.m.]: Last Saturday I visited the East Maitland Community Men's Shed as a part of Men's Shed Week. It was an opportunity to celebrate the amazing role that the Men's Shed plays in the prevention of social isolation. The Men's Shed provides a safe, friendly and welcoming place for men to work on meaningful projects that contribute to our community. I was pleased to learn there are 14 female members of the East Maitland Community Men's Shed.

Participants undertake all sorts of activities, such as leadlighting, watch repairs, carpentry, gardening, bike repairs and metal work. The inclusion of female members ensures that they too reap the

benefits offered by the Men's Shed and their contribution adds to the overall enjoyment of everyone. Those attending the Men's Shed learn new skills and experience valuable human interaction, which helps to keep dementia and depression away. I congratulate the East Maitland Community Men's Shed on doing great things in the Maitland community.

STEBERCRAFT SEVENTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [5.05 p.m.]: I congratulate Stebercraft, also known as Steber International, on its seventieth anniversary. Founder Bruce Steber said his biggest success was having the right woman by his side, his wife of sixty-five years, Beryl Steber. Their three sons, Alan, Graham and Colin manage the business and are supported by their wives Debbie, Kim and Roxanne. Bruce had the foresight to move from Sydney to Taree in 1973.

Steber manufactures a diverse range of commercial and recreational vessels, ranging in size up to 18 metres, for domestic and overseas markets. Steber is also a partner in the development of an unnamed surface surveillance vessel, which is a drone on water, and the Steber Solar Sailor Bluebottle, which is expected to have worldwide naval and private enterprise applications. Steber's research and development program has won many industry profile awards, including Australian design awards and boat of the year awards.

COUNCILLOR JAMES MCDONALD

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) [5.06 p.m.]: I acknowledge the outstanding work of local Independent councillor James MacDonald, who serves on Rockdale City Council. Councillor MacDonald provides fantastic representation on behalf of the people of Sans Souci, where I grew up, as well as the entire Rockdale city community, which covers the majority of my electorate.

Whilst Councillor MacDonald services his ward admirably on all local government issues, it is his passion for sport and our local sporting clubs that I most admire. Councillor MacDonald currently serves as chair on the Rockdale City Council Sports and Recreation Advisory Committee, which has driven a number of projects that have substantially improved sporting facilities across the city of Rockdale. Councillor MacDonald is a decent and honest man who shows integrity in his work for local government. I am proud to work with him in improving our local area and I am even prouder to call him my friend.

MOVEMENT STUDIOS DANCE SCHOOL

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie—Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education) [5.07 p.m.]: I recognise and congratulate the students of Movement Studios dance school on their selection to perform at the prominent Victorian Dance Festival. Ten girls from the Laurieton dance school have been chosen to perform at the festival, which will take place in Warrnambool. The girls will attend workshops during the day and have been invited to perform their hip-hop choreography at the gala showcase performance.

Movement Studios director Jo Rowan is excited to be able to take her young dancers, who range in age from their teens to their early twenties, on what is their first tour. Jo has had the girls and her local community focused on raising \$6,000, which is needed for transport, accommodation and expenses for the trip to Victoria. I congratulate Jo Rowan and the students of Movement Studios dance school in Laurieton and wish them the best of luck at the Victorian Dance Festival.

LIVERPOOL SERBIAN COMMUNITY

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) [5.07 p.m.]: I recognise the Serbian community of Liverpool and particularly acknowledge that last Saturday they had a ground blessing ceremony for the development of a new church, St Luke the Apostle, in Flowerdale Road, Liverpool. On Saturday morning a large crowd

attended the lengthy ceremony, which was followed by a function at the Bonnyrigg Sports Club. The Archbishop of Pec, the Serbian Patriarch, was present. The Archbishop has visited a number of Serbian churches around Sydney. It was a significant event for the Serbian community, who make up a substantial portion of the community in Liverpool. Since establishing the church in Flowerdale Road, they have made a valuable contribution to the ethnic diversity of Liverpool. I thank the Parish Council for their invitation.

SHANNON CROFTON, EMERGENCY SERVICES VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) [5.08 p.m.]: I acknowledge Mr Shannon Crofton, who was named the first New South Wales Emergency Services Volunteer Officer of the Year at the inaugural Rotary New South Wales State Emergency Services Awards last year. Shannon Crofton is a Southern Sydney State Emergency Services [SES] volunteer and Hurstville firefighter. He started volunteering with the SES in 1989 and has since become one of the world's leading experts on floods and flood rescue. In 2012 he was honoured with the prestigious Higgins and Langley Award for Outstanding Achievement in Flood and Swiftwater Rescue.

Mr Crofton is the first Australian and only the third individual since the inception of the awards to receive this award. The first award was presented to Jeff Langley, whom the award is named after posthumously. A Churchill Fellow, Mr Crofton has studied the use of helicopters in flood rescue and has received two bravery awards. He has also received many awards of recognition for his work as a senior firefighter. His passion for preparedness and education has been integral to the development of flood rescue capabilities within the New South Wales SES and other emergency services. I thank him for his hard work.

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CURE CANCER AUSTRALIA FOUNDATION

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.09 p.m.]: In Australia one in two males, and one in three females, will be diagnosed with cancer before they are 85 years old. The Cure Cancer Australia Foundation seeks to end this blight on society by investing in promising emerging researchers through research grants. I congratulate Cure Cancer, currently led by chief executive officer Floyd Larsen, on investing \$24.5 million in 453 cancer research funding grants since 1967. One of the original founders of Cure Cancer Australia is from my electorate of Davidson. From humble beginnings, the Cure Cancer Australia Foundation now partners with other cancer research organisations to host multiple community events and grassroots fundraising campaigns. I look forward to its promotional "Barbecue" coming up in April, which I understand will be attended by Cure Cancer Ambassador and Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce.

Community recognition statements concluded.

Pursuant to sessional order private members' statements proceeded with.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

SOUTH WEST RAIL LINK

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) [5.10 p.m.]: I again draw to the attention of the House issues concerning the South West Rail Link used by a number of my constituents. I previously raised concerns about faults in design and substandard construction work on the project. In particular, I have talked about the extraordinary speed restrictions placed on trains travelling over the bridge over Camden Valley Way, the faulty and dangerous electrical work that caused train drivers at the stabling yards to suffer electric shocks and the failure of the electrical system to be grounded properly. A further design and planning

problem was recently brought to my attention by my constituents. A constituent has written to me about this particular design fault on the South West Rail Link. The constituent's letter states:

On a recent train trip to Parramatta I found both car parks at the newly built Edmondson Park Rail Station were full. This was at 12.30 p.m. on a Wednesday. I had to park two kilometres away from the station.

This is obviously a reflection of what really happens when governments proclaim a project is ahead of time and under budget. With this Government, it means the project has not been done properly. I again quote from my constituent, who continued:

I find this not good as one should be able to park at the station. I would think that the planners would have built a multi-level car park with the increase of housing in the new estates.

My constituent correctly points out multilevel car parks have been built in recent years at nearby stations such as Holsworthy and Glenfield. Granted that this is done at nearby stations, it seems remarkably short-sighted for the Government not to have done it at this station and at other South West Rail Link stations. In practical terms, this decision has real consequences for public policy. To once again quote my constituent:

I have no bus to the Edmondson Station from home so I drive. Sydney trains would like us to use trains but if limited services and car parks are in place then I will have to drive. I would say the same problem will arise at Leppington Station in due time.

