



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Sixth Parliament
First Session**

Thursday, 12 May 2016

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 12 May 2016

The Assistant Speaker (The Hon. Andrew Raymond Gordon Fraser) took the chair at 10:00.

The Assistant Speaker read the Prayer and acknowledgement of country.

Announcements

ABSENCE OF THE SPEAKER

The CLERK: I announce the absence of the Speaker.

Bills

NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE AMENDMENT (ADJUSTMENT OF AREAS) BILL 2016

First Reading

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

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I set down the second reading of the bill as an order of the day for a later hour.

Documents

AUDITOR-GENERAL

Reports

The CLERK: In accordance with section 63C of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1993 I announce receipt of the Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled "Supporting Students with Disability in NSW public schools: Department of Education", dated May 2016, received 12 May 2016.

Bills

CRIMES (DOMESTIC AND PERSONAL VIOLENCE) AMENDMENT (REVIEW) BILL 2016

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 11 May 2016.

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (10:13): I speak in debate on the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Amendment (Review) Bill 2016 and state at the outset that every member of this House says no to domestic violence. Many hardworking professionals in the community have done a lot to raise awareness about domestic violence and its impact on communities, families and children. The member for Camden, Mr Chris Patterson, and I attend an annual event in my electorate that is organised by the community and the Camden Local Area Command. It is a "Say no to domestic violence" breakfast. All our local community leaders turn up and about 300 to 400 others attend. We listen to speakers talking about raising awareness of domestic violence and the practical steps we can take to send messages back to our community to help raise awareness about this important issue and to help prevent domestic violence. Unfortunately domestic violence is something that is still occurring. As community leaders we must do everything in our power to let our community know that it is simply not on. It is something that the community and I will not tolerate.

The statutory review of the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007, also known as the domestic violence review, found that the policy objectives of the Act remain valid and its terms mostly remain appropriate for securing those objectives. The report made 17 recommendations proposing legislative amendments to improve the operation of the Act and to better protect people from domestic violence. A key recommendation of the review is to improve the coverage of the Act by expanding who can apply for an apprehended domestic violence order [ADVO] to include the relationship between a person's new partner and former partner in the definition of "domestic relationship". It also recommended expanding the situations in which an ADVO can be sought to include additional offences in the current list of 55 personal violence offences, and to include any other New South Wales or Commonwealth criminal offence where the defendant's intent is to coerce,

control or cause fear in the victim—or where the conduct arises from the same circumstances as a personal violence offence.

The report also recommended that the court be allowed to determine an application for a final ADVO even if the victim and defendant are not present, provided they have been served with the order and it is in the interests of justice to do so. It also recommended the prohibiting of unrepresented defendants cross-examining child witnesses during ADVO applications and that the interaction with family law proceedings be improved by requiring parties in an ADVO proceeding to notify the court of any existing or pending family law property orders. It also recommended allowing the Children's Court to make, vary and revoke an ADVO during care proceedings.

The Premier has made reducing domestic violent reoffending one of the top 12 priorities for this Government. I think all members would agree that that is one of the most important things we can do. The reforms outlined in this bill build on existing reforms being progressed by the Government to reduce domestic and family violence and to tackle reoffending. A key pillar of our domestic and family violence reforms has been the Domestic Violence Justice Strategy 2013-17, which provides New South Wales justice agencies with a clear framework to improve the response of the criminal justice system to domestic violence.

The Domestic Violence Justice Strategy sets out standards of service for agencies to achieve to improve victims safety and access to support, and to ensure perpetrators are held to account and change their behaviour. Achievements to date include: improving victims safety by giving senior police the power to issue ADVOS; reducing stress on victims by allowing them to give evidence by prior recorded video or audio statement in criminal proceedings for a domestic violence offence; and introducing legislation to allow information sharing between government and non-government services to prevent and reduce serious threats to victims and their children and facilitate victims referral to domestic violence support services. It has also encouraged perpetrators to undertake behaviour change programs.

Since January 2015 Corrective Services has been delivering the newly reformatted EQUIPS domestic abuse program for medium- to high-risk domestic violence offenders under the supervision of Corrective Service in the community and in custody. It has introduced minimum standards for domestic violence behaviour change programs to ensure that they reflect best practice, are evidence based, and prioritise the safety of victims and children. Other achievements include specialist domestic violence training for police prosecutors and police domestic violence liaison officers, and the introduction of a code of practice for the NSW Charter of Victims' Rights. Victims now have greater access to financial assistance and counselling. Domestic violence list days have been introduced in all Local Courts that sit full time. This will speed up the court process and ensure support is available.

These reforms, together with the reforms outlined in this bill, reinforce this Government's strong commitment to improving victims' safety and increasing their confidence in the justice system. Many moons ago when I was undertaking my law degree I was a court officer in the Local Court. I continually sat in on domestic violence cases and spent time with some of the victims, their families and their children, so I know first hand how it impacts on people's relationships. Recently I met with the local area commanders in Hume and Camden who service my electorate of Wollondilly. They told me that the number of incidents in the majority of crime categories in my area has reduced—in particular, stealing. But unfortunately over the past 10 years domestic violence has increased in both those areas.

I suspect that is something that is occurring right across our communities. I asked them whether there were more cases of domestic violence and they said that there may well be, but people are now more aware of domestic violence and it is now reported. Make no mistake: domestic violence is a crime and it should not be hidden. If we hear or see something we should report it to the police and not hide it. We must do everything we can to help victims. Domestic violence, which is worse than many other crimes, should not be treated any differently. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (10:21): I support the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Amendment (Review) Bill 2016 and welcome the added protection and support it will provide to the victims of domestic violence. Domestic violence, whether physical, emotional or psychological, or any other form of violence, is totally unacceptable. This bill responds to recent recommendations from the Domestic Violence Death Review Team as well as from other statutory reviews.

Sadly, Lake Macquarie has a concerning rate of domestic violence. In fact, in some corners of my electorate, domestic and family violence rates are amongst the highest in the State, though I note that domestic violence is a blight on society and is not limited to any particular area or demographic. Police, government agencies and support services do a fantastic job in responding to this scourge, but the problem is growing and

more people are seeking intervention and assistance. For all those charged with addressing this problem there is always a shortage of resources and, in many cases, other pressing matters competing for attention.

Last financial year there were more than eight serious domestic violence assaults every day in the Hunter Valley region, which is unbelievable. That is almost 3,000 in a year and more than 10 per cent of all cases recorded in the State. In Lake Macquarie, 730 domestic violence related assaults occurred, up 34 per cent from a decade earlier. It is a disturbing blight on our communities and one that simply cannot be ignored. Refuges for women and children in the area simply do not meet demand and some victims are turned away, often returning to the violent homes from which they are trying to escape.

Police have trialled new support services in Lake Macquarie with great success, as has been done in other areas. These services are picking up the pieces and providing better support for victims but they are not reducing the frightening numbers or attacking the root cause. I wish to acknowledge the hardworking police officers in the Lake Macquarie Local Area Command who do a fabulous job across the board. They take domestic violence very seriously and they respond extremely well. I am grateful for the leadership delivered by Superintendent Brett Greentree, the local area commander, and his executive officers.

Domestic violence is overwhelmingly perpetrated against women and frequently—if not on most occasions—by partners who claim to love them. Violence against women, including domestic and family violence, can only be stopped by a cooperative and multifaceted effort including the community calling out perpetrators for what they are—cowards and bullies. Our community, including our political leaders, must maintain the highest level of interest in addressing this problem and, amongst other things, the inequality of women. Kelly Hansen, chief executive of Nova for Women and Children in my region states:

... women's voices must be heard, they must have equal representation in leadership and executive roles. As long as the voices and roles of women are considered by some to be of less value than those of men, women can be controlled and abused.

Legislators like us, she says, act quickly and decisively on public forms of violence such as the so-called coward punch, but are much slower at legislating for the much more common incidence of domestic violence that claims many more lives. I believe that is changing—indeed this bill is part of that change—but a jaded view along these lines is understandable, in particular from someone who often sees the impact of domestic violence. There is great complexity in the underlying sociological paradigm that has allowed domestic violence to flourish and there is complexity in the psychopathology of perpetrators of domestic violence. However, I have no doubt that a lack of respect for women generally, as alluded to by Kelly Hansen, is an underlying part of this problem.

I applaud the Government and the Attorney General on their willingness, amongst other things, to expand the apprehended domestic violence order [ADVO] system and to give greater protection and support to victims while working towards a reduction in domestic violence incidents. Specifically, I am pleased that the definition of "domestic relationships" is being changed as this will go some way towards controlling the harassment, violence and intimidation that often occurs between former partners. It will do more to provide greater legal protection to all who are at risk. I am pleased to see reforms that will expand the criminal categories for which an ADVO can be sought.

It is greatly distressing that we have such a high rate of domestic violence in our modern, largely well educated and generally progressive society. We must ensure that our laws offer the best possible protection to victims, and we must continue to review and reform legislation in a way that will reverse the rate of domestic violence in our communities. Most importantly, however, we must continue to address the underlying cause of this shadow across society by early intervention, in particular with children, so that these behaviours are not learnt in the first place and then transferred from generation to generation—unfortunately too often from father to son.

I note the Opposition's support for this bill other than the reporting period for the Domestic Violence Death Review Team being changed from annually to biennially. At face value this seems incongruous but it must be recognised that this change is in accordance with a specific request from the State Coroner. I do not feel qualified to argue against the Coroner's reasoning, though I imagine the Opposition's reasoning will be explained when it moves its amendments in the other House. The mostly non-partisan response to this bill has been pleasing to hear. I hope that this will largely characterise debates in sensitive areas such as this in the future, although I have no doubt that members would have much more in common on this than on other such subjects. Once again I acknowledge the Attorney General and her staff, thank them for introducing this bill and commend the bill to the House.

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (10:27): I contribute to debate on the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Amendment (Review) Bill 2016 and state at the outset that I am concerned about the proposed amendment to the Coroner's Act relating to the Domestic Violence Death Review Team—a Labor government initiative. As Minister for Women I introduced the Coroners Amendment (Domestic Violence Death Review

Team) Bill in this place in May 2010. As I said then, the role of the Domestic Violence Death Review Team was to:

... identify gaps in services and systems with the aim of developing a better understanding of how these can be improved to ensure that people who are victims of domestic violence do not fall through the cracks.

In responding to the bill in 2010 the then shadow Minister for Women, Prue Goward, issued a media release with the headline, "Minister for Women just doesn't get it". My message to the Minister for Women and to the Attorney General is, "You just don't get it." The death review team should report annually to the Parliament. This is about transparency and being able to act quickly to make recommendations when gaps are identified within services and systems in New South Wales.

This Government had never treated the Domestic Violence Death Review Team with respect. The current legislation requires the team to meet four times a year. However, in 2014 meetings were cancelled, there was a delay of eight months or more between meetings and, more disturbingly, the report tabled on 30 October 2015 covered a two-year period—not 12 months. Under this legislation there will be two-year reporting. Labor contends that this is a lazy and disrespectful approach to those non-government organisations that worked so hard to see the review team created, and we will be seeking to amend the bill.

The bill does have worthy elements, such as expanding key definitions, including that the victim's current partner can also seek an ADVO if they are being harassed by the victim's ex-partner. Pleasingly, the bill recognises the particular impacts of domestic violence on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, those from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex, older people and people with disability. I represent one of the most culturally diverse electorates in New South Wales, and I have written to the Minister seeking recognition of the impact on my local services of the cost of translation services. Currently, extra funding for these critical translation and interpreter services is not provided by the Government, and I am yet to hear from the Minister on this issue. We must look at all aspects of service delivery if we are to address the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

We also need to do more to protect people with disability, particularly women and girls, who are subjected to domestic violence and sexual assault. People with disability are some of the most vulnerable in our community. The Government is taking an inadequate approach to providing important protections and safeguards for people with disability. I also support the expansion of the range of offences that are categorised as domestic violence for which an ADVO can be sought. It is important that our fight against domestic violence takes into consideration the fast pace of technology. The inclusion of abuse by text messages, for example, is appropriate. We also support allowing women and children to apply privately for an ADVO. The easier we make the ADVO process, the less threatening it is and the greater the protection we can provide to victims.

I do not intend to go through all the elements of the bill, but the amendments regarding ADVOS are sensible and long overdue. As I said earlier, I remain concerned about the Government's undermining of the Domestic Violence Death Review Team. The reason given by the Attorney General appeared to relate only to administrative challenges in preparing reports. This should not be the reason for watering down the powers and the importance of the review team's work in analysing gaps, deficiencies and failings of government. In conclusion, I acknowledge the work of my local domestic violence liaison committee in helping victims of domestic violence in our community. I reiterate that most of those victims—children, women and men—come from culturally and linguistically diverse communities; English is not their first language. I ask the Minister to respond to my inquiry as to the cost of translation and interpreter services, and to support local services in my electorate and the wonderful work they do. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (10:33): I speak in debate on the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Amendment (Review) Bill 2016. I do so with a heavy heart because, especially of late, the issue of domestic violence has been far too close to my local community. Sadly, in the past few weeks reports of the death of Tina Kontozis have been broadcast in the media across the State. For those who are unaware of her story, Tina Kontozis was a 51-year-old woman who had done all the right things. She had taken out an apprehended domestic violence order [ADVO] against her partner, yet he breached that order and entered her house. He bashed Tina to death with a cricket bat and violently injured her son. I live in the same suburb as Tina did—about a street and a half away.

Our close-knit community has been heavily impacted by the loss of this woman who was referred to as her family's Peter Pan—a child who never grew up. She was also referred to as a "bright, radiant light" who loved to dance, care for children and to love. This is deeply upsetting. I also live in the local area command that is currently taking part in the trial of the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, yet Tina was murdered. I am pleased that the Government is paying so much attention to the issue of domestic and personal violence but, to be honest, no matter what we do it will never be enough whilst people continue to be murdered in this way. I hope that I am

part of a government that will prevent these occurrences and that in a couple of years from now we will not be speaking in this place about another woman being murdered in someone's electorate.

The statutory review of the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007 made a number of recommendations to improve the protection of victims. Currently, the Act nominates 55 existing criminal offences as "personal violence offences". When these are committed, or attempted, in the context of a domestic relationship the Act defines them as "domestic violence offences" for which an ADVO may be sought. The review recommended expanding the definition of "domestic violence offence" to include any other criminal offence under New South Wales and Commonwealth law that is intended to coerce, control or cause fear, or an offence that arises from the same circumstances as a personal violence offence. This implements a recommendation of the Australian Law Reform Commission and the NSW Law Reform Commission in the 2010 report "Family Violence—A National Legal Response"—that is, that State and Territory family violence legislation should provide that family violence includes violent or threatening behaviour, or any other form of behaviour that coerces or controls a family member or causes that family member to be fearful. This amendment recognises the range of behaviours that can constitute domestic violence. It means that more offences can be identified on an offender's criminal record as domestic violence offences.

The expansion of domestic violence offences is threefold. First, the domestic violence review identified that some relevant offences were missing from the list. For example, a man breaks into his ex-partner's home and sexually assaults her. If he is charged with sexual assault this would be a domestic violence offence within the current definition because sexual assault is on the current list of 55 personal violence offences. However, he may instead be charged with the offence of break, enter and commit serious indictable offence under section 112 of the Crimes Act 1900, with the sexual assault constituting the serious indictable offence. In this case, even though the facts are exactly the same, the offence would not be considered a domestic violence offence because section 112 is not on the current list of 55 personal violence offences. The domestic violence review recommendation corrects this anomaly by expanding the meaning of "personal violence" offence to include section 112 and other similar offences where they involve one of the existing 55 personal violence offences as an element.

Secondly, in addition to adding more specific offences, the proposal expands the definition of "domestic violence offence" to include any other criminal offence under New South Wales and Commonwealth law that arises from the same circumstances as a personal violence offence. For example, under current law, if a defendant kicked and damaged his ex-partner's front door, causing her to flee and drive away from the scene, and then pursued her in his own car, trying to run her off the road with the intention of injuring her, the first offence of damaging the door would be considered to be a "domestic violence offence", while the second would not, despite the fact that they arose out of the same factual scenario and would be considered by the court together. Under the expanded definition in this bill, the offence of predatory driving would be captured and would allow this related charge to be recorded as a domestic violence offence.