This is really quite unacceptable. The constituent whom I have quoted is certainly not the only person who has complained to me about the inadequacy of parking facilities at stations on the South West Rail Link. I have heard stories from people who have driven to the station, could not find a parking spot and then driven off in disgust. This reflects quite inadequate planning and inadequate thought by the Government. Not having enough space for commuters at new railway stations reminds one of *Yes Minister* and the approach to hospitals: Hospitals are very efficient if you do not have to worry about patients.

This comes on top of other quite serious concerns about the South West Rail Link. The original speed limit for the trains at the bridge over Camden Valley Way was 115 kilometres per hour. On 27 June last year this was reduced to 10 kilometres per hour in one direction and 40 kilometres per hour in the other. Rail staff tell me that this restriction was imposed because of fatigue issues, which is obviously a very grave concern on a brand-new rail link. The restrictions were only fully lifted last month, so they were in place for eight months—a matter of considerable concern on a brand-new rail line.

Last month I reported to the House the fact that train drivers were experiencing electric shocks as they left the stabling yards at Leppington. On investigation, it was discovered that large amounts of electrified circuitry at the stabling yards were not grounded or not grounded properly. All the platforms at Leppington stabling yard were cordoned off. Rail crew had to get off the trains using cab steps on the train, remembering to keep three points of contact. All those issues—inadequate parking facilities for commuters, fatigue in newly built bridges, electric circuitry not being properly grounded—demonstrate the cavalier way in which the Government has approached this project. Ahead of schedule and under budget the project may have been but it was also badly planned, badly done and sloppily executed. The people of south-west Sydney deserve better.

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INGHAM INSTITUTE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY FUNDRAISING EVENT

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) [5.14 p.m.]: Last week I attended the third Ingham Institute annual fundraiser to celebrate International Women's Day. The event aimed to raise funds for diabetes research. Ingham Institute is world renowned for its groundbreaking medical research. The vision of Bob

Ingham, AO, in 1996 to give something back to the south-west came to fruition on 23 October 2012, when the institute was opened and its work began. As a charitable organisation, the institute has been fortunate to receive the long-running support of some great community members, including the Ingham family and Lady Mary Fairfax.

Congratulations to the institute's chairman Terry Goldacre and the board—Amanda Larkin, Professor Annemarie Hennessy, Arnold Vitocco, David Hazlett, Debbie Killian, Jim Marsden, OAM, Professor Jeremy Wilson, John Hexton, John Ingham, Professor Michael Barton, OAM, Robynne Cooke, Dr Teresa Anderson, Tim Bryan, Tony Perich, AM and Professor Rodney Phillips—on their outstanding leadership. The lunch was supported by the following wonderful businesses. Thank you to Hope Partners, Narellan Pools, Butterfly Partners, Commonwealth Bank, Macarthur Chronicle, Infine Print, McGrath Real Estate, Fitzpatrick Group, Sene Gence, Diamond World Jewellers, Ibis Styles, Dove Partners, Absolutely Fabulous, Cameron Brae Group, Coutts Solicitors, Vitocco Constructions, Marsdens Law Group, C91.3, United Cinemas, Dan Murphys, Elucent and Barenz Camden. I know that their support is very much appreciated.

No event such as this can come together without a very hardworking committee. The girls did a wonderful job making the day a memorable one. Thank you to Adriana Care, Sophie Cooley, Natalie Herd, Emma Macfarlane, Leanne McNamara, Victoria Nasso and Tracey Roberts. The focus of the event was on celebrating the women involved in medical research and their amazing hard work to find that little something that can make a change to someone's life. Patron Lyn Ingham and Ambassador Irene Vitocco expressed their gratitude to the sponsors, event committee and the women who contribute to medical research.

Master of ceremonies, Channel 7's Natalie Barr, addressed the attendees highlighting the fact that inspirational women in medical research should be recognised for their roles as part of International Women's Day. Natalie did an outstanding job, which was a highlight of the event. I had the opportunity at the event to announce the Camden Local Woman of the Year Award. Adriana Care, principal solicitor at Coutts Solicitors, is one of those quiet achievers. Adriana is also the president of the Narellan Chamber of Commerce. Since Adriana came to office the chamber has become one of the most respected and hardworking chambers in New South Wales. Through her business, Adriana has a passion to bring to her clients a positive attitude, and her hardworking team aim to assist in all aspects of legal advice.

Adriana has been admitted as a solicitor of the Supreme Court and the High Court of Australia. But that is only a small part of Adriana's contribution to the Camden and Narellan communities. Adriana always steps up when there is a need to help out those who are less fortunate, through her business, as a sponsor or as president of the Narellan Chamber of Commerce. Adriana brings her unwavering passion to be there for others through her business and the chamber. Adriana has managed, through her work, to put Narellan on the map as a thriving, growing business hub. Her award as Local Woman of the Year is very much deserved. Sadly, many people who contribute to the community go unrecognised for their selfless commitment, and in some small way this is recognising Adriana as one of those people.

Congratulations to Adriana and all the other women who were recognised recently for their commitment to their communities as part of International Women's Day. We all thank you for your hard work. Talking about outstanding women, the Minister for Health is in the Chamber. She is a huge supporter of the Ingham Institute and the great work it does through Liverpool Hospital. The Minister has been a wonderful supporter of hospitals in Camden, Campbelltown, Liverpool and Westmead and other hospitals around the State. I thank the Minister for her efforts and her contributions to our community.

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Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER (North Shore—Minister for Health) [5.19 p.m.]: I advise the member for Camden that last week I spoke about my three nominees for women of the year awards. They were all medical researchers. One of them was placed on the Local Women of the Year Honour Roll for the North Shore, another was named Harvey Norman Young Woman of the Year and the third was a Premier's Woman of the Year finalist. The member for Camden is quite right: Women working in medical research

are absolutely fabulous.

BALMORAL BURN

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER (North Shore—Minister for Health) [5.20 p.m.]: Registrations open today for the 2016 Balmoral Burn, which will be held on 29 May to raise funds for the Humpty Dumpty Foundation children's charity. The funds raised will be used to purchase medical equipment such as infant resuscitation cots, ventilators, humidifiers, vital signs monitors and other important pieces of equipment to assist sick and injured children. I am pleased to say that the Balmoral Burn has raised more than \$25 million in its 16 years. The Humpty Dumpty Foundation was established 26 years ago to support children's services at Royal North Shore Hospital. Established by Paul Francis, who has executive chairman and is still involved along with a dedicated team of expert advisers and volunteers, Humpty Dumpty has raised more than \$50 million and now helps hospitals across the country, including 188 in New South Wales. It is important that the community continues to support the Humpty Dumpty Foundation's generous donations to our hospitals. Second only to the New South Wales Government as the largest provider of medical equipment to our children, the foundation does marvellous work.

The Burn, as it is fondly called by those who have sprinted—or perhaps crawled—up the steep 420-metre Awaba Road hill was the brainchild of former Wallaby Phil Kearns after his daughter Finn was helped back to health at Royal North Shore Hospital following a tragic incident 17 years ago in which her father backed over her in his car. Phil is still very involved in the Balmoral Burn and it is pleasure to see him and so many other high profile people involved in the run. While it is no doubt physically demanding, the Burn has become one of Sydney's most popular fitness and social events with individuals, families and corporate teams participating. People in wheelchairs, schoolchildren and people with pets also take part and there are many race categories to suit different ages. There is also the famous—or infamous—Humpty's Hill of Hurt obstacle course challenge like you might see in a high level military exercise. Whether a person is a seasoned local who takes on the hill each year—and a number do—or a newcomer who wants to give it a go, I encourage everyone to get involved.

Mr David Harris: Have you done it?

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: While I have not done the sprint I am happy to say that a couple of years ago when it was pouring cats and dogs I stood at the top of the hill shrouded in umbrellas and raincoats welcoming home 18 members of Team Skinner. They included three members of my family, my two sons and a daughter-in-law, and numerous of my staff and other Ministers' staff who are for some reason addicted to running. It was a real credit to all of them that they did so very well.

Mr Anthony Roberts: Joe Hockey's done it.

Mrs JILLIAN SKINNER: Joe Hockey has walked it and been involved with other fabulous fundraising events for the Humpty Dumpty Foundation. I should mention that Kerry Chikarovski has been a board member since the day it was founded and is a very strong supporter of the event.

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Participants can also be sponsored for their hard work on race day, with online fundraising available to support their efforts. I think it is a fantastic day. I will attend the event and I will be there the night before at a big fundraising event to encourage people to donate towards a wish list. People can follow events on www.humpty.com.au, which I invite members to do. As I said, registrations open today and close on Friday 27 May.

TAXI INDUSTRY

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) [5.24 p.m.]: I wish to bring to the attention of the House an issue of major concern to many of my constituents, that 17 December 2015 will stand as a dark day for thousands of families across our State as that is the day on which their investments in taxi plates were

destroyed by a stroke of the pen of the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, Andrew Constance, following the legalisation of ridesharing. For decades mum and dad investors have made the decision to invest in a taxi plate with the implicit guarantee of a government-backed asset, one whose value would be supported by our New South Wales State Government. Most of these people were not looking for big returns, just a stable, steady yield that would see them through retirement and maybe something to leave behind for the children or grandkids.

Historically, we must also remember that many taxi plates were given to war widows. I cannot put into words how disgraceful it is that our Government would devalue a small gesture of kindness to people who gave so much to our nation. The Government is offering compensation of \$20,000 to each individual taxi plate owner, a paltry and entirely inadequate sum when one considers that many of them were purchased for up to \$450,000 under a year ago, and are now worth less than half that amount—and in the long run they are potentially valueless. I find it blatantly hypocritical that the Government would sneak through such drastic reform without adequately considering industry compensation, when in the past many senior members of the Government were so concerned about Labor Government's Passenger Transport Amendment (Taxi Licensing) Bill 2009, which had only very minor impacts on the price of taxi plates.

While there are many good arguments I might make as to why it is unconscionable for the Baird Liberal Government to deregulate without fair compensation, I think these arguments might be better made in the words of the member for Ryde and Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation, Victor Dominello, whose pursuit of better regulation does not seem to include fair regulation. Victor Dominello said in 2009:

The Government has failed to provide any evidence to back up the claim that the bill will not adversely impact on the owners of existing plates. As such, it is not offering any compensation for potential loss in the value of people's hard earned investments.

Minister Dominello went on to speak of the plight of a number of his constituents, including a World War II veteran and his wife. The member for Ryde seemed highly concerned about the investments of his constituents back then, but there is not a peep now. Then there are the words of the then shadow Minister for Transport, now our State's Treasurer, Gladys Berejiklian. It would behove the Minister, now that she actually holds the purse strings and could provide the funding to fairly compensate taxi plate owners, to listen to what she said in 2009:

Some people have put their entire life savings into a taxi plate—it is their main investment in life—

I have many constituents coming into my office about this matter, so please listen to what the Treasurer said—

but their world will be turned upside down if the bill is passed in its current form.

We want reform, but we want to ensure the reform is fair and that people who, as recently as last month, purchased a plate valued at \$400,000 will not see that investment diminished overnight because the State Government should have worked harder in consulting with the industry.

We are talking about a lot of small businesses who own either one plate or two plates, some of whom have borrowed heavily to pay for those plates and now find themselves in a position where their investment could be severely diminished if the Government's plan continues without consideration of the impact on them.

We are indeed talking about a lot of small businesses in the hands of working families, and I am sure they would appreciate an equal level of support from the Treasurer now that she can offer them more than mere words.

Mr Alister Henskens: Let us have a bit of passion.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: There is passion alright. Finally, I remind the House of the words of Premier Baird when he was shadow Treasurer in 2009. In a backflip bonanza he said:

Legislation has been brought before us but the Government has not determined how it will protect those who have current plates or transition them to the new regime. I do not know how any Government can be run that way.

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This was our Premier. I do not know how any government can run that way either, although Premier Baird seems to have changed his mind on that point. He went on to say:

The Government has a moral and economic obligation to look after those who have made significant capital investments under an existing regime but have not been given any signal about change. Such a signal would be normal in a transitional arrangement, informing the market that there will be a change. But it is not acceptable that the Government allows plates to be purchased in a very short time frame but changes the game plan and rules.

While I am not opposed to industry reform, if members opposite are not willing to live up to their previous sentiments about the nature of decent and fair government, thousands of everyday citizens will be left footing the bill for their heartless decisions. I call upon the Premier to make good and properly compensate the decent people of New South Wales who have underpinned our taxi industry for decades.

CYCLISTS SAFETY

Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH (Coogee) [5.30 p.m.]: Today I make a small contribution on the issue of cycling. Cycling is a popular undertaking in the electorate of Coogee. Many people cycle for pleasure. Right next door we have Centennial Park, which is a mecca for cyclists, both recreational and sporting cyclists. Many people choose to commute to the central business district or other places of this great city on bicycles. I have always been a great advocate for cycling. I believe that cycling is beneficial for easing traffic congestion and improving the health of people, particularly as we are always hearing that people are becoming more and more obese.

I have received a number of emails and telephone calls recently about the changes to the penalties that apply to cyclists. The change that interests me the most is the increase in fines for not wearing a helmet. Some people have said to me that the only person who suffers is the one who chooses not to wear a helmet and then has an accident. That is not entirely the case. People have also said to me that this is becoming a nanny state and that we are making cyclists wear helmets when they do not need to. People have said that in other countries around the world the laws do not require cyclists to wear helmets and that making it compulsory for cyclists to wear a helmet will dissuade people from getting onto a bike.

Back in the 1970s we made the wearing of seatbelts compulsory in this country. One could rightly argue that the only person who suffers by not wearing a seatbelt is the person who chooses not to and that nobody else in a motor vehicle will suffer. I did not drive less because I had to wear a seatbelt—in fact, I do not know anybody who drove less because they had to wear a seatbelt. Interestingly, the fine for not wearing a helmet has just been increased to the same level as the fine for not wearing a seatbelt. In addressing the nanny state assertion, in many ways we do already live in a nanny state. I, for one, support measures such as free access to health care—if you have an accident you need not worry about the consequences of the cost—and we have workers compensation and motor vehicle accident insurance.

The fact is that if a cyclist has an accident and was not wearing a helmet, it is very likely that they

will suffer a severe head injury, which means they will increase the cost to the health system of this State and they may be potentially maimed for the rest of their life and will have to be cared for by the State. Cyclists should do everything they can to minimise that risk and that is why I am supporting the roads Minister and the transport Minister in increasing fines to get people to wear helmets whenever necessary.

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People have asked to see the epidemiological studies. Over the last week I have scoured a number of university studies from around the world and found that compulsorily requiring people to wear helmets has not decreased cycling and has increased a person's survivability in an accident. I am happy to continue discussing this with my community. I cycled a great deal as a child and was involved in accidents, either being hit by or hitting cars or pedestrians. I now realise how vulnerable I was. I will continue to discuss this with my community.