Thirdly, the bill expands the definition of "domestic violence offence" to include any other criminal offence under New South Wales or Commonwealth law that is intended to coerce, control or cause fear or intimidation to the person seeking protection. For example, the Commonwealth offence of using a carriage service to menace, harass or cause offence would be considered to be a domestic violence offence. Broadening the definition of domestic violence offence in this way is critical to ensuring that ADVOs are appropriately available to victims, where required.

The bill further improves the protection of victims in a number of ways, including: empowering the court to make ADVOs without having to establish that the victim, in fact, fears violence, to ensure that victims who are reluctant to cooperate with police for fear of reprisal may still obtain an ADVO; prohibiting unrepresented defendants personally cross-examining child witnesses during ADVO applications; allowing for provisional ADVOs to remain in force until they are revoked or an application for an interim or final ADVO is withdrawn or determined by the court and served on the defendant—however, the hearing date must still be set within 28 days—clarifying that where police initially applied for an ADVO or were otherwise a party to the proceedings, the Commissioner of Police must also be served with notice of any application to vary or revoke the ADVO and be given standing to appear—this is aimed at protecting victims from being coerced into varying orders—and removing the ability of a defendant to apply to have expired ADVOs revoked, which will prevent defendants from obtaining a firearms licence or weapons permit any sooner than 10 years after the ADVO has expired.

I have addressed the merits of the bill, but before I conclude I acknowledge the very hardworking local community service provider in my electorate of Miranda, Sutherland Shire Family Services. I cannot imagine the things that those caseworkers see every day. We all know that the incidence of domestic violence is grossly underreported because so many fear coming forward—I once heard the numbers described as the equivalent of Shark Park being filled with New South Wales victims of domestic violence every year. Knowing how prevalent

domestic violence is in our community and having had the most tragic outcome in my local area recently, I commend the bill to the House. I hope that we do not have to address this issue again in the near future.

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (10:43): I make a brief contribution to debate on the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Amendment (Review) Bill 2016. The purpose of the bill is to amend the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act and the Coroners Act following statutory reviews. The Labor Party will support the bill with the exception of the proposed change to section 101J of the Coroners Act, which seeks to extend the reporting period of the New South Wales Domestic Violence Death Review Team to two years. The Government has never thoroughly considered the findings of the team. It has delayed the team's meeting and has failed to implement a number of recommendations.

Some of the proposed changes to the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act include extending the definition of "domestic relationship" and the definition of "personal violence offence"; allowing a court to make an order if satisfied that the person has reasonable grounds to fear the commission of a domestic violence offence; making transcripts and evidence from the Supreme Court and the District Court in respect of serious offences admissible in the Local Court and the Children's Court; and allowing the Children's Court to make an order during care proceedings.

We must ensure the safety and protection of individuals who have experienced or witnessed domestic violence. The statistics on domestic and family violence are staggering. Up to two women die each week in Australia due to domestic violence. Domestic violence is recognised as the single greatest preventable cause of death, ill health and disability for women aged under 45 in Australia. It is reported that domestic and family violence costs the New South Wales economy \$4.5 billion per year. In the recent Federal budget delivered by the Turnbull Government funding fell short to seriously improve the situation for those escaping violence. In my electorate of Cabramatta I know that many people, for cultural reasons, are reluctant to speak out about domestic and personal violence. I have heard from many people with migrant backgrounds that they are reluctant to seek police help for fear of retribution or of bringing shame to the family.

Victims of domestic violence should seek help, and I believe more funding needs to be provided for awareness and prevention campaigns that target different groups. I am concerned that adequate funding for domestic violence specialist services and refuges has not been provided. We must keep tightening the laws relating to domestic violence, and funding and education must be forthcoming from the Government. Domestic violence is one of the worst things to happen to families. Back in the 1950s when I was a child I used to hear about domestic violence. The women were black and blue but they would not say a word to anybody. In those days, not only European but Australian and English women who were victims of domestic violence would not say a word about it because they considered it would bring shame to their family. They were afraid their children would be shamed at school when other children said, "Your dad beats your mum."

I did not go to many hotels back then, but when I did I remember guys talking about domestic violence back in the 1950s and 1960s as if it was a big joke. They would make comments such as someone having "to sort his wife out last night". It was a big laugh for the guys. But it is not a laugh anymore; it is a terrible thing. Anyone who has experience of domestic violence knows the terrible impact it can have on their upbringing, their memories and their life. Domestic violence can cause people problems throughout their lives; they can never forget what happened. It is time that we increased funding to help the police and community groups that look after women who have been violently assaulted by their partner, husband, brothers or by anybody else, to fight the scourge of domestic violence.

The police do a tremendous job. I have been to many meetings with the police and different community groups that seek to educate women—and also men, because sometimes they are victims of domestic violence—to speak up. Domestic violence will not be tolerated—it is a crime—and we must educate people to speak out against it. They must report it to the police so that the perpetrators are arrested and brought before the courts. If they spend a little time in jail or they have to pay a fine out of their pockets they may wake up to themselves that domestic violence in this country—any country—is not okay.

A woman came to my office about a year ago pleading with me to ask the police to withdraw criminal proceedings against her then husband. She had walked out of the house one day when her husband was threatening her; she got to the front gate but the husband ran out, grabbed her and dragged her by the hair back into the house. Luckily for her, a police officer was passing by and saw what happened. He arrested the man and took him to the police station, where he was charged with domestic violence.

The wife came into my office crying, asking the Minister to withdraw the proceedings against the husband because the family would take retribution against her and cause more problems. Of course, we told her that we could not do that; the matter was now in the hands of the police. Domestic violence is of great concern in this country. Refuges across New South Wales are under pressure and at capacity because of the Government's

Going Home Staying Home policy debacle. I urge the Government to provide more funds to domestic and family violence programs. As I said earlier, the Opposition does not oppose the bill, with the exception of the proposed changes to section 101J of the Coroners Act, which the Opposition will seek to delete by amendment.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I extend a warm welcome to the young women taking part in the parliamentary leadership program being conducted by Parliamentary Education Office.

Mr Geoff Provost: Future politicians, Mr Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Tweed will stop interrupting. If that happened in his class back at school he would be in trouble. He would be in the headmaster's office. He is heading that way very quickly.

Ms Jodi McKay: Throw him out.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Would you like to see how it is done?

Ms Jodi McKay: Yes.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Tweed should be very careful. We are discussing the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Amendment (Review) Bill, which deals with an issue that is very topical and of major concern to every member and all communities.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (10:51): I lead for The Greens in debate on the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Amendment (Review) Bill 2016 and express The Greens' support for the bill. It is important to acknowledge for those who have joined us in the public gallery that we must be sensitive when talking about domestic and family violence because, unfortunately, its reach into our community is such that there would be nobody in the Chamber or the gallery who does not have personal experience of or a connection with somebody who has experienced domestic and personal violence.

It is important for us to say upfront that domestic violence is not inevitable; it is not something that we need to live with. Just like poverty and other issues, there are ways to work together to eliminate domestic and family violence for all time, and we should be committed to working towards that aim. The bill seeks to address one element of this objective by giving effect to the recommendations of the statutory review of the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007 and the statutory review of chapter 9A of the Coroners Act 2009—the Domestic Violence Death Review Team.

The Greens are supportive of many of the provisions in the bill, noting the positive changes that it will implement to better protect members of our community who are victims of domestic and personal assault. I acknowledge the work of my Greens' colleague in the other place Dr Mehreen Faruqi, who has worked tirelessly with people in the sector to prevent domestic violence in our community. Schedule 1 to the bill amends the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007. It expands the definition of "domestic relationships" to include two people who have had a relationship with the same person—for example, a woman's ex-partner and current partner would have a domestic relationship with each other. Practically, this means that the new partner of a domestic violence victim could also seek an apprehended domestic violence order [ADVO] if they were being harassed by an abusive former partner.

It also categorises a number of additional offences from the Crimes Act 1900 as personal violence offences. A personal violence offence can result in an apprehended violence order, which in a domestic relationship will be treated as an apprehended domestic violence order. In short, the addition of those offences will give greater scope to someone to apply for an ADVO. Schedule 1 also introduces into the objects of the Act the particular impact of domestic violence on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons, persons from culturally and linguistically diverse background, persons from gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex communities, older persons and persons with disabilities. It removes the 28-day limit on the provisional ADVO, closing the gap just in case a final ADVO has not been served in time, and it allows the court to proceed with an application for an ADVO if one or more of the parties is absent if the court is satisfied that there was enough notice of the proceedings and that it is in the interests of justice to make such an order.

The bill also restricts the ability of the court to impose court costs against a protected person unless the claim is frivolous and vexatious, and it ensures that a child who appears in court cannot be asked questions directly by the defendant. That is obviously important in cases where defendants represent themselves in court. The bill also gives effect to the Government's plain English ADVO reforms announced in November 2015, which are designed to increase defendants' understanding of, and compliance with, orders. It also revises the threshold for making an ADVO. Currently, the Act nominates 55 existing criminal offences that are grounds for seeking and reinstating an order. The bill expands that list to include all New South Wales and Commonwealth criminal

offences when committed in a domestic relationship where a perpetrator intends to intimidate or coerce a victim—for example, sending an abusive text message or attacking a victim's pet.

Schedule 2 to the bill makes several amendments to the Coroners Act 2009. It will align the definition of "domestic relationship" to the corresponding definition in the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007 to ensure that all domestic violence related deaths are reviewed by the Domestic Violence Death Review Team. It ensures that Indigenous representation will be added to the Domestic Violence Death Review Team to assist in identifying gaps in service delivery and to provide information, expertise and perspectives on issues particularly affecting Indigenous populations. While The Greens welcome and support the bill and many of its provisions, we wish to flag potential areas of concern that have been raised, particularly by the Women's Legal Service NSW.

The Women's Legal Service NSW has raised a number of concerns with the Attorney General and we ask that these be considered and responded to in this place. In particular, the legal service notes that, while the bill includes a number of additional offences, several offences that are not infrequently related to domestic violence matters have not been included. These include section 51A of the Crimes Act, predatory driving; section 53 of the Crimes Act, injuries by furious driving; and section 54 of the Crimes Act, causing grievous bodily harm. The Women's Legal Service also notes that the bill changes the timing of reports of the Domestic Violence Review Team—Opposition members have spoken about that in the House today—requiring it to prepare a report for Parliament once every two years. Currently the reporting is done once a year.

The Women's Legal Service believes it is important that systemic issues are identified and made public in a timely manner so improvements that could save lives can also occur in a timely manner. The Greens recognise and support this position but we also acknowledge that this recommendation appears to have come from the Coroner's office. The Coroner has said that an annual review does not give the office enough time to monitor the implementation of previous recommendations and the development of evidence-based policy. The important question that needs to be answered here is whether the Coroner's office is making this recommendation because of a lack of resources to do this monitoring in real time and annually. If that is the case, it is unacceptable and we need to allocate more resources to enable it to happen. If it is for other reasons, and it seems that two-year monitoring is a better option, then it would be good to hear what those reasons are. But a lack of resources is not an excuse for changing the monitoring and time line for something as significant as this.

The Greens note also that the bill focuses primarily on law and order. It is important that we always look at the broader need to integrate approaches to address domestic violence in our community. We need effective strategies that stop gender inequality, which research shows is the primary indicator for domestic violence in a society. Shoestring budgets for the areas that support services such as refuges, crisis centres and other specific services need to be changed. We need more investment to be made in those services, not just attention to be paid to the law and order aspects of addressing domestic violence. It is also important to recognise that if we are to address this problem it is not enough simply to address Aboriginal persons, Torres Strait Islanders and other minor groups who are particularly impacted by domestic violence; we must recognise the need to fund specific and tailored support services for them—services that include, but are not limited to, services in their own language that are supported by their own communities.

When it comes to domestic violence, prevention is key. We must move up the cycle of violence and invest significantly in preventative strategies and programs to identify and support those at risk. We must say that domestic violence is not inevitable. We must end the need for the project run by researchers from the Destroy the Joint Group where they spend their time counting the number of women who die in Australia from domestic violence each year. That count stands at 30 in only the first few months of this year—to May. We must get to a point where we do not need those projects anymore. We must eliminate violence against women in our community. We must put a stop to it, and that means investing in the services, approaching it in a holistic way and making sure that we deal with prevention rather than just punishing the perpetrators.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before I call the next speaker, I did earlier extend a welcome to the young women taking part in the parliamentary leadership program being conducted by the Education Office. But only half the participants were in the gallery at that time. Now that all participants are in the gallery, I welcome you all here this morning. I again thank the Parliamentary Education Office for its work, on this project and all the other projects it runs on behalf of the Parliament.

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (11:01): I support the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Amendment (Review) Bill 2016. I support this bill in essence, but not those amendments proposed to section 101J of the Coroner's Act relating to the Domestic Violence Death Review Team [DVDRT]. I understand that this bill is based upon statutory reviews. It contains a suite of proposed changes that are, in the main, welcome. I thank all those who work at the coalface in providing services around domestic violence matters: the police; the paramedics; the refuges and women's health services; the extraordinary case workers, who hear the most awful stories; community and women's legal centres; Aboriginal family violence prevention legal services; domestic

violence court assistance schemes; family support services; neighbourhood centres and many others. As has been stated already, domestic and family violence is an all too common crime. Its prevalence is high.

However, as few as 14 per cent of victims actually report incidents to police. Official statistics show that nearly two million Australians over the age of 15 years have experienced violence at the hands of a current or previous partner. A 2015 NSW Domestic Violence Death Review Team review reported that in domestic violence homicides in New South Wales between 2000 and 2010 some 76 per cent of victims killed were women. This is inherently a gender crime. Current concerns about the response to domestic violence include: the number of breaches of apprehended domestic violence orders [ADVOs]; the effectiveness of efforts to reduce those breaches; the alleged lenient treatment of offenders at sentencing; changes to New South Wales Government funding for homelessness services, which resulted in specialist domestic violence refuges losing funding; the implementation of domestic violence courts in New South Wales; and the development, operation and effectiveness of perpetrator behaviour programs.

Our legislative response must address the fact that a common purpose of "protecting victims and penalising offenders" is not working as well as it ought to. We know that our Crimes Act has had a number of amendments to strengthen the apprehended violence order regime. We know that adding conditions and penalties for breaches of ADVOs aims to improve the system. We know that the 2012 Legislative Council inquiry and the New South Wales Auditor General reached a similar conclusion—that is, the domestic violence system works in silos; it is patchy and lacks leadership; and outcomes for victims are constrained by system requirements.

So I have applauded, as have many members in this place, any efforts made since to articulate and implement improvements. This suite of proposed changes goes some way toward that. However, it is imperative in this place when such critical legislation is being debated and discussed that we speak for those who work at the coalface; and, importantly, speak for those who cannot speak. I take a moment to pay tribute to Lynette, whose story was highlighted by Antoinette Braybrook just yesterday in her moving opinion piece on the ABC website *The Drum* entitled "Aboriginal Women's lives really do matter". She says:

It shouldn't require Four Corners to expose the failure of our justice system in dealing with domestic violence towards Aboriginal women. There needs to be urgent investment to tackle this epidemic.

Four Corners recounted—in horrifying detail—the brutal killing of an Aboriginal woman, the failure of our justice system to respond, and the failure of our community to care.

Lynette was battered, bruised and ultimately destroyed by men's violence. It was ended by the most obscene disregard for her humanity. The system did not protect her and justice has not been done.

Violence against Aboriginal women and their children is at epidemic levels. If you are an Aboriginal woman you are 34 times more likely to be hospitalised and 10 times more likely to be killed by someone who purports to love you.

She continues:

To address this national crisis we need strong national leadership and huge political will. So far political rhetoric has not been matched with funding commitments needed. And we need to set targets to reduce violence against our women.

To Lynette's family, friends and community, I say, "She mattered." I will now refer to some of the comments and concerns raised by the Women's Legal Service of NSW around some clarification they seek on this bill regarding section 4 and the meaning of a "personal violence offence". They say:

We note the inclusion of s43A of the *Crimes Act 1900*: Failure of persons with parental responsibility to care for the child and s44 of the *Crimes Act 1900*: Failure of persons to provide the necessities of life. We seek clarification that these provisions will not be used as a tool to hold the adult victim of violence accountable for the perpetrator's violence and/or failure to provide and that consideration will be given to circumstances of poverty. Further, consideration should also be given to the impact of domestic violence on the parenting of the adult victim.

The Women's Legal Service also says:

We are concerned by the proposed amendment of section 16(2)(c)(i) to omit "*at any time*" and replace it with "*on more than one occasion*". The change will increase the threshold such that a court will need to be satisfied that a person has experienced domestic violence on more than one occasion prior to the granting of an ADVO.

Waiting until a second time may be too late, and we need to address that. In regard to section 35 (2) (c1) the Women's Legal Service says:

We welcome inclusion of s35(2)(c1) "*prohibiting or restricting the defendant from locating or attempting to locate the protected person*". We recommend for clarity that this be expanded to refer specifically to third parties and surveillance. Our suggested wording is: "*prohibiting or restricting the defendant from locating, attempting to locate, asking someone else to locate, following or keeping the protected person under surveillance*".

The Women's Legal Service of NSW is also seeking to have an addition policy issue addressed around section 41A and the protection of vulnerable witnesses. The Women's Legal Service says:

We strongly urge NSW to take this opportunity to provide vulnerable witness protection from direct cross-examination, beyond the protection for a child provided for in proposed section 41A. We recommend protection from direct cross-examination extend to "any person against whom the respondent is alleged to have used family violence".

There are many concerns in this document, which the Women's Legal Service has presented to a number of members. I now refer to the amendment of the Coroner's Act 2009 where the Domestic Violence Death Review Team is discussed. Recommendation 27 in the NSW Women's Alliance response to the blueprint around domestic and family violence says that the NSW Domestic Violence Death Review Team should meet and publicly report every six months, at a minimum. There are many people in our community who do not support the Domestic Violence Death Review Team preparing a report for Parliament only once every two years. It has to be, at a minimum, once a year.

As specified in the Domestic and Family Violence Briefing Paper No. 5 2015, which was prepared by our fabulous New South Wales Parliamentary Research Service, we must look at developments in other States, particularly the recommendations that came out of the report of the Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland, headed by the former Governor-General Quentin Bryce, titled, *Not Now, Not Ever* and the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence. Let us also be reminded of the April 2015 Council of Australian Governments agreement to urgently reduce domestic and family violence, which signals a more concerted national approach to the form of violence that disproportionately impacts women and their children. *[Extension of time]*

Good intentions; legal and administrative reform to legislation; and community discussion and listening to stories about domestic violence all play a role in change. However, legislative change must be backed up with adequate funding for vital resources to save lives—not just educational programs for perpetrators, but funding for domestic violence liaison officers in every police station, funding for legal and referral services and, most importantly, funding for domestic violence specialist women's refuges. I will conclude with a shout out to Destroy the Joint, Counting Dead Women. I honour their effort in the hope that our communities maintain their rage and focus our efforts on preventing this crime. As the member for Blue Mountains, and as a proud member of the New South Wales Parliament, but more importantly as a child survivor of domestic violence horror, I am honoured to stand here and speak on this bill. I commend this bill to the House.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (11:12): I am 100 per cent for the great electorate of Tweed. I refer to a fairly significant amendment to the legislation in this place, the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Amendment (Review) Bill 2016. In the past I have been a strong advocate against domestic violence, particularly in the electorate of Tweed. On 27 November 2015 the Attorney General, together with the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Justice and Police Troy Grant, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Pu Goward, announced the introduction of plain English apprehended domestic violence orders [ADVOs] as part of the New South Wales Government's continued commitment to end violence against women.

This bill amends the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007 to give effect to plain English ADVOs by providing a regulation-making power to prescribe the contents of the ADVO application form. There is never any excuse for breaching an ADVO, but the Government is taking a further initiative in making these documents even clearer, so that defendants will have no excuse for not understanding or complying with their ADVO. The new plain English ADVOs will be written in simple language tailored to the individual, removing the complex legal jargon that is in current ADVOs. These plain English ADVOs are designed to use language that a 13-year-old can understand.

The changes aim to ensure that people who are the subject of ADVOs know exactly what the consequences will be if they do not comply—that is, they can expect police to be knocking on their doors. I acknowledge other amendments to legislation that impacts on cross-border areas and allows ADVOs to be transported across the border, which was a significant problem in the past, and is well on the way to being resolved as we speak. The new documents will spell out in plain English the penalties for breaching an ADVO, including up to two years in prison.

The Department of Justice has worked with the Department of Premier and Cabinet's Behavioural Insights Unit to develop these plain English personalised ADVOs designed to increase defendants' understanding of, and compliance with, orders. The Behavioural Insights Unit draws on research in behavioural economics, psychology and social anthropology to understand human behaviour and decision-making. The application of this research to government policy and service delivery is highly valuable. These changes are being introduced in response to issues identified by stakeholders who work directly with domestic violence defendants and victims, who noted that some of the terms of the ADVO orders are difficult for both parties to understand, as often the orders use legal or detailed language that people are not familiar with.

There is strong evidence that improving the legibility of forms will improve compliance. Key messages will be prioritised on the form, for example, the consequences for breaching an order, and examples and

explanatory text will be used to help defendants better understand their obligations under the order. The new ADVO form will also include messages that are focused on behaviour change by defendants such as the impact of violence on children. This messaging seeks to challenge the normalisation of domestic violence in some communities. The plain English ADVO changes are just one of many initiatives being progressed by the Government to change the way the New South Wales justice system responds to domestic violence.

Recently in my electorate the Minister for Women, Pru Goward, hosted a domestic violence forum that was extraordinarily well attended by a number of non-government organisations, victims of domestic violence and the wider community. All avenues of help were explained to attendees as was how to access those services. The Minister, the Hon. Catherine Cusack and I went into detail about a number of recent changes to the law. We have passed legislation that allows police officers to wear video cameras when attending domestic violence incidents, which has been backed up by allowing that evidence to be admissible in a court of law.

A year or so later those laws have resulted in a 30 per cent increase in defendants pleading guilty, thereby avoiding the victim's having to go through the very traumatic process of giving evidence about the domestic violence. This Government has introduced one of the first pilot programs of Safer Pathways. Last year the Attorney General, the Hon. Gabrielle Upton, visited my electorate. The program brings together six or seven government agencies and non-government agencies in regular meetings. They can upgrade a risk. It is all about risk assessment for the victim: the higher the risk the greater the resources that are applied.

Senior police are very supportive of the program and have seen the positive benefits. Members experience people knocking on their doors reporting domestic violence, which is extraordinarily depressing. The hardship that a fellow human being inflicts on another is deplorable. Interestingly, 80 per cent of the current offenders experienced domestic violence in their youth—there is definitely a cycle. I take this opportunity to applaud the Deputy Speaker, who has been actively working with the National Rugby League [NRL] to speak out against domestic violence. The Superintendent of the Tweed-Byron Local Area Command, Wayne Starling, is also very proactive. He has a great team of domestic violence liaison officers [DVLOs], including Jacquie Maroney, Keryn Chisholm and Beck Couch. Beck is a tremendous individual, who works tirelessly for the wider community and has a real focus on the Aboriginal community.

I was pleased to obtain some funding for a number of Aboriginal people who are now undertaking certificate IV courses in Aboriginal studies, with a reference to domestic violence. Beck was over the moon about that. I will continue to lobby hard for some extra funding for her. Kellie Young is a women's domestic violence court advocate [WDVCA]. She also does a tremendous job in ensuring victims are treated properly during the court process. Recently I attended the opening of the office of The Family Centre, a not-for-profit organisation, at Tweed Heads. The centre offers a program for domestic violence offenders, including group therapy and counselling. I am led to believe that that is also highly respected in Lismore and has achieved some really positive outcomes in the Deputy Speaker's region.

A lot is happening in this space and I am sure that we will do more as these programs evolve and are evaluated. I am pleased to be part of a Liberal-Nationals Government that has taken such a hard stance on domestic and personal violence. Indeed, we are working tirelessly with the wider community, our enforcement agencies, court systems and non-government agencies. For example, On Track runs a very successful women's referral agency, as well as a women's refuge at Murwillumbah, in the Tweed Heads area. Chief Executive Officer Elaine De Vos is deeply committed to increasing the high level of services that On Track provides in the local area—mostly to women. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (11:22): I speak to the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Amendment (Review) Bill 2016. The proposed amendments in this bill will give effect to a number of recommendations set out in the statutory review of the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007 (NSW) and the statutory review of chapter 9A of the Coroners Act 2009—the Domestic Violence Death Review Team. For a long time domestic violence was one of those subjects never spoken about and always dealt with behind closed doors. I am glad that is no longer the case: Domestic violence now holds a place on the national agenda, with an overwhelming amount of support flowing through from the community.

Domestic violence is recognised as the single greatest preventable cause of death, ill health and disability for women aged 45 and under throughout Australia. It should also be noted that women who have disabilities, live in rural or remote areas, or are from Aboriginal, migrant or refugee backgrounds, are at a much greater risk of male violence. We should be doing all we can to support and assist those in need to put an end to domestic violence in New South Wales and throughout Australia. It is estimated that domestic and family violence costs the New South Wales economy \$4.5 billion per annum. However, inadequate funding continues to be provided for domestic and family violence programs. We can only hope that through improved legislative change we can make some difference to the lives of those who are affected by family and domestic violence in New South Wales.

I note that the refuges available for victims of family and domestic violence all too often operate at maximum capacity, with no beds available for anyone in need throughout the Sydney metropolitan area. More funding must be provided to tackle this curse; we should not rely simply on legislative change to fix the underlying problem. In the proposed amendments contained in this bill the definition of a "domestic relationship" has been extended and the definition of a "personal violence offence" has been expanded. Further provisions have been put in place to ensure that under certain circumstances, such as if the person is a child, it is no longer necessary for a court to be satisfied that the person is in fear, to make an order. Also, a defendant is now prevented from directly questioning a child in proceedings for a domestic violence order. However, a legal practitioner may still do this.

Any transcripts and evidence from the Supreme and District courts in respect of serious offences will now be made admissible in the Local and Children's courts. In addition, the Children's Court may make an order during care proceedings. I am pleased to note that the Victorian Government has raised the bar for all governments in Australia, with its announcement of more than half a billion dollars for domestic violence to implement all the recommendations of its recent royal commission. This commitment is a true game changer for Victoria, and I urge the New South Wales Government to step up and place its chips on the table with respect to the safety of women and children in New South Wales. No member in this Chamber is opposed to supporting and improving the facilities available to victims of domestic and family violence. However, it appears that only a select few of us are talking about the need for more funding and the enormous benefit it would have for victims throughout New South Wales. I urge members to voice these concerns to their colleagues and to echo our call for more funding for domestic and family violence support services. I do not oppose this bill.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (11:27): I make a brief contribution to the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Amendment (Review) Bill 2016. I note at the outset that the Opposition does not oppose this bill. Members from both sides of the Chamber who have contributed to this debate have been very passionate. Some have related circumstances experienced in their electorates not only by their constituents but also by non-government agencies and others as they attempt to curb domestic and personal violence in this State. This issue touches every policy area—police, health, mental health, et cetera—and any assistance this Government can provide to eradicate domestic and personal violence in this State is worthy of support. It is unnecessary to remind members about the devastating effects of domestic and personal violence on families and communities.

I welcome this bill but want to raise concerns about one part of the bill relating to the Domestic Violence Death Review Team which will no longer have to report annually to Parliament but will report biennially. I am surprised that provision has been included in the bill, given that the vast majority of amendments to the Act are to expand the manner in which we support victims of domestic violence. The Domestic Violence Death Review Team has an important function in this State. It not only reviews a variety of closed cases of deaths due to domestic violence in New South Wales but also analyses data to identify patterns surrounding those deaths and makes important recommendations to legislation, policies, practices and services that are implemented by government and non-government organisations and agencies in this State to prevent and reduce the likelihood of such deaths. I think it is pertinent for those recommendations to be made annually in order to give the Attorney General and Ministers with carriage of domestic violence issues an opportunity to make necessary amendments to legislation as recommended by the team.

It is wrong to diminish the role of the Domestic Violence Death Review Team by having it report biennially instead of annually. I am surprised that the Attorney General is attempting to amend the Act in that way. Recently I received a request to give consideration to have the Child Death Review Team report biennially but I indicated that the New South Wales Opposition would not be supporting such a suggestion. There is a pattern by this Government of reducing reporting structures and I do not understand the motivation behind it. Clearly, an annual reporting structure can only assist the Government in ensuring that it eradicates such deaths in our State.

If there is an issue relating to resourcing and funding the teams appropriately, and the request is coming from the bureaucracy, it might be better met by the Ministers, the Attorney General and the Government reviewing whether it is resourcing those teams appropriately to ensure that they meet that 12-month reporting target. I understand that the Opposition will move amendments to ensure that section 101J remains in the Act. Otherwise, the Opposition does not oppose the bill. The Labor Opposition has always demonstrated that it will do everything it can to support the Government when it is rightly attempting to eradicate domestic violence in this State.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (11:33): I contribute to debate on the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Amendment (Review) Bill 2016. Government representatives, the Premier, the Attorney General and the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence regale us in this place about domestic violence being a scourge on our community and that it is a priority for this Government. I agree with those sentiments. It is a scourge on our communities and it should be a main priority of this Government. It is more than disappointing that, time and again, the Government's actions show that its words are merely rhetoric, and this bill is no exception.

How can the Government purport to be prioritising domestic violence when it introduces a bill that includes a significant backward step?

Whilst Labor members support those aspects of the bill that implement the recommendations of the statutory review of the Coroners Act and the statutory review of the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act, we cannot and do not support the proposed change to section 101J of the Coroners Act, which seeks to extend the reporting period of the NSW Domestic Violence Death Review Team from one year to two years. The NSW Domestic Violence Death Review Team was established by Labor in 2010 to comprehensively examine the stories of those who have died due to domestic violence, to inform future policy, to identify opportunities for intervention and prevention aimed at addressing the causes of domestic violence and, critically, to prevent more deaths.

It is nothing short of irresponsible for the Government to now introduce a bill that will result in less accountability, less transparency and less action at a time when we need more visibility and greater understanding of what is happening. What is happening in our communities is a perfect storm. The Government's Going Home Staying Home so-called reform saw many specialist women's services shut down across New South Wales. The Government has also closed community psychology services. We have very limited access to drug and alcohol services. Services that received funding under Going Home Staying Home, now called "homelessness services", are primarily trying to support women escaping domestic violence. Early prevention support programs for children are so overstretched that more than 100 children in my local area are on a waiting list to receive support and be placed in a safe environment. There is no support for people coming out of prison and going back into our communities. As I said, this is a perfect storm and domestic violence rates are skyrocketing.

It is evident that this Government is struggling to stay abreast of what is happening. The inaugural Domestic Violence Death Review Team convenor retired and it took four months to find a successor. It took three months to appoint new members to the Domestic Violence Death Review Team after memberships had lapsed. The 2012-13 annual report was not tabled until March 2015, and the latest report, tabled in October 2015, covered two years, from 2013 to 2015. In the last two reports, 38 evidence-based recommendations were made, yet there have been no updates as to any progress made on these recommendations, aimed at government agencies in past years. All this indicates a lax approach by the Government. Reducing the annual reporting to biennial reporting merely serves to relieve pressure on the Government when it should be tackling the problems and highlighting the issues being faced by our communities.

The Government's Going Home Staying Home so-called reforms have seen a significant shake-up of the domestic violence support sector, but as the dust settles it is clear that the outcomes have not been positive. These reforms have led to an exodus of skilled staff from the sector, confusion and distrust among service providers and a loss of confidence from women and children escaping domestic violence. In Port Stephens, the Yacaaba Centre was threatened with closure before being granted a temporary reprieve. With interim funding soon to expire, its future remains uncertain. Yet the Yacaaba Centre provides a critical service to women escaping domestic violence on the Tomaree Peninsula.

In December alone last year in Port Stephens there were 150 police reports of domestic violence, which is about five a day. Police made applications for 55 apprehended violence orders—an increase from 41 the month before. In 2013 statistics from the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research indicated that just over half of all domestic violence assaults are reported. These statistics are merely the tip of the iceberg of what is happening in our communities. Given the justifiable community concern about this issue, the Government must act to ensure that women are protected in their homes and, where that is not possible, that they have a refuge to flee to in times of need.