MYALL LAKES ELECTORATE JOBS GROWTH

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) [5.35 p.m.]: I inform the House of the Government's efforts to create jobs and help businesses in the Manning Great Lakes and Myall Lakes area in my electorate. Government supports regional business through the Office of the NSW Small Business Commissioner and the regional activation program. The Small Business Commissioner was established by this Government and is travelling around regional New South Wales assisting businesses. A few weeks ago in Taree I attended, together with several local businesses, an online business workshop. We listened to experts explain how to improve online business, whether through websites, sales or apps. That is growing. I had a breakfast meeting with the Small Business Commissioner and business owners to talk about future possibilities.

The online workshops provided information about activating small business opportunities through specialised programs, assistance and tools to support skills development and future sustainability. That program included one-on-one time with experts the following week. There was a great deal of interaction between the business people and the experts about how this can boost sales and create jobs. The Manning area is experiencing a transition. It was the second largest manufacturing base outside Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong but a number of businesses closed prior to 2011. They included a car component company, Schefenacker, which moved its business to South Australia and UGL, which closed its rail manufacturing plant. Both occurred as a result of Labor Party policies. There were 683 rail carriages ordered from China. It was due to those opposite.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): Order! I call the member for Blacktown to order for the first time.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD: The Government offered a payroll holiday to the company to reduce its tender costs. The unions came to see me and said that they were embarrassed by the Labor Government's decision to contract 683 carriages to China. They came to me to see whether anything could be done; they understood the lengths this Government went to in trying to save the company.

The Government is looking to other employment opportunities in the Myall Lakes area. The biggest employment sector is health. At TAFE there is nurse education and an allied health training and education centre that is now being upgraded in order to train more people for the health sector. The National Disability Insurance Scheme [NDIS] will generate 25,000 jobs in New South Wales. People can receive training at the Taree TAFE. There is a significant disability population in the Manning Great Lakes area.

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This Government has introduced the employee incentive program providing \$2,000 for each new employee. The Government has been discussing the program with employers in the area. The New South Wales Government has led the way by also employing people. For example, at the Manning Base Hospital medical staff have been employed—two new anaesthetists; two new intensive care specialists; a new general surgeon; a new orthopaedic surgeon; an oncologist for the first time; a new obstetrician; six

new registered nurses; two new midwives; and staff for a new stroke unit. All those positions are government jobs and that has come about through the increased budget for the hospital. We have also employed extra police in the Manning Great Lakes command, increasing the authorised strength by 16. There are now 16 additional police working in the area. Through the increased education budget a number of teachers have also been employed in the area [*Time expired.*].

PENRITH DISABILITIES RESOURCE CENTRE

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Trade, Tourism and Major Events, and Minister for Sport) [5.44 p.m.]: I speak this evening about the Penrith Disabilities Resource Centre [PDRC]. The PDRC began in 1988 in a small office space at the rear of the Emu Plains library. An advisory body comprising people with disabilities was also established to provide expertise on local issues. In May 1996 the PDRC moved to an accessible shopfront in Henry Street, Penrith where it remains today. In 1997 the advisory body became the Penrith Disabilities Action Forum, an official subcommittee of the PDRC. That subcommittee gives people with disability the support and advocacy they require to act on matters that affect them.

The PDRC is headed by the compassionate and determined Denise Roberts, truly one of life's lovely people. I have had the pleasure of meeting and working with her since I have been a member of this House and she is a great advocate for the disability sector, together with the many others who work in that area. The PDRC, with its permanent staff and its 18 volunteer information officers, many of whom have a disability or care for someone with a disability, is able to offer a wealth of advice and can offer assistance in locating service options.

I mention a member of Denise's team, Murray Wilcockson. Murray was diagnosed as a child with congenital glaucoma. He underwent a number of surgeries and maintained approximately 25 per cent of his vision until the age of 10. However, due to illness, he had both eyes removed. In 2006 Murray applied for a guide dog and a suitable dog was found. That dog was Dawson. Murray and Dawson have been inseparable for the past nine years and are well-known around Penrith. Murray first became aware of the PDRC whilst attending the Penrith vision impaired group in 2003. He was asked to fill a vacancy on the management committee and in 2004 he was elected secretary of the PDRC before becoming president in 2005.

An achievement that is particularly special to Murray was when he stepped up to run the PDRC when it was without a coordinator, a feat that he states he could not have achieved without the help of Michaela Frommel and Sarah Barns. During his time with the PDRC various committees and organisations have formed, such as the Penrith Disabilities Action Forum. Murray has been instrumental in achieving results for those with mobility issues, such as the upgrading of the taxi rank at Penrith railway station, safe road crossings and the construction of a footpath to assist a blind lady to navigate her way to the bus stop. I recall working very closely with Murray at the taxi rank at Penrith railway station, making it more accessible for people with disability.

Although Murray has had many good times and wonderful experiences, he states that one of his happiest days was the day that Denise Roberts was appointed as coordinator of the PDRC. Murray announced his retirement from the PDRC at the end of last year. I congratulate him on his dedicated service over more than a decade.

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I also make mention of Darren Maroney. Darren is a regular friendly face who visits my office to deliver the PDRC's "Readers Resource" magazine, along with other important information about events, services and activities that assist people in the electorate of Penrith. By educating and informing the community, and through its advocacy, the PDRC works to change the way people with disability are stereotyped. Denise and the team at PDRC inspire those around them to take the attitude that achievements can be made regardless of the problem at hand. Their tireless work is a credit to the Penrith community. They continue to improve the lives of people with disability and those of their families

and carers.

I emphasise how important this group is. Strong leadership is provided by Denise and Murray, who have been the heart and soul of the organisation for a long time. The resource centre has offered a helping hand and comforting conversation to many people over a number of years. It continues to advocate strongly for people with disability. It continues to work with service providers across the community in the transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme. I am proud to represent these people. Long may the fantastic work of the resource centre continue to support people with disability, their families and their carers in the Penrith community.

BLACKTOWN ELECTORATE HOUSING

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON (Blacktown) [5.45 p.m.]: I begin by telling the House a story about a disturbing issue in the electorate of Blacktown. Imagine that you and your family have saved for a long time, through hard work and perseverance, to purchase a house. In this housing climate you decide to build your family home from scratch. There are a number of new estates in my area. After months of building and anticipation you experience joy and jubilation because the day is approaching for your keys to be handed over by the builder. You have given notice to the real estate agent that you will be moving out of your rental property and into your new home. But, days before Christmas, you suddenly discover that your house is being held to ransom. The building company refuses to hand over the keys. It is asking for more than the agreed sum, more than the fixed price that you were given. It is asking for 3.75 per cent more than the agreed sum. The building company says that if you do not pay more money it will not give you the keys.

This is not a fairytale; this is a true story. This has happened to more than 70 residents in the electorate of Blacktown who purchased home and land packages from Landcom and engaged a company called Champion Homes to build their homes. Champion Homes is a building company that has serious questions to answer about how it treats customers, families, who have contracted it to build their new homes. This is not the first time Champion Homes has been mentioned in private members' statements in this place. In 2000 my comrade the member for Liverpool, Paul Lynch, spoke about the questionable building practices of Champion Homes in south-west Sydney.

It is not only the 70 residents in Blacktown who are affected; people who are building homes in an estate called Thornton, in the electorate of Penrith, have also had the same experience. Managing director Steve Malesev and business manager George Vardis have some serious questions to answer. They need to answer why Champion Homes is asking for 3.75 per cent extra in payment. The company has asked not one or two people but more than 70 in Bunya estate in Blacktown. Why are customers being abused, threatened with legal action and not properly informed about work on and progress with their properties during construction? Why did customers receive no notification of price variation before alleged additional work was commenced in the building of these homes?