This Government is taking a number of actions in regard to domestic violence and the Opposition supports and congratulates the Government. Early indications for the Safer Pathway safety action meetings are demonstrating positive results. The continuation of the Staying Home Leaving Violence program seeks to reverse the onus on women to leave and instead offers greater protection for women to stay in their homes. These are valuable policies. Unfortunately these programs have been launched as pilot programs only. The most recent launch of services—the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme—has five pilot sites, all in Liberal and Nationals held seats. None of the pilot programs is operating in Port Stephens, for example, despite the area's having domestic violence rates 2½ times the State average.

Instead of introducing programs in the areas of greatest need this Government is playing politics with domestic violence, placing women and children at ongoing risk of harm at the hands of partners and former partners. There are a significant number of women for whom these policies are not enough. When a woman reaches a point in her mind where she must leave a violent relationship, she requires an immediate place of accommodation and safety. In Port Stephens, as in so many other areas across New South Wales, we have no

emergency housing. Refugees are in nearby communities and they are at overcapacity. Women and their children are forced to stay overnight in motels and caravan parks.

In my community we all know where they go, so when we are talking about safety in this sector we know that it does not exist in these communities. These services may provide a roof over a victim's head for a night but they lack the specialist caseworkers, experienced staff and specialist services that the refugees used to employ. They also lack the security necessary to protect a woman from a violent partner, especially in rural communities, where there are very few accommodation options. I take this opportunity to congratulate the many people who are working in the strained and overstretched domestic violence sector, providing much-needed care and hope to women and children escaping domestic violence.

The voiceless people in the domestic violence space are the children—children who have experienced so much trauma in their lives that their school is the first place they feel safe in. However, those children are so affected by the trauma they have experienced at home they no longer know what is appropriate behaviour or what healthy relationships look like. Our schools are struggling to manage these trauma-impacted children. There is so much more that this Government needs to be doing to address the enormous prevalence of domestic and family violence in our communities. We need more emergency housing. We need the Safer Pathway model to be expanded across all local area commands [LACs] with the resources that are provided for the pilot programs made available in other areas.

We need more funding for services that are attempting to support women and children escaping domestic violence. Currently, the services are unable to meet the sheer need in our communities due to the lack of resources. Whilst many elements of this bill are not opposed, I stand alongside my Labor colleagues and urge the Government to reconsider its position on extending the time frame for reporting by the NSW Domestic Violence Death Review Team. Not only is this sending a very sad message to our communities about this Government's priorities; it is reducing our understanding of what is happening. It is a backward step at a time when we need to be going forward full throttle and, most importantly, it is placing too many women and children at risk of harm. We must do better.

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (11:42): I, too, make a brief contribution to debate on the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Amendment (Review) Bill 2016 as a member of this House who represents many communities that are struggling with this shameful crisis every day. The faces of many people in those communities reflect this scourge on our society. I acknowledge the thoughtful, passionate and heartfelt contributions made yesterday and today by members from all sides of the Chamber. Most members are in agreement about this scourge, what should be done and the importance we are obliged to place upon it.

My staff and I hear stories every day that break our hearts, and that will not come as a surprise to any member of this Chamber. I will not raise them here today—there are too many to mention—but, like many members, I will speak on behalf of these women who have been brave enough to speak. I will speak on behalf of those women who were brave enough to come and speak to me as recently as late last week, because many feel they have no voice. In some parts of western Sydney, including some parts that I represent, it is well documented that the rates of domestic violence are twice that of the New South Wales average according to recent data collected by the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research [BOCSAR].

Domestic violence is recognised as the single greatest preventable cause of death, ill health and disability for women aged under 45 in Australia. This is an incredible statistic and it requires us to be constantly doing more. We know that children who grow up in families where there is violence may suffer a range of behavioural and emotional disturbances. These can also be associated with perpetrating or experiencing violence later in life. Women with disabilities, women living in rural or remote areas and women from Indigenous, migrant or refugee backgrounds are at much greater risk of male violence. Last year over 29,000 domestic violence assaults were reported in New South Wales. Official BOCSAR statistics from 2013 indicate that just over half of all domestic violence assaults are reported. That means, as many of my colleagues have indicated in this debate, that the crisis we are talking about is only the tip of the iceberg.

As Opposition members have said many times in this place on this bill, we support the bill with the exception of the proposed change to section 101J of the Coroners Act, which seeks to extend the reporting period of the NSW Domestic Violence Death Review Team to two years from its current position of reporting annually. I note the comments of the member for Port Stephens, who quite rightly said that this is a backward step at a time when we need to be going at full throttle. Members have given statistics on how domestic violence is affecting people from all walks of life. I have been moved by stories members have told the House about women and families who have come to them pleading with them to do more. Surely this is not the time to limit the amount of reporting to the Parliament about women who have been killed at the hands of their partners. The reporting must be done a minimum of once a year, if not more.

The Domestic Violence Death Review Team was set up by the Labor Government in 2010. As stated previously in debate, many women's advocacy groups are calling for reporting to occur twice a year. The Domestic Violence Death Review Team is vital for its comprehensive and exhaustive examination of the stories of those who have died due to domestic violence. The team must report regularly and those recommendations must be taken up. While the New South Wales Government is obviously rightly focusing on increasing its legislative and policing response to the significant tragic and endemic issue of domestic violence, it must acknowledge that it is still not adequately funding domestic violence specialist services and refuges.

We know that since the debacle of the Going Home Staying Home policy, where only 20 of 76 refuges across New South Wales remained under existing management, most refuges have been at capacity. In a sample week, seven of 76 refuges had a bed, including none in metropolitan Sydney, as reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald* last year. This will not be a surprise to any member of Parliament because, if my office is any example, women who have no place to go are constantly speaking to us. Under the combination of general homelessness services with specialist domestic violence services, it is unclear exactly how many beds exist for those escaping domestic violence, although estimates are at around 63 government-owned refuges with 350 rooms and 12 privately owned refuges across New South Wales.

The Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service has had a massive increase in its workload of referring victims to appropriate services. However, it was unfunded until early this year—when the Government allocated only 20 per cent of funding to these vital services. I cannot speak in this important debate without acknowledging the incredible and tireless work of local women's advocacy groups in and around western Sydney, which I represent in this place. In particular I put on the record my ongoing support for and thanks to the police local area commands of Penrith, St Marys and Mount Druitt.

In particular, I thank the domestic violence liaison officers, whom I have come to know. The domestic violence liaison officers [DVLOs] in these commands consistently go above and beyond, and I know others do likewise across New South Wales. As their local member of Parliament I continue to be impressed by them, and I know that they make a real difference to women in our community. I hear about that on a regular basis. I put on the record my thanks for what they are doing and their passion for our community.

On behalf of my electorate, on behalf of the many women who have come to me, and on behalf of those who have not, I am proud to lend my voice to this debate today. But I am not proud that 79 women have died in the past 12 months at the hands of those who claimed to love them. We all need to do everything in our power to stop this. We need to make the legislative and policing changes that our communities rightly expect and demand to expose these perpetrators for what they are. We also need to properly fund the services that enable women to safely leave these relationships. As the member for Londonderry I will keep fighting for both these priorities.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse—Attorney General) (11:51): In reply, I thank all members of this Chamber for their contributions to this important debate, including from the Government the Hon. Troy Grant, Deputy Premier; the Hon. Pru Goward, the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault; and the members representing the electorates of Wollondilly, Miranda and Tweed. I thank Opposition members for their contributions, including the shadow Attorney General, Mr Paul Lynch, and the members representing the electorates of Maitland, Shellharbour, Wollongong, Campbelltown, Lake Macquarie, Strathfield, Cabramatta and the Blue Mountains. I thank the shadow Minister for Justice and Police, Mr Guy Zangari, and the members representing the electorates of Fairfield, Bankstown, Port Stephens and Londonderry. I thank Ms Jenny Leong, the member for Newtown and member of The Greens, for her contribution. I thank them all for their contributions and the heartfelt thoughts and reflections on their own electorates and how domestic violence impacts their constituents and the community of New South Wales.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge the work of the Deputy Premier and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault for their efforts and determination, working with me as the Attorney General to provide greater protection for victims of domestic violence in New South Wales. I look forward to continuing to work closely with those Ministers and with all members of Parliament to do whatever I can in my capacity as Attorney General to provide increased safety and freedom from violence for victims and their children in New South Wales.

Before concluding I wish to address a number of matters that have been raised in debate on this legislation in the House today and yesterday. I turn to the issue of the reporting cycle of the Domestic Violence Death Review Team [DVDRT]. The shadow Attorney General and others in this House raised concerns about the bill providing for the Domestic Violence Death Review Team to move from an annual to a biennial reporting cycle. I understand that the shadow Attorney General has tabled an amendment in the House in this respect. The Government will be opposing that amendment.

The State Coroner, His Honour Magistrate Michael Barnes—being the convenor of the DVDRT—submitted to the statutory review of chapter 9A of the Coroners Act that the current requirement for the team to report annually to Parliament should be changed to a requirement to report every two years. The State Coroner has also written to me about this issue in his capacity as convenor of the DVDRT. I will quote from his letter to me, which sets out clearly why he is asking for this change. It says:

There were a number of reasons for making this recommendation.

First, the process of developing evidence-based recommendations derived from robust interagency consultation and collaboration is undermined by the time-frame posed by the annual reporting framework.

Second, the 12 month time-frame leaves insufficient time for a whole-of-government response to be co-ordinated, and recommendations to be implemented. On this point it is noted that, as the Team is required to monitor responses to and uptake of recommendations, in circumstances where no response has been received, this may be perceived as inaction by the Government in responding to the work of the team.

Thirdly, the quality and scope of the Team's quantitative and qualitative research would benefit from additional time and consultation prior to reporting and this would be better afforded under a biennial reporting framework.

Finally, biennial reporting aligns with the reporting calendar of other similar bodies such as the NSW Ombudsman's Reviewable Child Deaths Report and the Australian Institute of Criminology's National Homicide Monitoring Program Report.

The statutory review ultimately agreed that amending the team's reporting requirement to every two years will ensure that it is able to effectively fulfil its legislative reporting requirement, while also leading to greater interagency collaboration. The Government supports this change, argued strongly for by the Coroner as the convenor of that team. It will mean that the team continues reporting on domestic violence deaths and systemic issues in service delivery on the ground, to the highest possible standard.

As the State Coroner noted in his letter, biennial reporting is undertaken by similar bodies, and I mentioned those reports. In addition to those bodies, I note that in November last year this Parliament passed amendments in the Courts and Other Justice Portfolio Legislation Amendment Bill 2015, which I introduced, to allow the Child Death Review Team to report biennially rather than annually. The Child Death Review Team is convened by the NSW Ombudsman and is responsible for keeping a register of all child deaths in New South Wales, for classifying and analysing these deaths for patterns and trends, and for undertaking research into the causes of the deaths.

In my second reading speech I noted that the purpose of those amendments was to increase the effectiveness of Child Death Review Team reporting. I explained to the House that biennial reporting continues to identify trends and, in fact, it should enhance the identification of real trends over the longer term, as opposed to spikes or anomalies that may occur during a 12-month period. Those same considerations I spoke about last year in relation to the Child Death Review Team also apply in relation to the DVDRT. It is not surprising that the State Coroner has raised the issue of annual reporting of the DVDRT when similar bodies have experienced the same limitations with annual reporting.

It is perhaps surprising that last year the Opposition did not oppose biennial reporting in relation to the Child Death Review Team, yet today it raises issues with the same policy change relating to a body that performs a similar function relating to domestic violence. This is an inconsistent approach on the part of the Opposition. Again, on behalf of the Government, I will not support that amendment. This Government is a strong supporter of the important work undertaken by the DVDRT and it takes its recommendations seriously. It listens to the recommendations, support and advice of its convener, the Coroner. The House may be interested to know that the whole-of-government responses to the two annual reports of the DVDRT for 2012-13 and 2014-15 have been provided to the State Coroner and are published on the DVDRT website. The responses show that the Government supports, and is progressing, all but one of the 38 recommendations made across both reports.

I encourage all members to read the Government's responses. The Government also supports the recommendation of the statutory review of the Domestic Violence Death Review Team [DVDRT] for consideration of a Premier's memorandum to require Ministers and government agencies to report back to the Attorney General on any action being undertaken to implement the team's recommendations within a reasonable time frame. The Government is currently consulting on this proposal. The DVDRT annual reports also publish updates on the Government's responses to its recommendations and where recommendations are not supported the reasons are provided. This provides a robust accountability mechanism to ensure that the Government provides updates on progress of implementing recommendations to subsequent DVDRT annual reports.

The shadow Attorney General and other members of this House also requested clarification in relation to a number of issues raised by the Women's Legal Service NSW. I received the same letter on Tuesday 10 May from the Women's Legal Service NSW. I note that the opening paragraph of the letter commends the Government for introducing this bill, and I thank the Women's Legal Service for its support and advice. I also thank the

Women's Legal Service for the time it has taken to write to me, and for its close involvement over the course of the development of the reforms in this bill.

The Women's Legal Service was part of the consultation process for the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007 statutory review and provided a submission as part of the review. The service was also consulted on the drafting of this bill as it relates to that Act as part of its membership of the Apprehended Violence Legal Issues Coordinating Committee. I assure the Women's Legal Service that its considered, measured and informative input is highly valued by the Government and all the points it raised—which have been reiterated in this House by the shadow Attorney General and other members—were considered carefully by the Department of Justice in finalising the statutory review and drafting this bill. Of course, I will respond in writing to the correspondence from the Women's Legal Service and its various requests for clarification.

For the purposes of this debate and for the benefit of members who raised the points identified by Women's Legal Service, I note that the bill is the result of extensive and broad stakeholder consultation. I believe the bill balances the diverse views that were put forward and includes those that were already expressed during the consultation period by the Women's Legal Service. I also note that the reforms in this bill arise from the statutory review of the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act and that they will be monitored by the Department of Justice during the first 12 months of their operation to ensure they meet their intended policy objectives, and to ensure there are no unintended consequences arising from the recommendations. That is an important safeguard. Before concluding, I note that the member for Strathfield asked about correspondence sent to the Government in relation to interpreter services as part of Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Services. That correspondence was referred to my office by the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault in April 2016 and, as with all members' correspondence, I am considering it and I will reply to the member for Strathfield in due course.

The reforms before this House outlined in the bill will make a difference. Put simply, there will be increased protection under the ADVO scheme for domestic violence victims and their children. As I have said before in this House, domestic violence is not only a serious crime but also a violation of trust. These reforms reflect the fact that domestic violence is about a perpetrator controlling a victim—domestic violence is not just physical abuse, but any behaviour that coerces or engenders fear in a domestic relationship. Controlling someone by violence or in other ways, including threats over the phone or by controlling bank accounts, is also domestic violence and must be recognised as such in our criminal law. This bill does that. This is why we must make sure that the system for preventing and responding to domestic and family violence is comprehensive and adaptable.

I take this opportunity to talk a little about the \$60 million package that this Government announced in October 2015, which includes not only a monetary commitment to stamp out domestic violence and help perpetrators curb their damaging and sometimes violent behaviour but also new and innovative things that our community and stakeholders are embracing. It includes: \$15 million to introduce domestic violence high risk offender teams in all six police regions to target repeat offenders and investigate serious domestic and family violence matters; \$20 million to increase the Specialist Homelessness Services' capacity, spoken about at length by some members in the Chamber today, through additional emergency accommodation and support for women and children affected by domestic violence, enabling those services to respond more quickly; and \$20 million for mandated perpetrator behaviour change programs to make perpetrators face up to their actions, attitudes and behaviours.

I will not run through all the other initiatives. It is not a matter of the numbers that I catalogue or the dollars behind them; it is important that the bill before the House does one significant thing: ensures that domestic violence is understood in its broadest form. The reforms introduced today are the result of detailed statutory reviews undertaken by this Government, as well as comprehensive stakeholder consultation with government and non-government bodies, some of whom I have mentioned in my remarks. I once again thank the many stakeholders who contributed their time and expertise to the development of these comprehensive legislative reviews and a comprehensive bill. We thank them for their energy, emotion and personal experiences—and indeed the experiences of many members within their local communities.

The changes outlined in the bill will commence on proclamation to ensure that all necessary system changes for courts and police have occurred, that any training that has to take place has been done and that the regulations to support the legislation have been drafted. They will commence as soon as operationally possible. I am especially pleased that Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Services [WDVCAS] director Renata Field has applauded the reforms, and has said that the measures will give victims of domestic violence more confidence. The bill before the House is an omnibus bill; it is a comprehensive bill. It is further evidence of the Government's ongoing commitment to prevent domestic violence by giving victims appropriate support and protection within the justice system and assistance for perpetrators. The Government will not resile from the strong

and enduring commitment that it has made to protect all victims of domestic violence. I commend the bill to the House.

Motion agreed to.

Consideration in detail requested by Mr Paul Lynch.

Consideration in Detail

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: By leave: I will propose the bill in groups of clauses and schedules. The question is that clauses 1 and 2 be agreed to.

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that schedule 1 be agreed to.

Schedule 1 agreed to.

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (12:08): I move Opposition amendment No. 1 on sheet C2016-042:

No. 1 **Reports**

Page 15, Schedule 2 [6], lines 1-6. Omit all words on those lines.

The amendment proposes to delete schedule 2 [6], which effectively means that we do not amend section 101J of the Coroners Act. That means that reporting by the Domestic Violence Death Review Team remains annual. I certainly will not repeat in detail the arguments that I have made previously—and indeed that have been made by other members during the second reading debate. I simply note briefly that there has been no cogent or persuasive argument advanced to change the reporting times. The argument that the Child Death Review Team reports biennially and therefore as a matter of absolute certainty the Domestic Violence Death Review Team has to report once every two years as well, is in my view one of deep intellectual inadequacy. It is an argument that ranks with bureaucratise. It is a bureaucratic argument that does not deal with the substance of this debate.

The advocates and activists do not support it—Women's Alliance, Women's Legal Service NSW and previous members of the committee—as they say it is about transparency and transparency is reduced by reduced reporting. If we are to take the team's work seriously it should report annually, not every two years. If there is not annual reporting then the work is not being taken seriously. If there is a major issue about the work of the team; it is about the implementation of recommendations by the Government. The implementation of recommendations will be reduced by reporting every two years rather than annually.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vauchuse—Attorney General) (12:09): The Government does not support the amendment. I do not know how much clearer I can be. I have catalogued extensively the reasons why the Government does not accept it. Where do I start? The State Coroner, who is the convenor of the Domestic Violence Death Review Team, has explained in great detail why the amendment will work against the important functions of the team, including trends, research and insights to better-informed policy. That will be militated against by having an annual cycle of reporting. There is no stronger stakeholder from whom to take advice on the appropriate policy in this House than Magistrate Michael Barnes, who is the convenor of the Domestic Violence Death Review Team, and New South Wales State Coroner.

In addition, in my second reading speech I referred in detail to a number of reports that have a similar reporting time frame for reasons similar to those that I just articulated—namely, the fundamental reasons underpinning the request for biennial reporting on the part of the convenor of that very team. The Government will take the advice of the State Coroner over the Labor Party any time and respond to his request. At the end of the day it is about the substance of those reports better informing government policy. I will leave my comments at that.

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (12:11): The Labor Party places far greater weight upon the opinion of women's advocacy groups than it does upon the opinion of the State Coroner or, indeed, the Attorney General. If we are to take the work of the team seriously we need annual reporting. The problem here is that the Government has never taken the work of the team seriously.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): The question is that Opposition amendment No. 1 on sheet C2016-042 be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes	30
Noes	52
Majority.....	22

AYES

Dr McDermott	Mr Atalla	Mr Barr
Mr Chanthivong	Mr Crakanthorp	Mr Daley
Mr Dib	Mr Harris	Mr Hoenig
Mr Kamper	Mr Lalich (teller)	Mr Lynch
Mr Mehan	Mr Minns	Mr Park
Mr Warren	Mr Zangari	Ms Aitchison
Ms Car	Ms Catley	Ms Doyle
Ms Finn	Ms Harrison	Ms Hay (teller)
Ms Haylen	Ms Hornery	Ms McKay
Ms Mihailuk	Ms Washington	Ms Watson

NOES

Dr Lee	Mr Anderson	Mr Aplin
Mr Ayres	Mr Barilaro	Mr Bromhead (teller)
Mr Connolly	Mr Constance	Mr Coure
Mr Crouch	Mr Dominello	Mr Elliott
Mr Gee	Mr George	Mr Greenwich
Mr Gulaptis	Mr Hazzard	Mr Henskens
Mr Humphries	Mr Johnsen	Mr Kean
Mr Maguire	Mr Marshall	Mr Notley-Smith
Mr O'Dea	Mr Parker	Mr Patterson (teller)
Mr Perrottet	Mr Piccoli	Mr Piper
Mr Provest	Mr Roberts	Mr Rowell
Mr Sidoti	Mr Speakman	Mr Stokes
Mr Taylor	Mr Tudehope	Mr Ward
Mr Williams	Ms Berejiklian	Ms Davies
Ms Gibbons	Ms Goward	Ms Hodgkinson
Ms Leong	Ms Pavey	Ms Petinos
Ms Skinner	Ms T. F. Smith	Ms Upton
Ms Williams		

PAIRS

Mr Foley	Mr Baird	Mr Robertson
Mr Grant	Ms K. Smith	Mr Evans

Amendment negatived.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that schedule 2 be agreed to.

Schedule 2 agreed to.

Third Reading

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse—Attorney General) (12:18): I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Government business having concluded, the House will now consider General Business Notices of Motions (for Bills).

**SYDNEY CRICKET AND SPORTS GROUND AMENDMENT (DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT)
BILL 2016**

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Alex Greenwich, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (12:20): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 and the Local Government Act 1993 set out the requirements for proposed development to limit impacts on the environment, neighbours, traffic and heritage, and provide opportunities for public input in the shaping of the built environment. These Acts ensure that people living adjacent to a proposed development will know about it before it is approved and can have their concerns taken into consideration by decision-makers. Even smaller developments that get approved by private certifiers need to be permissible in a local environmental plan.

For major developments, the proponent exhibits an environmental impact statement and neighbours are notified. For parcels of land where a number of developments will occur over a number of years, such as hospitals, universities, Barangaroo, the casino, Carlton United Brewery and the Bays Precinct, this takes form as a concept plan to prevent ad hoc planning decisions and to provide the community with certainty. Environmental impact statements include impact reports on trees, overshadowing, wind, glare, traffic, parking, noise, biodiversity and heritage. During the exhibition period, the public can make submissions and the Department of Planning and Infrastructure or the Planning Assessment Commission must consider those submissions before making a final decision.

In all cases, local plans such as local environmental plans, conservation management plans and development control plans, which get established following a rigorous community consultation process, must guide decisions. This process exists in various forms in all healthy democracies. While there are some instances across the State where certain parts of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act and the Local Government Act are overridden, these are usually in the context of temporary events and particular projects. There is, however, one parcel of land in New South Wales where the law turns off all provisions of these Acts, and that is the Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground.

Since 1985, the Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Act 1978 has exempted its grounds entirely from any application of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 and the Local Government Act 1993. Instead, planning decisions are left entirely with the sports Minister, with no need for an open and transparent environmental impact assessment. The only consultation required is with the Minister for Planning and the Minister Finance, Services and Property. Residents living adjacent to the Sydney Cricket Ground [SCG] are not consulted about proposed development, they are not presented with any environmental impact assessment and they have no opportunity to contribute to improving the development. Indeed, in practice, they are not even notified about proposals and often find out about a development when construction begins.

The only applications that have gone through an open planning assessment process on SCG land were for upgrades to grandstands. Other developments have been approved behind closed doors without any consultation with local communities. In 2007 the Rugby Centre for Excellence and in 2008 the Sports Medicine Clinic were completed. In 2011 the trust cut down mature trees on the Gold Members Car Park without any approval from local government or any arborist reports. This bill is timely because of new development being proposed. Only yesterday the Government approved the Australian Rugby Development Centre with sports science facilities, which is to be built on the Gold Members Car Park without any public assessment or consultation, and there also will be an upgrade to Aussie Stadium in the near future. We are told that the rugby centre is a part of a master plan, but that is not a public document and it was not developed with public consultation.

The people who live adjacent to the stadia and those who use the precinct have the right as citizens of a democracy to be informed about plans that impact on them before they occur and to provide input to the decision-making process. Proper assessment and community input can improve design and development outcomes—community submissions can identify pedestrian links, traffic problems, heritage values and environmental issues that proponents may not have identified. I will quote the comments of former member for Bligh Michael Yabsley, who represented the area now largely covered by the Sydney electorate, when the then Liberal Opposition opposed the exemptions when they were introduced in 1985 to allow the redevelopment of a stadium. He said:

This bill represents the culmination of a grand and shameful conspiracy against the residents of the eastern suburbs, to thrust upon them and their residential environment a sporting stadium of massive magnitude. It is the ultimate example of government by wink and nod ...

Who would have contemplated the need for the Government to pursue this matter in a way that totally dispenses with the perfectly reasonable and respected procedures allowed for in the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act and the Local Government Act?

Yabsley's concerns back then remain relevant today. There is no reason for SCG land to be treated any differently from land owned by neighbours, developers, schools, universities, hospitals, jails, aged-care facilities and government departments. Why the special treatment? There is no reason. The Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Amendment (Development Assessment) Bill 2016 will remove these exemptions and ensure that all future developments will go through the normal development application process that should apply to that development under existing planning laws. It will ensure that the SCG fulfils its duty as a proponent of development, as a trustee of public land and as a neighbour.

In 2011 the Coalition Government removed the extraordinary discretion of the planning Minister in determining major projects under part 3A and referred these decisions to the Planning Assessment Commission. The Government did that because it promised the community that in government it would increase accountability and transparency in planning decisions. But decisions remain behind closed doors on SCG land and this bill would contribute to the Government's delivering its promise for open and transparent planning decisions. The bill has strong support from the communities that surround the SCG. I hope that the Government will understand their concerns about development in this precinct and grant them what all other New South Wales citizens are entitled to: open and transparent public assessments of proposed developments in their neighbourhood. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

HURLSTONE AGRICULTURAL HIGH SCHOOL SITE BILL 2016

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Anoulack Chanthivong, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (12:28): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

In introducing the Hurlstone Agricultural High School Site Bill 2016 I am reminded of something that I expressed in my inaugural speech in this place almost 12 months ago. In that speech I said:

We are here to serve our fellow citizens and to open up opportunities for their aspirations.

I went on to say:

Public education is fundamental to a fairer and more prosperous NSW. I know this because I have lived it. When Government's underinvest in our education or training systems or seek to commercialise what is a valuable common good ... We deny people the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

The bill before the House today seeks to give expression to the ideas that I articulated in my inaugural speech. Fundamental to the hopes and the aspirations of my local constituents is the desire for world-class public education for their children. In my electorate and in the public sector that means a place at Hurlstone. Places at Hurlstone are highly coveted; I cannot emphasise that enough, and why would they not be? Hurlstone, its name, its history, its reputation and even its uniform are synonymous with excellence, opportunity and a better future. Reputations like Hurlstone's are not earned overnight. They are built over decades. In the case of Hurlstone it is more than 100 years.

From its initial vision by John Kinloch in 1878, to the school reopening in 1907, to its relocation to Glenfield in 1926, Hurlstone has led the way in rural education and academic excellence for generations. But now all that is under threat. That is why the bill I have introduced today is needed more than ever. This bill will protect Hurlstone's heritage, history and future at Glenfield; preserve its working farm and the green open space; promote educational hope, opportunity and aspiration in south-west Sydney; and prevent any greedy developer destroying our prized environment and our prized school for 30 pieces of silver. I quote the following words:

It would be a sad indictment of the character of any member of this Parliament who would contemplate a vote to sell off the proud heritage of Hurlstone Agricultural High School to property developers for 30 pieces of silver ... there could be no greater insult to the memory of Corporal John Edmondson, VC. It begs the question whether anything is sacred to this mob, which is desperate to stay in power for the sake of staying in power. The Hurlstone farm is a vital resource for the quality teaching of agriculture. The decision to sell the land is based on the notion that the school has surplus land. However, agriculture involves practical experience; you cannot teach it out of a book ... Hurlstone agricultural farm has no surplus land.

Those eloquent words are not the words of the current Labor member for Macquarie Fields; they are the words of the Hon. Charlie Lynn, and former Liberal member of the Legislative Council in his contribution to the second reading speech on the Hurlstone Agricultural High School Site Bill 2009. Although those words were said about seven years ago, they are just as appropriate today, if not more appropriate. Charlie was right in every sense. Who would contemplate selling Hurlstone's proud heritage for 30 pieces of silver? Who would insult the memory of

Hurlstone's alumni, including that of John Edmondson, VC? Who would declare the farm surplus? Who would deny local students a practical experience of agriculture? The answer is the Baird Liberal-Nationals Government.

In a backflip worthy of an Olympic gold medal, in an act of breathtaking hypocrisy, in an act of absolute treachery, the Baird Liberal-Nationals Government, led by the Minister of Education, is now proposing the exact opposite of what it sought to achieve and voted on back in 2009. Let me go through, one by one, the reasons why the Government should vote for this bill. On 13 March 2009 Mr Stoner, then Leader of the National Party, said the following in this House when speaking on the 2009 Hurlstone Agricultural High School Site Bill:

Hurlstone Agricultural High School is an educational facility that has tremendous significance in the history of this great State. The school has a proud tradition with outstanding alumni throughout New South Wales, across the nation and internationally.

Like his Coalition colleague Charlie Lynn, Mr Stoner was 100 per cent correct. Hurlstone is a school with tremendous significance. It does have a great tradition and does produce outstanding alumni, both across the nation and internationally. Graduates like John Edmondson, VC; Sir William Keys, decorated World War II Royal Australian Air Force pilot Ron Rankin; former Federal Treasurer and Primary Industries Minister, the Hon. John Kerin; the current head of the Defence Force, Mr Mark Binskin; Professor Alan Trounson; Race Discrimination Commissioner Tim Soutphommasane; actress Kate Ritchie; former Wallaby David Lyons; and members of the band Human Nature. The list could go on and on. Every year Hurlstone produces some of the most outstanding results in the Higher School Certificate and is always ranked in the top 20 to 25 schools.

The first reason why this bill needs support is that south-west Sydney needs a school of Hurlstone's history, calibre and reputation. I am afraid that a non-descript, no name selective school just does not cut it. Surely the fact that Hurlstone is to be relocated is because the Minister knows the worth and value of Hurlstone's history and legacy. The Minister knows that one cannot buy and create educational prestige overnight. Any proposed relocation and removal more than 50 kilometres away from its rightful home at Glenfield can best be summed up with these words:

The relocation of Hurlstone is impractical and the school should be retained in its current form.

Put simply, "it is ridiculous" for the Government to consider moving the school from Glenfield. Those were Minister Piccoli's words back in 2009 when he fought so hard to save Hurlstone. They remain as relevant if not more relevant today than they were back in 2009. I could not agree with him more—it is impractical and just ridiculous. On 26 March 2009 the Deputy Speaker said the following regarding Hurlstone when the 2009 bill was being debated. He stated:

Those students go to Hurlstone Agricultural High School because they do not have access to the same opportunities anywhere else in Sydney or even close to Sydney ...

But this Government is going to take away that opportunity for children to learn about agriculture ... We are taking away a school that provides an initiative for people to go into the agricultural sector in this State.

Minister Pru Goward said similar things on 4 June 2009 when she said :

The loss of the Hurlstone Agricultural High School farm will deny a significant proportion of the future New South Wales agricultural industry workforce an opportunity to learn how that is best done.

Both Deputy Speaker George and Minister Goward, still members of this House, are surely right. South-west Sydney students need real, practical exposure to agriculture. They need access to a real farm and what better place is there than Hurlstone Agricultural High School at Glenfield—right bang in the middle of the south-west growth corridor and suburbia. What is also fundamentally concerning about the sell-off and removal of Hurlstone's farm at Glenfield is the loss of educational opportunities that this educational icon provides for the kids of south-west Sydney. Deloitte Access Economics estimates agribusiness to be a top five major growth industry, producing more than \$40 billion in exports in 2015, with forecasted double-digit growth and global opportunities for rising exports, economic growth and income.