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The added amounts are simply demanded, without proper consultation, after the additions are already made. These people, especially those purchasing something as valuable as a house, should not be coerced or forced into making additional payments. Steve Malasev has often refused to communicate with residents, directing them to Landcom, because Landcom is the developer, or simply ignoring their requests for answers. I tell their story and I pose these questions because numerous affected individuals have come to me with identical issues with Champion Homes. It seems unbelievable that, of the more than 70 houses that were built that I am aware of, they all had variations that equated to 3.75 per cent. It seems more than a coincidence that that is the case.

What I find more disturbing is the conversations that are carried out between the home builders and Champion Homes. They get hit with these variations and are told that if they do not pay the money they will not get their keys. When they say they do not have that money, the response to one particular almost homeowner was, "How much money have you got? Whatever you can afford, we will take." The

fact is that this is a rort. It is very alarming that people who, in many instances, are looking to purchase their first home or their first new home are put in those circumstances, with their houses effectively held to ransom until they pay these fees.

With a name like "Champion Homes" one would hope the organisation would be a champion in the way it deals with people and would meet the aspirations of individuals who are building their dream homes rather than rorting them. I will tell more stories about the activities of this building company as I continue to meet with people. It is completely unacceptable that people who are excited about moving into their new home in a new estate—people who have saved like mad and will have mortgages—find themselves, having given notice to move out of their rental property on a particular date because that is when they are told they will be given their keys, confronted with not much choice other than to become homeless or to pay the extra money to get their keys. Such behaviour is unacceptable in this day and age.

DEMENDTIA-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie—Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education) [5.51 p.m.]: I update the House with a progress report on Port Macquarie becoming the first dementia-friendly community in Australia. My electorate has the third highest prevalence of dementia in New South Wales behind the Myall Lakes and Tweed electorates. We have 1,730 people living with dementia in our community. This is set to increase by 350 per cent by 2050. Based on that information, in November 2012 I got together with a number of like-minded people to form the Port Macquarie Dementia-Friendly Steering Committee to discuss how we as a community could tackle this growing problem.

We decided the best way forward was to get our community behind us by increasing awareness about difficulties facing people living with dementia and their carers. The committee aimed to develop, plan and implement community-based initiatives that would contribute to the development of a dementia-friendly community through building relationships with key stakeholders. To achieve this we set a target of Port Macquarie becoming the first dementia-friendly community in Australia. If we can collectively have a greater understanding of dementia and an ability to respond to the needs of people living with dementia in the community, it can only be a positive step in the right direction.

A dementia-friendly community is a place where people living with dementia are supported to live a high quality of life with meaning, purpose and value. A dementia-friendly business is customer focused and goes that extra mile to make changes and improvements to their services, procedures and environment. Port Macquarie is a step closer to being a dementia-friendly community, with eight local businesses approved to work towards becoming dementia-friendly. The first business in Port Macquarie to develop its action plan in July and work towards being dementia-friendly was Coast Front Realty, closely followed by St Agnes' Parish and Silver Service Hire Cars.

Shortly afterwards MBC Recruitment; Settlement City, which is owned by Lend Lease, and Top Spot Cafe and Cakes in Laurieton came on board with action plans approved by the Dementia Community Support Alliance. Other businesses that were approved in October-November last year were Cafe Buzz, Port Macquarie, and the Fat Fish Beachfront Bistro at Bonny Hills. These businesses are only the tip of the iceberg, with many more organisations currently in the process of developing action plans and/or taking the program to their board and management for review and approval.

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All businesses have tailored action plans to suit their customer base and business type, but commonly all their staff have undergone dementia education by watching the "Is it dementia?" DVD. Businesses have reviewed office and external environment signage and the physical spaces, reviewed colour contrasting within physical spaces, and reviewed business documentation. Another aspect of the dementia-friendly community project is a new volunteer social engagement program called Dementia Mates, which will link volunteers and people living with dementia. It aims to reduce social isolation.

Encouragingly, other communities in New South Wales are seeing the achievements being made in the Port Macquarie-Hastings area and are looking to our town for guidance and support in their own dementia-friendly community endeavours. Woollahra, Narrabri, Springwood, Kiama, Orange, Leichardt and Myall Lakes have either indicated an interest or have taken action in their town or community to become a dementia-friendly community.

Last month, the Hon. John Ajaka, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Multiculturalism, from the other place joined the Hon. John Watkins, Chief Executive Officer of Alzheimer's Australia NSW, and I to launch my latest community newsletter, which is dedicated entirely to Port Macquarie becoming a dementia-friendly community. It was delivered to more than 36,000 households. I thank the team from Alzheimer's Australia NSW for their help in producing the brochure. I have shared copies with members of the Parliamentary Friends of Dementia group. If anyone else from this House would like a copy then I invite them to let me know. In closing, I thank all the members of this House who have joined the Parliamentary Friends of Dementia; and I encourage those who have not done so to do so. It is important that we all work to support those in our community living with dementia by supporting the great work of Alzheimer's Australia NSW.

RSL YOUTH CLUBS STATE SWIMMING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) [5.55 p.m.]: Today I share with the House information about an outstanding event that was held in my electorate over the past weekend and that deserves to be acknowledged for many reasons. I refer to the fifty-fifth New South Wales RSL Youth Clubs State Swimming Championships, which was held at the Mount Druitt Swimming Centre on Saturday 12 March 2016. The event was attended by more than 1,000 spectators and 570 competitors. This outstanding competition is organised by the New South Wales RSL Youth Clubs and is held annually, with representatives from across not just Sydney but all of New South Wales. The RSL Youth Clubs State Swimming Championships is a magnificent contribution to sport, especially for our youth. The championships move between the city and the country each year.

This is the first time the event has been staged at the Mount Druitt Swimming Centre. It is appropriate that it was held at the Mount Druitt Swimming Centre as it celebrated its forty-first birthday. I can think of no better way to celebrate the centre's birthday. Since opening in 1975, the Mount Druitt Swimming Centre has been a place for the community to come together to seek relief from the scorching summer heat; and for the many local schools to host swimming carnivals there year in and year out. The swimming centre is an integral part of the Mount Druitt community. It is impossible to quantify the benefits it has brought to the sporting community by fostering young swimmers and shaping the future of swimming by identifying and encouraging talent—let alone what it has meant to the community over the past 41 years.

I was delighted that the New South Wales RSL Youth Clubs chose the Mount Druitt Swimming Centre as the venue for the 2016 State championships. It was a pleasure to represent Blacktown City Mayor, Councillor Stephen Bali, and to join my colleague the Federal Member for Chifley, the Hon. Ed Husic, at the official opening. It was hard to believe, looking at the huge crowd that attended last Saturday, that only two years ago there was a group of Liberal councillors in Blacktown who wanted to close down Mount Druitt pool. "Sell it off to developers for high rise development," was their cry. Today I acknowledge the people who fought long and hard stop that from happening, led by community activist, Kerri Bradbury; my fellow Blacktown Labor councillors; various swim clubs from all over Sydney; and, last but not least, the "We Love Mount Druitt Pool" group.

The fact that we can attract a statewide and highly prestigious event such as these championships is proof positive of how wrong it was to even consider closing Mount Druitt Swimming Centre! The Rooty Hill RSL Swimming Club did themselves very proud. They finished in second place in the overall competition. They won an impressive 14 gold medals, seven silver medals and three bronze medals. I am very proud of them and equally proud of all the people in our community who fought hard to

keep the Mount Druitt Swimming Centre open.