By relocating and selling off Hurlstone's farm to developers, Minister Piccoli is denying the kids of south-west Sydney an opportunity to study and to share in the rising income and economic prosperity of the growing agribusiness industry. Minister Piccoli should remember he was quoted as saying on 1 April 2009 that he understood the importance of agricultural education. With Minister Piccoli's decision to remove Hurlstone from Glenfield, he must mean that this agricultural educational importance does not apply to the kids of south-west Sydney.

A quick analysis of the Hawkesbury shows that there are four existing schools, each within spitting distance from the Western Sydney university campus that already teach agriculture. These are Windsor High School, which is nine kilometres away; Colo High School, which is 5.5 kilometres away; Richmond High School, which is 1.3 kilometres away and Hawkesbury High School, which is 1.7 kilometres away. The prospectus of Richmond High states that it has one of New South Wales highest performing agricultural show teams and prides

itself on the quality of its agricultural programs. Hawkesbury High's plan for 2015-17 mentions that it has "excellent facilities with an agricultural farm". Windsor High's curriculum handbook outlines animals, plants, tractors and agricultural shows and that agriculture is a subject for students.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): In accordance with sessional orders debate is interrupted for the consideration of General Business Orders of the Day (for Bills). I set down the resumption of the second reading speech 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 5 May 2016.

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (12:38): Not too long ago there was a film with the famous line "You can't handle the truth". There have been too many karaoke sessions—

Ms Jodi McKay: Demonstration required, please

Mr JIHAD DIB: I had better not, just in case this is recorded. I have had too many evenings of bad karaoke. Everybody knows the film I am talking about; it is called *A Few Good Men*. We all remember seeing Jack Nicholson sitting there telling us why he had to defend the world. The reason I refer to that is not to show my huge knowledge of movies, although I will say on the public record that the *Rocky* series is one of my favourites. I am yet to get right into the *Star Wars* adventures. I am here today to talk about the Government Information (Public Access) Amendment (Sydney Motorway Corporation) Bill 2016, which was introduced by my colleague the member for Strathfield. It seeks to amend what I would say is currently an undemocratic process. I will mention a few things that highlight why I am speaking in favour of such a bill and against the Government's suggestions here.

Going back to the issue of truth, we all come into this place for one particular reason—that is, to make a difference. Regardless of what side members are on we are all here for that reason. We want to make a difference and to do everything that we can. We bring all of our experiences with us into this place, and that experience is wide and varied. We come here with different belief systems and different backgrounds, and all of that comes together into the mix to make this place a place of robust debate where we make decisions that affect the people of New South Wales and ultimately seek to make this State an even greater place in which to live.

We are often asked to speak about things that concern us. Opposition members often speak about things that the Government is doing, and in particular the things that we think they are doing wrong. I often visit schools, as all of us do. I go and talk to the kids about things here and my job. Something I often say is that the job of the Opposition is to hold the Government to account. We tell the Government when it is doing the wrong thing and we applaud when it is doing the right thing.

Ms Melinda Pavey: You do not.

Mr JIHAD DIB: Of course we do.

Ms Melinda Pavey: Well, it is not very loudly.

Mr JIHAD DIB: Well, the Government needs to do more things right.

Ms Jodi McKay: The member for Lakemba does do that. He is one of the fairest people I know, and I know a lot of people.

Mr JIHAD DIB: I thank the member for Strathfield. I appreciate her comments. Anyhow, what I talk to the school kids about is the fact that our great democracy is built on a series of principles around transparency. I often say to the school kids that, regardless of whether we are in government or in opposition, members of Parliament have an opportunity to represent their community as best they can. And I have talked in particular about this public access to information bill that we are seeking to pass. The WestConnex motorway is the biggest infrastructure project going on right now. It is the biggest infrastructure project we have seen in years and years. There are arguments as to the positives and negatives of this project.

Ms Jo Haylen: Hold onto your hat and say that you do not want it.

Mr JIHAD DIB: I will tell the member for Summer Hill what I do want: I want to see the whole picture, and we cannot see the whole picture without this bill. It is like things are being hidden. I go back to that famous line from Jack Nicholson. We can handle the truth; we just want to know the truth. The Government must tell us the truth. People want to know what the truth is. Then when somebody asks me, "What is going on?" I can say,

"Do you know what? You're not going to believe this, but they actually gave us the full story." When you tell someone the full story you also gain their trust. When you keep things hidden from people they start to wonder what is wrong and why things are being kept from them, and they start to lose trust.

The Government often talks about trust. It also talks about the most vulnerable people in our society. The Government cannot talk about trust on one hand and then not give us all the information that is relevant on the other. I do not think I am being unreasonable. Our entire system is based on transparency and openness. As the shadow Minister for Education, I know that I can put in a request for information and that a response will be provided. It would be very sneaky for the Government to create another body that is completely separate from the Government agency that looks after this whole corporation so to speak and say that we cannot ask any questions of it or that if we do ask any questions then it is not obliged to answer them.

The average punter on the street will tell you that WestConnex is being delivered by the Government—in other words, it is a government agency. So to create a separate authority is simply playing tricks on people. I know that people are not gullible and they are not silly. So I stand here to support this bill that was introduced by the member for Strathfield because it is a common sense bill. This bill is about honesty and transparency. It is a bill that speaks to the very core of the things that we believe in. We talk about accountability, transparency and openness. But we need to keep in mind the phrase *factum non verba*—that is, deeds not just words. The deed of creating a separate body that is free from scrutiny we cannot support, and I do not think the average punter would either.

As the member for Newtown said, whether we agree with this project or disagree with it we at least want to know what the whole story is. I think people have got that right today. A lot of money is being spent on this particular project—more money than has been spent on any other in the past 50 years. I would hazard a guess that it is much more than what we think. We know there have been massive cost blowouts on this project and that things have changed along way. A few months ago I drove to Granville and took the exit at James Rouse Drive. I saw all the machinery there to build the motorway, but the biggest disappointment for me was to see the tollgates. The one thing they had managed to complete was the tollgates. It was a reminder that people are going to be sluggish with this toll. It was like the Government saying, "We're going to slug you. We're going to hit you with a toll." At least let us see the road finished first.

I want to talk about the vulnerable. People might be thinking, "Well, you live in Lakemba, why would you care?" I will tell them why I care. I care because I am a member of this Parliament and I took an oath to do everything I could to support the people of New South Wales. People from the electorate of Lakemba use those roads that will be tolled. Those roads are not currently tolled. The M4 has not been tolled since the Labor Party removed the toll. People from Lakemba use those roads every single day. I do not need to make a case for where they stand in terms of their financial position. The evidence is there. We have seen the breakdown of the people in the electorate and how much the people in my community struggle.

The people in my electorate need those roads to get to work. They need those roads to get to university out in Western Sydney. They need those roads to visit their family members, who cannot afford to live closer to the city. The pressures of housing affordability in Sydney means that that is the only place they can live. So what are we saying to them now? Every time they go to university, every time they go to work, and every time they go to visit their friends and family there will be a toll. It is coming. We do not even know yet what it will cost. We do not know whether there will be any rebates or refunds. We just do not know.

And we are not even able to ask those questions. What has happened is that this Government, which says it does things for the most vulnerable—it says that it does things for the people and that it is investing in the community—actually has created a cover so that we cannot ask questions. If we were to go outside and ask the average punter about this, he would say, "Tell us the truth." Despite what Jack Nicholson said, we can handle the truth—and not only can we handle it; we want it. Who knew I was such a movie buff—just wait until I start quoting from the *Rocky* movies.

Ms Jo Haylen: That would fit in really nicely with this bill.

Mr JIHAD DIB: Yes, it would—we are being punched in the face, so to speak. The sale of the poles and wires was meant to be enough. But we see more and more measures like this. We have heard about the tolling and the congestion, but we not allowed to ask for further information. We are told that we can ask for information, but the information is not being given to us. So we can ask a question, but we can never be told the answer. It is a little bit like the Hotel California—you can come in, but you can never leave. I do not see why the community does not have the right to ask why this is the case and to ask about the compulsory acquisitions.

The fact is that people will have to move out of their homes. These are not houses; these are homes. People have brought up families in these places and built memories. It is all well and good for the Government to

say, "We're going to give them a bit of extra money.", but sometimes it is not about money. It is actually about the memories that they have built in those places and the family they have raised there, and that is what is really important. We cannot ask those questions because there is a blanket of secrecy. This cloak of secrecy has been put over this project.

Recently I read a story of a person involved in a compulsory acquisition. I may have read this story in the *Inner West Courier*. The story was about a disabled person whose home was being compulsorily acquired. The Government said it was offering more money. But where was the support to ensure that person could find the right house to suit their needs? Where was the support to make sure that person was still connected to their community and could continue to do the things that they need to do? It is all well and good to say that people will be compensated, but there is more to life than just money, and there is more to building a road than just saying, "We are doing it and we are going to stick on a toll."

There is something that we all believe in and that we are all here to defend—it is a thing called openness and transparency. The entire community, regardless of where they live, expects something to be fair and expects something to be right. I make it clear in no uncertain terms that this bill, which has been introduced by my friend and colleague the member for Strathfield, is right because it addresses the wrongs of the Government. The Government cannot have a project this large and expect people not to ask questions. The Government cannot simply say, "Don't ask questions." That is not acceptable. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (12:49): I strongly support the Government Information (Public Access) Amendment (Sydney Motorway Corporation) Bill, which will ensure the public can apply for access to all documents associated with the WestConnex project. When the Government transferred all functions connected to the project from the WestConnex Delivery Authority to the private corporation, the Sydney Motorway Corporation, it meant that documents such as business case development, traffic modelling, costings and assessment of alternatives could no longer be requested under the State's freedom of information laws.

The situation is untenable; the WestConnex project is publicly funded and the risks and impacts will be borne by the community. The project is estimated to cost a whopping \$16.8 billion, an increase of 68 per cent from the initial \$10 billion estimate from just four years ago. The project is Australia's most expensive and largest toll road project and decisions surrounding it must be subject to public scrutiny. There is no reason for WestConnex documents to be kept secret unless the Government is hiding something.

SGS Economics and Planning gave its final report on the business case for the project to the City of Sydney in February. It provided a damning appraisal that identified overestimated benefits, underestimated costs and a lack of strategic justification. The report concluded that at best, WestConnex will only produce marginal benefits. Even Infrastructure Australia found that the business case failed to account for induced and redistributed vehicle trips caused by the construction of the project and did not provide allowance for cost blowouts. Its cost benefit estimate of \$1.80 for every dollar spent is considerably lower than the Government's claimed benefit of \$2.55. The full business case has never been released. Meanwhile the Government is signing contracts and has begun construction. This is a disgrace.

I oppose the WestConnex project, which will only entrench car dependency and result in even worse future traffic congestion. Each day it will result in an additional 10,000 motor vehicles in Sydney's central business district, 20,000 using Anzac Bridge and 20,000 using parts of Parramatta Road. Those roads are already congested. Good governments are open governments, and it is disappointing to see this Government slide into the tired old habits of secrecy and complacency, viewing public information as nothing more than a hindrance. This needs to be addressed. Notwithstanding, all WestConnex associated documents should be subject to the provisions of the Government Information (Public Access) Act so that they can be requested by the public. I commend the bill.

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (12:51): In reply: I thank members for their contributions to the Government Information (Public Access) Amendment (Sydney Motorway Corporation) Bill 2016. I have to say from the outset that I am disappointed the Government will not support it, although it is probably what I expected. Accountability is one of the cornerstones of a healthy, functioning democracy. It ensures that there are checks and balances in place to monitor and question the actions of Executive Government. For accountability to work, there needs to be ongoing access to information so that Parliament, the media and the people of New South Wales can be informed and inform themselves on the whys and wherefores of the Government's decision-making.

The creation of the Sydney Motorway Corporation is a cynical and scurrilous attempt by this Government to put facts and figures surrounding the WestConnex project beyond the reach of Parliament, beyond the reach of the media and importantly beyond the reach of the people of New South Wales. It reeks of arrogance and the three people responsible for this decision—the Premier, the Treasurer and the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight—are betraying the confidence put in them by the community. It is disappointing that the Premier, the Treasurer and the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, who will never get the opportunity to speak on this

bill, have been able to give reasons to this place why they have put the Sydney Motorway Corporation beyond the reach of ordinary people.

By removing the activities of the Sydney Motorway Corporation from the purview of the Government Information Public Access Act 2009, this Government is quite simply undermining principles and protections put in place by this Parliament to inform the public and ensure their ready access to information on public projects and the expenditure of public funds. Day by day, this Government is acting more and more like a cartel that puts its own interests above that of the public. The removal of access to information on the WestConnex project is the latest breathtaking decision of a government that has lost the faith of the people of New South Wales over this project. Let us not forget that this is the largest project in New South Wales, costing \$17 billion, and the Government, after years of inept management, spiralling costs, and non-existent business cases, now decides that the best way forward is to keep the facts and figures away from the public.

These actions are arrogant, reckless and make a mockery of accountable government. We strongly believe that a project of this size, with its implications for the community, for motorists, residents and the overall infrastructure spend in Sydney requires the closest scrutiny. Yet this is where the Government has let down the people of New South Wales with tardy business cases scratched together at the last moment after ongoing public pressure and consultation processes that have been wholly deficient, led by a Minister who refused to engage personally with affected individuals or communities. Not once has he been to a public meeting. Not once has he acquiesced to meet with people who are impacted by this project. And now we have this attempt by the Premier, his Treasurer and his Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight to effectively privatise the delivery and the management of this public project.

Information is power, and any attempt to remove access rights to information of government should be viewed with the greatest concern. This bill seeks to return accountability to a secretive Sydney Motorway Corporation and simply ensure that the public, the media and members of Parliament can access information on how it is spending public money. I thank the members who have participated in this debate. In voting against this bill and leading for the Government the member for Castle Hill said "the doors are already open through RMS as the client agency of WestConnex". He was, of course, referring to the access of information through the Roads and Maritime Services as the agency, but that is simply not true.

The first of the three reasons given by the member for Castle Hill for not supporting this bill challenges this very assertion when he said, "It has never been the intention of the GIPA Act to apply directly to private companies" and he is right, which is why this bill has been brought before the House. The Sydney Motorway Corporation is a private company and so it is currently not subject to the GIPA Act, yet it must and should be subject to the GIPA Act because it is managing a \$16.8 billion public project, the largest project in the history of this State.

The member for Castle Hill also said there is already a great deal of information out there about WestConnex and the Sydney Motorway Corporation. The information available on WestConnex is only what the community has argued for and what the Government thinks is appropriate. But there is no information out there on the Sydney Motorway Corporation. The member has obviously never googled "Sydney Motorway Corporation" because beyond one page on the WestConnex website and a directors' report of a few pages, there is no information available whatsoever about it. This agency is managing a \$16.8 billion project and we know nothing about it apart from who is on the board.

And laughable, at best, is the member for Castle Hill's claim that this Government is more open and transparent than previous governments. As pointed out by the shadow Attorney General, the member for Castle Hill obviously failed to read the latest Information Commissioner's report, which found information release rates declined from 80 per cent to 69 per cent, which corresponded with when the Liberal-Nationals took government. The report on the operation of the Government Information and Public Access Act makes for interesting reading and I urge the member for Castle Hill to do his homework before he enters this place and makes claims that are simply untrue and are proved to be untrue.

The member for Epping described the delivery of this project as exactly the same as NorthConnex, which is absolutely wrong. I would have expected more from him because he should know that NorthConnex is essentially a Transurban project; a project delivered by an ASX listed company. This proposal came about because of an unsolicited proposal, and while there is far too much secrecy around that process, there is a very obvious difference between the governance of NorthConnex and the governance of WestConnex. For a start, there are no shareholder ministers of Transurban.

The member for Drummoyne, my neighbouring member of Parliament and a strong advocate for WestConnex, actually called me a whisperer of something, I think. I want to put on the record of this place that I have always been honest with my community about the M4 widening and M4 East tunnel; never have I deviated

from my position. I will continue to highlight the deception to which members of my community have been subjected. The Government always promised that the M4 East tunnel would be under Parramatta Road—even the media release issued when the announcement was made in June last year said so. Instead, the tunnel has been moved to cater for high-rise development on Parramatta Road.

This shocking breach of trust will impact approximately 500 homes in Burwood and Croydon in particular. How dare the member for Drummoyne accuse me of not standing up for my community on this issue. How do I know that? Because his constituents come to me for help. He supports the project and refuses to meet with his constituents even though many of the houses being compulsorily acquired are in his electorate. I thank the shadow Attorney General for his contribution to this debate and for his support for this bill. The question that he asks goes to the heart of this bill—namely, what is the Government trying to hide? As he said, this \$17 billion project is subject to cost overruns and budget blowouts.

For example, we have seen the cost of this project blow out from \$10 billion to \$16.9 billion. I sincerely thank the shadow Attorney General for his help in drafting this bill. WestConnex is having more of an impact on the electorate of Summer Hill than it is on any other electorate. I congratulate the member on her advocacy for her community. The member for Summer Hill, who was in the House, has been vocal in her opposition to this bill and has never hidden her views on this project. The member for Summer Hill has fought side by side with her community and they deserve answers. But those answers have not been forthcoming because the information to which they are entitled is being hidden by the Sydney Motorway Corporation's governance structure.

I note that the member for Newtown is in the Chamber. Her community is also being impacted by WestConnex and she too has been a vocal opponent of the motorway. I thank The Greens for their support for this bill. I agree with her comments that the interests of impacted communities are being put behind the interests of private interests in the construction of this motorway. She drew the attention of the House to the business case for WestConnex, which was released late and which had large and important parts redacted. I also support her comments that no longer are those who were elected making decisions on this project; rather, seven individuals on the board of the Sydney Motorway Corporation are—seven individuals who were never elected and who most people have never heard of.

During debate one member tried to gag the member for Charlestown for using the term "secret scheming" to describe the way in which this Government is going about the delivery of projects in New South Wales, including the upgrade of Hillsborough Road in her electorate. The member for Hawkesbury took offence to the use of those words and used this forum to gag her contribution—an extraordinary action for the member for Hawkesbury to take because this bill is all about secret scheming. It is about secrecy and the scheming of this Government to make sure that information on WestConnex is not available. So out of line was the decision of the member for Hawkesbury to gag the member for Charlestown that her time was reinstated. He was given a slap on the wrist and told not to do it again.

The member for Clarence also spoke in debate on this bill. He was given a speech and told to go into the House and read it, not because he has an interest in WestConnex, the Sydney Motorway Corporation or transparency. I thank the member for Londonderry for her contribution. The impact of this Government's obsession with tolls is a significant issue in her electorate and she has launched a petition, which has attracted thousands of signatures. The member for Londonderry has told this House and others that wherever she goes people want to talk about the imposition of tolls and the impact that will have on commuters as they travel from her electorate to the city.

The member for Blue Mountains also spoke in debate on the bill. Her constituents are concerned about the toll that will be reinstated on the M4 from early next year. As from next year they will be paying about \$2,000 annually to travel to the city on a road that is currently free. This is not a new road; it is a free road. But that road will be tolled from early next year and that toll will rise above the consumer price index [CPI]. Indeed, for the first time in New South Wales we will be seeing tolls above the CPI. The member for Blue Mountains has joined the member for Londonderry in her petition, and has also been overwhelmed by the reaction from her community. One of the reasons for this reaction is that the Government has done a poor job in communicating with the community about this. In fact, they have had no communication at all; the Opposition has been spreading the message and toll gantries have been erected on the M4.

The motivation of the member for Granville in speaking to this bill is similar. She has often spoken in her community and in the media about her concern for those in her local area who will be slugged by tolls on the M4. The contract for the M4 extends to 2060. It is the longest concession agreement ever seen in New South Wales, and we are yet to see what the concession agreement will be for the M4 East. This bill is not specifically about transparency around tolls; another bill will be introduced to deal with those issues. Labor is concerned about how tolls are being set, the transparency of the contractual negotiations and the ongoing operation of toll operators.

This bill is about transparency more broadly; it is about all those issues related to the Sydney Motorway Corporation.

I thank the member for Lakemba. As I said earlier, he is one of the fairest people I know. He may have a swag of old movies that he wants to bring before this House; but he spoke about trust, and of all people he is in a good place to do so. As he said, one cannot talk about trust and not give people information. He commented that the punters on the street think that this project is being delivered by this Government. It is not; it is being delivered by seven people sitting around a board table making decisions in secrecy because they have been chosen by this Government, for whatever reason, to be on the board of the Sydney Motorway Corporation. He remarked that people are only finding out about the toll by noticing the toll gantries as they are driving along the M4. The gantries are the only things currently being completed, which is a good indication of the Government's priorities in relation to this project. It is all about raking in the dollars through the tolls.

The member for Sydney has also been an advocate for transparency in relation to this project. He has been involved in the commissioning of a number of reports. He has spoken strongly about the failure of this Government to release the full business case. The member for Sydney and I have made applications under the Government Information (Public Access) Act [GIPA]. We now know, from making those applications, that documents can no longer be accessed. Indeed, much of the information about the business case has been redacted so we will never be able to get the information we need to understand the feasibility and management of this project.

Labor introduced the Government Information (Public Access) Act in 2009. We did so to ensure that the actions of Executive Government remain accountable and to engender greater levels of confidence in government decision-making. It was rightfully supported by both Houses of Parliament. In introducing this bill I spoke about the lofty sentiments expressed by the member for Willoughby, and now the Treasurer, and ironically a shareholder Minister of the Sydney Motorway Corporation. She spoke in this House of the importance of transparent decision-making. Unfortunately, the sentiments that she held so dear back then now seem to be redundant when it comes to the biggest infrastructure project in the history of this State. The GIPA Act is fundamentally important to the functioning of a healthy and open democracy. The Baird Government's attempt to stifle accountability and conceal how it spends public money is a slippery slope that should be resisted at all costs. As I said earlier, if the Baird Government gets away with exempting WestConnex from public oversight, when and where will it stop?

Will it stop with schools, the hospital system, or police? Yesterday I spoke about the concerns that I have as shadow Minister for Transport that the metro project could be headed in this direction. The Government must guarantee that it will not redact information about the metro, the second largest project that it is delivering, from the Government Information (Public Access) Act. The people of New South Wales have a right to know how \$30 billion in projects will be delivered and what discussions are occurring relating to it. In the second term of this Government the people of New South Wales have become rightfully suspicious. Today an announcement will be made concerning council amalgamations—another good example of why people are suspicious of this Government. The decisions concerning councils are political. Communities across the State will be impacted by decisions based on what is in the best interests of the Liberals and Nationals.

Across many areas the Government is showing signs of arrogance and a belief in its own infallibility. This arrogance was exhibited at the recent WestConnex project media conference on the introduction of tolls on the M4. When questioned the Minister did not know the toll charges, the number of toll gantries, or how many motorists travel on the M4. He appeared to find it amusing that he did not know the answer to these basic but critical questions. The Baird Government perceives the community as an obstacle to government rather than the fundamental reason for government.

I am concerned about the redaction of information about the Sydney Motorway Corporation from the provisions of the Government Information (Public Access) Act as well as the precedence it sets. It creates an environment in this State that will further weaken democratic government—something that we can ill afford. The Parliament must support the bill and demonstrate to the electorate that no level of public oversight and accountability is too high when it comes to the expenditure of public funds and decisions that impact on people's lives. I commend the bill to the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): The question is that the Government Information (Public Access) Amendment (City Motorway Corporation) Bill 2016 be now read a second time.

The House divided.

Ayes35

Noes46

Majority.....11

AYES

Dr McDermott
Mr Chanthivong
Mr Dib
Mr Hoenig
Mr Lynch
Mr Park
Mr Warren
Ms Car
Ms Finn
Ms Haylen
Ms McKay
Ms Washington

Mr Atalla
Mr Crakanthorp
Mr Greenwich
Mr Kamper
Mr Mehan
Mr Parker
Mr Zangari
Ms Catley
Ms Harrison
Ms Hornery
Ms Mihailuk
Ms Watson

Mr Barr
Mr Daley
Mr Harris
Mr Lalich (teller)
Mr Minns
Mr Piper
Ms Aitchison
Ms Doyle
Ms Hay (teller)
Ms Leong
Ms T. F. Smith

NOES

Dr Lee
Mr Ayres
Mr Connolly
Mr Crouch
Mr Evans
Mr George
Mr Henskens
Mr Maguire
Mr Patterson (teller)
Mr Roberts
Mr Stokes
Mr Ward
Ms Davies
Ms Hancock
Ms Petinos
Ms Williams

Mr Anderson
Mr Barilaro
Mr Constance
Mr Dominello
Mr Fraser
Mr Gulaptis
Mr Johnsen
Mr Marshall
Mr Perrottet
Mr Sidoti
Mr Taylor
Mr Williams
Ms Gibbons
Ms Hodgkinson
Ms Skinner

Mr Aplin
Mr Bromhead (teller)
Mr Coure
Mr Elliott
Mr Gee
Mr Hazzard
Mr Kean
Mr O'Dea
Mr Provost
Mr Speakman
Mr Tudehope
Ms Berejiklian
Ms Goward
Ms Pavey
Ms Upton

PAIRS

Mr Foley
Mr Baird

Mr Grant
Ms K. Smith

Mr Robertson
Mr Rowell

Motion negatived.

**MINING AND PETROLEUM INDUSTRY POLITICAL DONATIONS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT
(CORRUPTION RISK REDUCTION) BILL 2016**

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 10 March 2016.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy) (13:11):

I oppose the Mining and Petroleum Industry Political Donations Legislation Amendment (Corruption Risk Reduction) Bill 2016, which proposes excessive and unnecessary measures aimed at prohibiting mining and petroleum companies from making political donations. It would remove the right of donors to make certain planning applications and submissions and from applying for mining and petroleum authorisations. The bill would void environmental planning instruments and development control plans that have been subject to a submission by a political donor.

These prohibitive measures are a departure from current controls which prevent members of the liquor, gambling, tobacco and property development industries from making donations. They will impinge on the personal freedoms of individuals to communicate on political and governmental matters. This is because business entities and their close associates—including directors, officers and their spouses—will be limited in their ability to make submissions on important planning issues. There is an obvious and compelling alternative. This

Government already has in place a number of significant measures that reduce the risk of corruption in the mining and petroleum sectors. These measures include the strategic release framework for coal and petroleum, which was implemented last year and enshrined in legislation.

In addition, all political donations in New South Wales are already capped at relatively low levels. New South Wales is a leader in this area. In most other Australian jurisdictions donations are virtually uncapped, with caps only applying to certain types of donations such as anonymous or foreign donations. I think it is telling that the NSW Electoral Commission does not support any broadening of industry-specific bans. It is well established that bans on particular types of donors pose significant challenges in terms of compliance and enforcement. Because the bans proposed by this bill are triggered by the activities of the donor instead of objective criteria, there is a high likelihood of uncertainty in determining whether or not the bans apply. This Government is serious about mitigating the risk of corruption. That is why in 2014 the Government commissioned an expert panel chaired by Dr Kerry Schott to consider options for the long-term reform of political donations laws.

The New South Wales Government provided its response to the panel's final report on 5 March 2015. The expert panel's recommendations and the Government's response were referred to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters in 2015, and the committee's review is ongoing. The Government considers this committee will be able to provide a robust and holistic view on this issue. The committee is due to deliver its final report on 2 December this year. The measures proposed by this bill are prohibitive and pre-emptive. For all the reasons I have cited, the Government does not support the bill.

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (13:21): I lead for the Labor Opposition in debate on the Mining and Petroleum Industry Political Donations Legislation Amendment (Corruption Risk Reduction) Bill 2016. The Opposition is sceptical of its constitutional validity and in the absence of any coherent and persuasive argument that it is likely to be constitutionally valid, we are hard pressed to support it. The object of the bill is claimed to be to reduce corruption risk and ensure appropriate decision-making in specific industries. It seeks to do that by removing the ability of those who would benefit from decisions of public authorities or public office holders to make political donations that could exert influence on or otherwise affect the making of those decisions.

Four specific measures involved in this bill are related to this object. They are: prohibiting political donations from the mining and petroleum industry; prohibiting the making of environmental planning instruments relating to extractive industries at the request of persons who have made political donations or having regard to submissions made by such persons; prohibiting the granting of certain planning approvals relating to extractive industries to persons who have made political donations or having regard to submission made by such persons; and prohibiting the issue of mining authorisations or petroleum titles to persons who have made political donations.

It is fair to say that the primary measure here—the headline proposal—is to ban political donations from the mining and petroleum industry. If that proposal were validly enacted it would be hard to see much scope for the application of the other three proposals. If they are banned, and therefore are unable to be made, provisions relating to how to deal with approvals for such donations seem redundant. An obvious question is: Is the banning of political donations from the mining and petroleum industry constitutionally valid? The first several paragraphs of the mover's speech used language similar to that used by a High Court judgement and asserted that the provisions of the bill have a legitimate purpose and a rational connection to the intended purpose of the bill. The member also asserted that there is no obvious and compelling alternative or reasonably practical means of achieving the same purpose. Once again that is language similar to that used by the High Court. However, I think the member has failed to apply the actual logic of the High Court in *McCloy v New South Wales* [2015] HC 34. At one point the mover reduced his argument to this:

The High Court of Australia found that New South Wales laws which ban specific classes of political donors are constitutionally valid. There is no excuse not to include the mining and petroleum industries in this ban. In fact, as highlighted by the Independent Commission Against Corruption, it is prudent to do so.

That, with respect, is simply wrong. The Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC] made no recommendations to ban political donations from the mining and petroleum industries. It is pretty outrageous and disingenuous to suggest it did. It is hardly surprising that ICAC made no such recommendation granted that operations Jasper and Acacia had nothing to do with political donations. They dealt with pretty serious and sordid issues, but donations were not involved. Moreover, the piece I have quoted from the member's speech betrays a fundamental misunderstanding of *McCloy*. In *McCloy*, the joint judgement of French CJ, and Kiefel, Bell and Keane JJ made clear that the impugned provisions banning political donations by property developers were valid and did not improperly impugn the implied freedom of communication regarding political or governmental matters. At paragraph 93 they said:

These are provisions which support and enhance equality of access to government, and the system of representative government which the freedom protects. The restriction on the freedom is more than balanced by the benefits sought to be achieved.

The difficulty in the glaring simplicity of the argument of the member for Balmain, however, is that the court was very clear to tie approval of a ban on donations only to property developers. They made clear they were not making a decision about a tobacco industry business entity or a liquor or gambling industry business entity. Moreover, they justified their decision upon the very particular history of New South Wales in relation to property developers. I quote from paragraph 49 of the judgement:

New South Wales submits that the degree of dependence of property developers on decision of government about matters such as the zoning of land and development approvals distinguishes them from actors in other sectors of the economy. Property developers are sufficiently distinct to warrant specific regulation in light of the nature of their business activities and the nature of the public powers which they might seek to influence in their self-interest, as history in New South Wales shows.

Those advocating for the validity of the laws thus pointed to the very distinctive position of property developers. At paragraph 50 the judgement continues:

These submissions of New South Wales should be accepted. Recent history in New South Wales tells against the plaintiffs' submission. The plaintiffs may be correct to say that there is no other legislation in Australia or overseas which contains a prohibition of the kind found in Div 4A, but a problem has been identified in New South Wales and Div 4A is one means to address it.

The judgement then at paragraph 51 states this:

The Independent Commission Against Corruption ('ICAC') and other bodies have published eight adverse reports since 1990 concerning land development applications. Given the difficulties associated with uncovering and prosecuting corruption of this kind, the production of eight adverse reports in this time brings to light the reality of the risk of corruption and the loss of public confidence which accompanies the exposure of acts of corruption.

The difficulty for the member for Balmain is how specific the High Court was in relation to property developers. The reference to eight separate reports does suggest a degree of uniqueness—certainly in the apparent assessment of High Court judges. The member's bluff assertion that McCloy validates this bill is too simple and I think wrong. The reality seems to me to be much more problematic. I note as well the comments in the judgement of Justice Gageler. His Honour points to the particular incentives for property developers to exploit opportunities they discover. At paragraph 194 he said:

The problem is not merely theoretical. The unfortunate experience in New South Wales has been one of exploitation of influence leading too readily to the corruption of official conduct.