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WILLINGA PARK EQUESTRIAN CENTRE

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—The Speaker) [5.59 p.m.]: This evening I inform the House about Willinga Park at Bawley Point in my electorate. It is the incredible result of one man's vision to create a facility where interests, passion and quality have fused to create a property that enriches the environment and complements its surrounds and is home to the best Australian stockhorses and equine facilities in the country. Willinga Park is the vision of Terry Snow. His personal investment of \$50 million comprises 60 hectares of gardens and regeneration areas, 74 hectares of equine and grazing areas and 27 hectares of equine infrastructure, stables, stockyards, arenas and playing fields for polocrosse, jumping and eventing.

The facilities at Willinga Park include a 100 metre campdrafting arena; 27 stables; a veterinary room; three 8 to 18 metre round yards; a horse walker with a 33 metre hydrotherapy pool; two open training and dressage arenas, including spectator seating; one covered training and dressage arena, including spectator seating; a polocrosse and playing field, featuring a pavilion for spectators; a riders' club, including a kitchenette, wash facilities and lounge area; a marketing area; and 50 stockyards for management and training of the property's 120 horses. The infrastructure is provided with 450 solar panels and 750 million litres of underground water storage, as well as three cottages, truck sheds, nurserymen's sheds and an irreplaceable eight hectares of native gardens with more than 8,000 native plants.

Additionally, under development is another 20 hectares of endemic regional botanic garden plants, mostly sourced from within 10 kilometres of the property. This garden is being designed and built in partnership with the Australian National Botanic Gardens [ANBG], which is currently propagating plant material taken from the property. The gardens will be open to the public and plant material will be referenced on the ANBG website. The property is 800 hectares in total and is surrounded by more than 12,000 hectares of national parks on both sides. The property was heavily harvested until the 1990s and previous owners used it for grazing. Willinga Park is simply breathtaking. It is the result of one man's dream and investment in an area that had been previously degraded by other uses. It is now a sight to behold. Willinga Park is one of the most significant private investments in our area, if not New South Wales.

The business directly employs 17 full-time staff and for the past 20 months it has employed 70 construction workers who have been engaged to build the equine centre, which is due for completion in June this year. When visiting the centre I noted that most of the employees are local, some of them former students of mine. This is significant for an area that has high unemployment. The centre will host major national and international competitions and could have up to 200 competitors requiring top-class camping facilities for several days. Parking areas for trucks and floats are provided as well as areas for spectator parking. The property is also an Australian stock horse stud and has 120 horses that are used for breeding and competition. Further, the property runs approximately 100 head of cattle. I could speak about Willinga Park for an hour or more.

I invite members and Ministers to visit Willinga Park because seeing is believing. All of this was achieved without any government assistance and, to date, little support. I could say more about that but I will defer my comments to a later date. I invite Ministers to visit the centre to witness not only the facilities but also the care and concern shown for the environment, which has been central to every design component of Willinga Park. I invite the relevant Ministers to peruse the flora and fauna management plan and its meticulous outline of recommended planting lists for the lowland grassy woodland, swamp oak floodplain forest, swamp sclerophyll forest, southern lowland wet forest and wetland species. There has also been extensive bird monitoring. Sixty nesting boxes, which are hollow logs placed in trees, have been installed.

The plan also outlines proposals to monitor threatened fauna and to protect, for example, the habitat of the green and golden bell frog. The plan, amongst other things, also allows for natural regeneration of native vegetation and for the control of noxious and invasive weeds. I could go on. Mr Snow has developed Willinga Park into a world-class facility that provides equine facilities and is enhancing the environment with fastidious attention to detail. Twelve years ago the property was degraded as a result of logging, grazing and vegetable farming. It was also suffering from the destructive effects of bushfires that had ravaged the area. Terry Snow deserves credit for his vision, leadership and resilience in the face of avoidable obstacles that were placed before him and for his significant investment in job-creating development and caring for the environment.

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TRIBUTE TO TOM LYONS

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) [6.05 p.m.]: Vale Tom Lyons. On Friday 26 February I was honoured to be able to attend the funeral of Tom Lyons, who was buried by his family in accordance with his wishes at the Palmdale cemetery on the Central Coast. A broad cross-section of the Central Coast community attended the funeral as testament to the active community life Tom led. Amongst them were Michael Lee, former member for Dobell; Paul Crittenden, former State member for Wyong; Tony Sheridan, former mayor of Wyong Shire Council; and John Millard, current president of the Entrance Chamber of Commerce. Also present at the funeral were people from the opposite side of politics, which is testament to Tom's broad community engagement over the years.

Thomas Fredrick Lyons was born in 1932 in the Punchbowl area. As a boy he was apprenticed as an electrical fitter to Associated Batteries. He became an active member of the Electrical Trades Union [ETU] and then an official of that union and trainer with the Trade Union Training Authority. Tom moved with his family from Sydney to the suburb of Long Jetty on the Central Coast and, after retiring from the ETU, he worked on the staff of Michael Lee, the Federal member for Dobell. Tom's commitment to social justice and social progress led him to be active in many community groups, including the Australian Labor Party where he helped establish The Entrance-Bateau Bay branch and was president of that branch for many years. Tom was a fine branch chairperson.

The key role that branch officials play in between elections is often forgotten. They keep branches alive. They are the foundation of a successful political party. A good branch executive, chairperson and secretary and their assistants, need to keep the branch life interesting and vibrant. Tom did that and much more. The continued existence of the branch is part of Tom's legacy. After retiring from active party work, Tom continued to help the party on election day. At the age of 80 he was handing out for me in the 2011 election at the Long Jetty booth where he was booth captain for many, many years. Tom is survived by his partner and widow, Elizabeth, who is known to all of us as Betty, and his children Bernadette, Anne Maree, Neal and Veronica. After the service, Betty took a tight hold of my hand and said to me that it was her and Tom's hope that I succeed. I know exactly what she meant by that statement. She did not mean just my personal success but also success in the furthering of the social justice aims that Tom and Betty had worked so hard to achieve during their life together. I will do my very best in that regard. Vale Tom Lyons.

KINGS LANGLEY

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) [6.07 p.m.]: I pay tribute to the area of Kings Langley. Kings Langley is one of the most diverse and historically significant suburbs in the Seven Hills electorate that I represent. It is full of mainstream Australians who are aspirational in nature, striving to do the best they can for themselves, their families and the wider community. The sense of community spirit is very strong in Kings Langley. This is something that I noticed when I was campaigning for the seat as well as during the past 12 months. The people of Kings Langley do not ask a lot of their government. They do not demand that government heed their every need or fix every one of their problems. What the people of Kings Langley want is opportunities in their local community. They want necessary investment in roads and infrastructure and they want government to act as a facilitator.

The New South Wales Government is committed to delivering for the people of Kings Langley. Kings Langley is serviced by several fantastic government schools and this side of the House is investing in the children in the local area. Vardys Road Primary School on Vardys Road is a fine educational institution, helping children to gain a quality education in the local area. Principal Amanda Connelly is doing a fantastic job. It was an absolute pleasure to attend the school's presentation day late last year. Another local school in the area is Kings Langley Public School on Isaac Smith Parade, which was established in 1981. It is a great school and well run by principal Phil Walker and deputy principal Rhonda Maiden. A few months ago I visited Mr Walker and chatted with him about various education issues and also his great interest in horseracing and the Parramatta Rugby League team—and a great team it is.

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The families of Kings Langley place great faith in their education system, and with good reason. These are quality schools being run by great people.

Relevant to the community spirit in Kings Langley is the Kings Langley Village Fair run by the Lions club. This is the club's biggest fundraiser of the year, with all moneys raised going back into the community. Last year there were more than 70 stalls, rides and slides for children, and a sausage sizzle. It is a great day out for the youngsters from the local area, with the fair's ice-cream being one of the fair's greatest hits. I commend the fair organiser, Derek Margerison, for his work. Every year the Lions club raises about \$8,000, which goes straight back to community groups and local organisations. William Rose School at Seven Hills recently received \$1,000 from the Lions club, and so did the Kings Langley Soccer Football Club, which runs a special program for children with disabilities. The Lions club has run the fair for about 20 years, which is simply incredible. I commend Mr Margerison for his commitment to involving as many people from the community as possible. This is at the core of the community spirit in Kings Langley.

As I mentioned the Kings Langley Soccer Football Club, I want to put on record that it is a great organisation. Founded in 1969, it is a community-based club affiliated with the Blacktown District Soccer Football Association and home of the flying fillies and colts. Catering for players from five years of age through to all older age groups, Kings Langley Soccer Football Club prides itself on being a community club, where kids and parents from all walks of life can be part of the great game of football in a fun, friendly and safe environment. The club is committed to giving participants the opportunity to develop athletically and personally in a positive, supportive and safe environment. The Kings Langley Soccer Football Club is a great club indeed.

What a great area Kings Langley is. It was named by early settler Matthew Pearce, who named it after his manor house in England. The area grew from a housing estate in the 1970s to a neighbourhood in 1976, and eventually became an official suburb. It is a great suburb full of great people in the great electorate of Seven Hills.

WOLLONGONG ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms NOREEN HAY (Wollongong) [6.12 p.m.]: I am so happy that the member for Oatley is sitting on our side of the Chamber at the moment. Earlier today he was arguing about how brilliant he was to get easy access lifts installed at Oatley railway station. None of us is stupid; we all understand how pork-barrelling works. It has been very disappointing since the Coalition came to government. Pork-barrelling has resulted in the Government looking after its own electorates, whereas the former Labor Government looked after the whole State. It is often forgotten that we handed the present Government—that motley crew—a triple-A credit rating. Members opposite should be thanking the former Government, but they do not have sense enough.

After all my years as a member of Parliament, I found it appalling that members of the Liberal Party, in their attempts to win the seat of Wollongong, promised that, should they form government they would provide easy access lifts at Unanderra station.

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It has become something of a joke in the Chamber that I always go on about the Unanderra lifts. The fact is it was a commitment that was made and reneged on.

Dr Geoff Lee: At least you're consistent.

Ms NOREEN HAY: Stay out of it, Parramatta.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): Order! Government members will come to order. The member for Wollongong will be heard in silence.

Ms NOREEN HAY: Thank you, Mr Temporary Speaker. What a fine Temporary Speaker you are. Since this Government came to office I have been calling for a fair go for Wollongong and the Illawarra. The Government insisted on selling the port of Port Kembla, which was another "oops, pardon me" reneging on a promise. Following that I did not write asking for anything because I did not believe that port should have been sold, as has been said in this Chamber many times. When I met with representatives from the Business Chamber of Louisiana a year or so ago they could not believe Australia was selling off its ports. The market economy of the world does not sell its ports. However, this Government knows better. I have been calling for a convention centre as an extension of the Wollongong Entertainment Centre [WEC].

Mr Mark Coure: Next you'll want the Powerhouse Museum.

Dr Geoff Lee: Do you want the Powerhouse? That's appalling.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): Order! Government members will come to order.

Ms NOREEN HAY: The member for Oatley and the member for Parramatta do not believe anyone outside Oatley and Parramatta should get anything. I have got news for them: We have good taxpayers in my area who are staunch members of our community and good Australians. A government should be a government for all. The member for Parramatta should try thinking about that.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): Order! Members will direct their remarks through the Chair. The member for Parramatta will come to order.

Ms NOREEN HAY: We have an unemployment crisis in Wollongong that requires action by this Government. The Government needs to invest in a convention centre as part of the WEC. It needs to provide a fund for the revitalisation of Port Kembla and it especially needs to install easy access lifts at Unanderra station. It also needs to create employment opportunities by transferring a government department to the area or seriously investing in job creation projects in the Illawarra. Members opposite should not pat themselves on the back. Self-praise is no recommendation.

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.17 p.m.]: Whilst we may have disagreements across the Chamber with the member for Wollongong, there is no doubt that she has been an exceptional champion for the lifts at Unanderra station and continues to request them from the Government. Maybe we cannot grant all the member's wishes, but she is a great a champion for the lifts and we appreciate her struggle. No-one can deny that she is standing up for her community and doing the right thing for them. I congratulate the member for Wollongong. We may be on opposite sides and argue for different things but we respect her hard work and advocacy for her local community.

EVANS HEAD MEMORIAL AERODROME HERITAGE AVIATION MUSEUM

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.18 p.m.]: As the member for Clarence, I was very pleased to hear that the Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome Heritage Aviation Museum had been gifted a Canberra bomber from Defence Heritage. I have watched the museum go from strength to strength since it opened in August 2013. I congratulate the committee, its members and all those who have contributed financially or otherwise towards making it the success it is today. I am pleased to say that I know personally several of the committee members and am aware of the tireless efforts of the volunteers in seeking to make this museum a regional attraction. Evans Head is a small coastal town, which makes the success of the museum all the more remarkable.

The Evans Head Airfield was first established in 1936 as an emergency landing ground. It was taken over by the Commonwealth in 1937. After the start of World War II, in 1939, more than 5,000 men and women came to train at Evans Head as part of the No. 1 Bombing and Gunnery School.

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One-and-a-half thousand of these trainees lost their lives in the war. This connection with the Royal Australian Air Force [RAAF] made the establishment of an aviation museum all the more significant, and 17 transportable Bellman hangars were erected on the base in 1941 to house aircraft for coastal surveillance duties. I remember the vision that was presented to me about four years ago when there was only a very old, decaying Bellman hangar on site but the enthusiasm and confidence of those involved enabled me and the Federal member for Page, Kevin Hogan, to offer our full support for the venture.

The museum was opened on 25 August 2013, just on 2½ years ago, by the Australian War Memorial Museum Director, Dr Brendan Nelson. During the intervening time the museum committee and volunteers have shown that the enthusiasm and vision for this museum have not waned. Over 25,000 visitors have come to the museum and many have expressed how impressed they are as the volunteers welcome them and give them a tour of both the history of RAAF Station at Evans Head as it was during World War II and of the iconic F.111 and other aircraft in the hangar. The enthusiasm of the association has resulted in the museum taking possession of a Canberra A84-203 bomber. This bomber was used to train pilots from the 1950s to the 1980s. President Rod Kinnish has also announced that the museum has been awarded a Caribou A4-299. The addition of these aircraft will make the museum a must-see place for visitors and tourists to the region. The museum, although not large compared to other aviation museums, prides itself on engaging with visitors. This is translated into great experiences that ultimately result in visitors saying:

I look forward to coming back to see the next new developments of this museum.

As this museum is wholly operated by volunteers, we acknowledge the time and effort that these volunteers give to help preserve a special and unique part of both national and local aviation history and also the economic benefits that this museum brings to the local economy as a tourist attraction. I recall being on site some three years ago when the Bellman hangar was being dismantled, knowing the tight time frame in which the refurbishment had to be completed. All credit to the volunteers as it was done on time, and the F.111 arrived and the museum opened. Now they need to expand due to the hard work that has continued over these past few years. I encourage all members of the House to visit the Evans Head Aviation Museum, as it is often referred to. I know they will find the visit educational and uplifting.

As the local member I am pleased to congratulate the Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome Heritage Aviation Association [EHMAHAA] committee and members on their great accomplishments and continue to wish them well in their future ventures. This museum is not just of local significance but of national importance, and I can see it becoming one of the most prominent aviation museums in the country. In particular, I acknowledge President Rod Kinnish, his wife, Donella, and vice president John Gosper, who was a pilot and flew the Canberra bomber which will soon be on display at the museum. I would be remiss in not mentioning the enormous contribution of Peter Lynch and the tremendous support, both financial and otherwise, provided by the Richmond Valley Council.

CAMPBELLTOWN HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) [6.22 p.m.]: This Parliament is an important and at times very impressive place, but it is complex and bound by many and varying influences. For some this Parliament is an outlet to further their interests and to boost their reputations in their communities, or to voice the concerns of their constituents. For me, this place is a product of something far greater and more important than the pillars under which we parade or the marble floors on which we are privileged to walk. It is a place that paves the way for the pursuit of prosperity for those we represent and are privileged to serve. It is for that reason I feel it is imperative in the name of integrity for me to clarify some points made during question time by the Minister for Health in reference to health services and funding.

Campbelltown Hospital is a wonderful place full of wonderful staff. The smooth operation of this hospital largely relies on the goodwill of those staff members. Despite this goodwill, a recent report found that 42 per cent of patients waited more than four hours for emergency care. The community does not accept this standard. I have always felt that integrity is the very foundation of our existence and must be paramount for all, regardless of position, appointment or where we are as part of this democratic process.

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Last week, in answering a question from the member for Camden about the Government's investment in hospitals, the Minister stated that the former Labor Government failed to provide any funding to Campbelltown Hospital in 16 years of government. With respect to the Minister, that is entirely false. The fact is that \$306 million was allocated to upgrades in our local health district, including to Campbelltown Hospital. In 2006, \$112 million was allocated, followed by another \$194 million in 2010-11. As far as I could find in my research, in those 16 years of a Labor Government that are continually referred to, I could not find one commitment or policy from those opposite at any time.

A simple search of the NSW Health website provides information that in relation to Campbelltown Hospital, following the \$112 million allocation in 2006, new operating theatres and a new emergency department were opened and other upgrades were undertaken. The Minister may have a selective memory in this case but, as I recall, in 2006 New South Wales had a Labor Government. As the Minister knows all too well, the planning of the redevelopment of Campbelltown Hospital was already in the advanced stages by 2011. The Keneally Labor Government set aside \$194 million from the 2011 budget to pay for the first stage of the redevelopment, with further funding to be provided under election commitments at that time. It should be noted that when that commitment was made in 2011 it was not matched by those opposite. To give credit where credit is due, when the Government changed, the Liberal-Nationals Government went through with the redevelopment—however, disappointingly, it removed \$60 million set aside for the mental health unit and, as a result, we have seen an increase in mental health issues in the area.

The Minister and this Government need to stop playing politics when it comes to Campbelltown Hospital. In my 12 months as the member for Campbelltown, not once has the Minister reached out to me to talk about the upgrades to Campbelltown Hospital. The Minister did not even extend to me, or to my colleague the member for Macquarie Fields, the courtesy of an invitation to the opening of the stage one redevelopment. This utter contempt shown by the Government for the people of Campbelltown must end. The Minister must stop spreading spin and misinformation and start getting on with the job of providing adequate funding and honouring the Government's commitments to Campbelltown Hospital. I worked in private enterprise before I came into this place and during my time in public representation I learned that integrity, honesty and respect must always be the foundation of our existence and how we conduct ourselves. I thank the House for its indulgence.

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.27 p.m.]: I would just like to correct the record in relation to the Minister for Health. She is undoubtedly the best health Minister that New South Wales has ever had. There has been record investment in hospital refurbishments and record budgets for hospitals. The Minister has revolutionised the way that we are delivering health care, and it is efficient and

effective. The member for Campbelltown denies the Minister the credit she deserves for her wonderful work and dedication. Doctors and administrators all support the professionalism of the Minister for Health in running her portfolio, increasing the budget and delivering on the Government's commitments. The health Minister is a wonderful, honest, genuine, hardworking and effective Minister, and this side of the House realises that. It is sad when the Opposition plays politics with people's health.

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QUEEN ELIZABETH II NINETIETH BIRTHDAY

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Corrections, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) [6.28 p.m.]: I acknowledge the Parliamentary Secretary's remarks concerning our wonderful health Minister. I worked for the former health Minister Peter Collins and acknowledge his effectiveness.

Dr Geoff Lee: Jillian Skinner is better.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: We will debate that at a later date. This year will mark the ninetieth birthday of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II. This gives me an opportunity to note the service and devotion she offered the entire Commonwealth in the week we celebrate Commonwealth Day. On her twenty-first birthday Princess Elizabeth delivered a speech which has been often quoted. She solemnly stated:

I declare before you all that my whole life whether it be long or short shall be devoted to your service and the service of our great imperial family to which we all belong.

That great imperial family is no longer imperial but is certainly a family. This week we commemorated Commonwealth Day and with it the accomplishment of a voluntary association of 53 independent and equal sovereign states, home to 2.2 billion citizens, of whom over 60 per cent are under the age of 30. The Commonwealth includes some of the world's largest, smallest, richest and poorest countries, but we are all family. Since that twenty-first birthday speech, the Queen has worked every day to her ninetieth year to maintain that diverse family of shared values, languages and politics. She delivered her speech from Cape Town and observed:

I am 6,000 miles from the country where I was born ... I am certainly not 6,000 miles from home.

She noted:

...the great privilege belonging to our place in the world-wide commonwealth—that there are homes ready to welcome us in every continent of the earth. Before I am much older I hope I shall come to know many of them.

She has certainly realised that desire. On behalf of the people of Baulkham Hills I congratulate the Queen on her ninetieth birthday and her youthful devotion to the Commonwealth. The young princess addressed the youth of the British family of nations in 1947 and bravely suggested:

If we all go forward together with an unwavering faith, a high courage, and a quiet heart, we shall be able to make of this ancient Commonwealth, which we all love so dearly, an even grander thing—more free, more prosperous, more happy and a more powerful influence for good in the world—than it has been in the greatest days of our forefathers.

There is no doubt that the Queen's generation took up this challenge and made the most of the opportunity granted by the sacrifice of their mothers and fathers. I have no doubt that the modern youth of the Commonwealth are full of the same idealism and zeal for freedom, prosperity and good. I have spoken in this Chamber of the tremendous accomplishment of many young people in Baulkham Hills. Queen's Scout Award recipients Isabela Gomez, Bailey Harris and Ben Kahana exemplify the sense of public duty perfectly represented by the Queen.

There are many young people in New South Wales who give us cause to celebrate. Next month I will accompany to the Western Front the young Anzac scholars of 2016, Eduardo Bianchino, Shehani De Silva, Petra Stojnic, Joshua Bednar, Lauren Sullivan and Liam Rickard. In their essays presented to this House they exhibited the same appreciation that the Queen had for our greatest generation and the opportunities they provided. In Her Majesty's ninetieth year I thank her for the example that she has provided the youth of the Commonwealth through those solemn words delivered on her twenty-first birthday. God save the Queen.

Private members' statements concluded.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to resolution, at 6.33 p.m. until Monday 21 March 2016
at 12.00 noon.**