His Honour then refers, as did the majority judgement, to the ICAC report by Mr Roden concerning North Coast land development. He then notes the seven further adverse reports. I do not think that the member for Balmain has resolved the constitutional issues adequately. In this case, of course, ICAC has turned its very direct attention to the issue. In October 2013 ICAC released a report entitled "Reducing the Opportunities and Incentives for Corruption in the State's Management of Coal Resources". That report stemmed from a referral by Parliament to ICAC that had already resulted in an investigation into Operation Acacia. The ICAC identified a number of corruption risks. They pointed out that the behaviour highlighted in Acacia and Jasper was not the result of a small loophole that was cleverly exploited, and was not simply the result of a rogue Minister. To quote page 6 of the report:

The state arrangements that relate to coal provided an opportunity not found in other parts of government for individuals to engage in corrupt conduct.

That ICAC report singles out coal from other extractive industries but that distinction is ignored in this bill from the member for Balmain, who blithely extrapolates from coal to all extractive industries. ICAC then proceeded to make 23 recommendations to deal with this problem. None, I might add, includes the measures contained in this bill. The clear inference is that they did not think them appropriate. The plethora of other recommendations provide a comprehensive and expert response to the risk of corruption in relation to coal—the risks not present in other parts of government. That makes the use of McCloy to justify this bill even more difficult. ICAC has provided an obvious and compelling alternative to this bill and the High Court has said that this type of legislation can only be justified if there is no obvious and compelling alternative. It seems to me that ICAC has provided such an alternative. The member has not established that this bill is constitutionally valid. That makes it very difficult to support the bill.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (13:28): In reply: I thank the Minister and the member for Liverpool for their contributions. I understand time is short so I will simply reemphasise the points I made in my second reading speech in support of this bill. I repeat that more than \$46 million has flowed from resource companies to State and Federal political parties since 1988 and I reiterate the opening of my original contribution in which I said that the purpose of the bill is to secure and promote the actual and perceived integrity of the Parliament and other institutions of government in New South Wales by reducing the risk to that integrity that may arise from undue, corrupt or hidden influences over those institutions, their members or their processes. Banning the mining and petroleum industries from making political donations would be a very strong start to restoring integrity to our democracy.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

Division called for and Standing Order 181 applied.

Ayes 5

Mr Greenwich

Ms Leong

Mr Parker

Mr Piper

Ms T. F. Smith

Motion negatived.

Motions

TRIBUTE TO CURTIS CHENG

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (13:36): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Pays tribute to the life of Curtis Cheng who was murdered in an act of terrorism in Parramatta, outside Police Headquarters on 2 October 2015.
- (2) Pays tribute to the men and women of the NSW Police Force and NSW Joint Counter-Terrorism Team for their dedication and commitment in keeping the community safe.

Mr Curtis Cheng was a well-respected and highly regarded employee. He was a man who lent his considerable skills and expertise to the NSW Police Force for 17 years. Mr Cheng has been described by his family, friends and colleagues as a kind, compassionate and gentle man. As a Buddhist he believed that making a small difference in people's lives every day could be a powerful force for good. Premier Mike Baird described Mr Cheng as "one of our very finest". In his role in the Finance Department, Mr Cheng played an integral part in ensuring that our police men and women can do their very important work—protecting our community.

Having studied and worked hard throughout his life, at 59 Curtis was also looking forward to retirement and spending more time with family. Mr Cheng was born in Hong Kong and lived in the United Kingdom. After graduating from Bath University in England, he returned to Hong Kong, where he lectured in economics. While in Hong Kong he worked two jobs because he was committed to saving enough money to come to Australia to make a life and to raise his family here in New South Wales. In Australia, Mr Cheng also became a member of CPA Australia. I understand he was a member for 36 years. Premier Mike Baird said, "One tragic irony is that Curtis is a perfect example of how much we gain by maintaining a vibrant, multicultural society that not only welcomes but also embraces newcomers and their contribution."

I agree. The story of Mr Cheng's emigration to Australia is an exemplar of what multiculturalism can be. Mr Cheng spoke two languages—his native Cantonese and English. And, most importantly, Mr Cheng raised a wonderful and prosperous family. His family described him as a gentle and caring man, a man committed to his family, and a loving husband and father. His wife, Selina, and two children, Alpha and Zilvia, now have to deal with a difficult and extraordinary situation—one that few of us can ever truly comprehend. It has been a difficult case for the NSW Police Force and the NSW Joint Counter Terrorism Team. The continued media stories are a constant reminder for family, friends and colleagues. It has meant the Cheng family have had to deal with their grief in public. According to Alpha Cheng, his mother was devastated when the family attended police headquarters, the place where the incident occurred. It was a very emotional experience seeing flowers lining the footpath and hearing all the tributes.

On 17 October 2015, 1,500 family, friends, colleagues and members of the public joined a service to remember Mr Cheng and celebrate his life. The family said it had been "challenging how public and big the story has been". Nonetheless they have been comforted by the outpouring of support from leaders in the community and many others. Mr Cheng's son added that he was "truly amazed how compassionate and helpful the Police were in their support and dealings for a civilian police member". The outpouring of support for the family demonstrates our community cannot be divided by terrorist acts.

Last year I joined the Multicultural Communities Council of NSW [MCC] at a candlelight vigil in remembrance of Mr Curtis Cheng outside police headquarters at Parramatta. Multicultural community leaders came together to pay tribute to Mr Cheng to demonstrate a united front against terrorism. I joined Superintendent

Wayne Cox at this moving vigil—the commander is a champion for harmony in the community. The murder has been described by the Commissioner of Police, Andrew Scipione, as a "politically motivated act of terrorism".

We rely on the NSW Police Force and NSW Joint Counter Terrorism Team as the front line to defend our community. They undertake this very difficult and complex task with little public acknowledgement. We expect them to always be vigilant and effective, and they do this in the great Australian tradition of quiet achievers. Multiple arrests have been made in regard to this callous terrorist act. Police acted swiftly and are to be commended for tracking down the alleged supplier of the gun used in this attack and an 18-year-old accomplice, as well as another who was charged with allegedly participating in a criminal group.

Four men have now been charged with plotting the terror attack that killed Curtis Cheng. One of the most shocking factors of this crime is that Mr Cheng was randomly targeted by a local 15-year-old boy, who was subsequently shot and killed by special constables. That someone so young can carry out such an act is truly disturbing. The community does not tolerate terrorist incidents such as this. We stand together to solve hideous crimes such as the murder of Curtis Cheng.

We must continue to build strong communities through mutual respect and we must continue to work with our police, our schools and our community leaders to prevent radicalisation and support those at risk. Australia, New South Wales and our local communities must remain inclusive, cohesive and harmonious places. We must tackle terrorism together with the whole community. Governments must ensure the right legislation is in place, the police must have the necessary powers to enforce the laws and keep our communities safe, and community leaders must be emboldened to tackle radicalisation and families need to watch out for signs.

It is circumstances such as this that remind us not to take our peaceful, harmonious community for granted. We should not let those who hate take over; we should not let those who hate divide us. I join with the House in commending the NSW Police Force for its work in keeping our community safe. I conclude with the words of NSW Commissioner of Police, Andrew Scipione: "Curtis was admired and respected by his colleagues, a gentle man in every sense. He was hardworking, measured but unfailingly positive." May he rest in peace.

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (13:43): I support the motion moved by the member for Parramatta and congratulate him on moving it. I did not know Curtis Chang, and I do not know his life up to the time his death unfolded. I do know that as a hardworking man with advanced degrees in accounting his opportunities in a modern Sydney were near limitless. Curtis Cheng chose a life of public service, and he died for it. This horrific act is difficult to comprehend—for what kind of ideology would demand that a wife is robbed of a husband, and that a son and daughter are robbed of a father?

The deeply malevolent reason for this killing was to strike terror into the lives of five million people who live packed together in this city. This man's death was meant to turn Australian against Australian—to instil fear and distrust at the heart of our human condition. And we are human; it is only natural that we would let feelings of suspicion or revenge creep into our conscious thought. But that is not what happened. This city has been rocked by several terrorist incidents or attempts in recent years—perhaps more than at any other time in our history.

And yet when I caught the train to work this morning, surrounded by people from all around this globe, including young women from Islamic backgrounds, I did not sense fear, distrust or panic. Instead I sensed inclusion and respect. The member for Parramatta is right: we must be vigilant when it comes to those who will do us harm. But the seeds of defeating this hateful ideology lie within us—by showing those who would do us harm that they cannot win. We know we are stronger together and we believe in modern Australia. While I did not know Curtis Cheng personally I do get a good sense of the man by witnessing the poise and grace of his son, Alpha. We need only listen to his words at Curtis's funeral. He said:

Dad did everything in his own, quiet, little way.

We need to do the little things for the people around us ... if we all do that little bit more as dad did in his life, I believe we can live in a more gentle and harmonious world.

These words were not a call to vengeance and not an appeal to revenge, but rather a simple call to public service and a plea for all of us to live in peace and love one another. These words uttered by Curtis Cheng's son say much about the man he was—only a wonderful parent could raise a child that would choose, at his murdered father's funeral, emollient words in place of hatred. Curtis Cheng's service was held at St Mary's Cathedral, a solemn and haunting building. It leads me to quote from scripture. Ecclesiastes says, "A good name is better than precious ointment, and the day of death better than the day of birth." Curtis Cheng died with a good name. And it is not just the responsibility of the Cheng family to remember his name; it is the responsibility of every member of this House. For Curtis Cheng was a public servant who worked on our behalf for the people of this State. He is the ideal symbol of what hundreds of thousands of Australians do every day of their lives—they wake up, go to work and make Australia a better place.

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (13:47): I support the motion before the House and I commend the member for Parramatta for moving it. He spoke eloquently on this matter. Every member of our community—every single person in New South Wales—has the right to expect that when they go to work in the morning they will leave work in the afternoon. They have the right to do so safely and to return home. In our free and democratic country, the type of tragedy that befell Curtis Cheng simply does not happen. It is because of the men and women of the NSW Police Force and our Counter Terrorism Unit that this is the case. So much goes into making a person's daily routine an entirely forgettable and unremarkable experience. It is not by accident that this perpetration of terrorism is such a rarity; it is because of the work of the men and women of the NSW Police Force, and I thank them sincerely for their daily efforts.

However, we must not dismiss this as an accident. This act of terror was cold-blooded murder, and it happened on our streets in the heart of Western Sydney. Sydney, and indeed Australia, is not immune from the brutal terrorism that we see daily in news from overseas. A very small minority of people in our communities, if given half the chance, would do us significant damage. But this just means even more that we must take the time to acknowledge the work and service of those who protect us. Consistently, our forces are one step ahead. They work day and night for the prevention of these types of acts of terrorism.

It is disappointing when some incorrectly equate initiatives to prevent terrorism with a dislike for multiculturalism. It is precisely because we believe in multiculturalism that we wish to combat terrorism. As the member for Parramatta outlined, Curtis Cheng embodied everything that is great about our society. Curtis Cheng, born in Hong Kong, studied in the United Kingdom, returned to work in Hong Kong and then migrated to Australia to work and start a family. This act of terror was an attack on our society. It was an attack on the tolerance and acceptance of our communities. Terrorism is indiscriminate—it seeks to target every single one of us. But in this case, it went at the heart of our State's multicultural fabric. I say to would-be terrorists, very emphatically, that we will remain unperturbed. We will not give in to the fear that they perpetrate. We have come out strong against these atrocities—and we will continue to do so. We owe it to Curtis Cheng to remain rock solid in our commitment to the values and ideals that he embodied.

I was privileged to serve in the NSW Police Force for the majority of my life, so this holds some particular significance to me personally. Curtis Cheng was a diligent, hardworking and extraordinarily well respected member of the NSW Police Force. I know, as well as anyone, that the men and women who serve our State, in the capacity that Curtis Cheng did, do just as much to secure our safety in our society as the men and women on the front line. Curtis Cheng therefore went to work every day for the betterment and security of his society, and I thank him for his years of service. In the loss of Curtis Cheng, the people of New South Wales have lost a great person in the service of our society. In the loss of Curtis Cheng, the Cheng family have lost a husband and a father. I pay special tribute to his wife, Selina, and his two children, son, Alpha, and daughter, Zilvia. We remember Curtis Cheng as the brave and loving man that he was. I commend the motion to the House.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (13:51): I pay tribute to the life of Curtis Cheng, who was shot and killed on 2 October 2015 in an act of terrorism in Parramatta, just outside the headquarters of the NSW Police Force. This House also pays tribute to the men and women of the NSW Police Force and NSW Joint Counter Terrorism Team for their dedication and commitment in keeping our community safe. Curtis Cheng was a 58-year-old accountant for the NSW Police Force and he was shot outside Parramatta police headquarters. Curtis's life was cruelly cut short by a 15-year-old by the name of Farhad Khalil Mohammad Jabar in an act of terrorism.

In a swift act of terrorism, the Cheng family lost a loving family member and the NSW Police Force lost a dedicated and committed public servant. This was a senseless act of violence against someone who was paid to work for the NSW Police Force; an attempt to send a message. Don't worry, we heard you. We stand united, we stand resilient and we will do everything in our power to protect our great State. We will not falter when it comes to the safety of our communities. I will take a moment to read into *Hansard* a moving statement that was released by Curtis's 28-year-old son, Alpha Cheng, on behalf of his mother and sister following his father's death. He said:

On behalf of the Cheng family, I would like to thank all those who have expressed their well wishes and blessings upon us following the tragic passing of our most loved husband and father, Curtis Cheng.

My father was a kind, gentle, and loving person. He was humorous, generous of heart and always put the family first. He has set a tremendous example for us as a family.

We are deeply saddened and heartbroken that he has been taken from us, but we are truly grateful for the fruitful and happy life he has shared with us.

To the many people who have offered their condolences and kind words about him, we are extremely moved by your thoughts and sympathies.

We are touched by the personal visit from the New South Wales Premier and the Police Commissioner.

This was a comforting reminder of the warm regard that was held for him, especially by the New South Wales police community.

He will be missed by all of us. We will cherish our memory of him forever.

Curtis was a family man who has been described by many as a kind, gentle, loving and caring man who always put his family first. His story is that of the great migrant dream and embodied that of a multicultural Australia we all embrace today. Curtis's diligence and commitment to his service to the NSW Police Force will never be forgotten and he will be remembered as a well-respected member of the team. He played his role and did his best to contribute towards keeping our community safe. His loss holds much weight and this was affirmed on the day of his funeral.

Fifteen hundred people attended his funeral to pay their respects—an executive guard of honour was presented by the highest ranking policing officers who lined both sides of the steps on the day. This was an incredibly moving ceremony and embodies the solidarity of the NSW Police Force on that day; they mourned the loss of one of their own. On behalf of the NSW Labor Opposition, I once again convey our deepest condolences to the Cheng family. Curtis's legacy will be remembered. The event that transpired on that day will not be forgotten. In this Chamber all members will endeavour to make New South Wales a better place and to protect all communities against such senseless acts of terror. To the brave men and women of the NSW Police Force and the NSW Joint Counter Terrorism Team, I personally say thank you. Thank you for your dedication and commitment towards keeping our communities safe. I commend this motion to the House. I thank the member for Parramatta, Dr Geoff Lee, for moving it.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (13:35): I thank the member for Parramatta for moving this motion. Members ought to reflect on the tragedy that beset the State. The tragedy of the Parramatta shooting last October saddened and shocked the nation. A radicalised 15-year-old boy took the life of Curtis Cheng. This event was shocking, as all such tragedies are, but this defied common logic. Curtis was an employee of the NSW Police Force. He was shot by a 15-year-old Islamic extremist who was targeting police at the office in Parramatta where Curtis worked. There are certain risks that are associated with the role of a police officer, but Curtis was not a police officer; he was an accountant working in the NSW Police Force finance department and he was on his way home from work.

One of the things about this tragedy which resonates is the sense that he was just like anyone else; the sense that it could happen to anyone at any time. This was an attack on all of us, on our families, on our way of life and on the social contract that we have a shared responsibility to uphold. But these are the times we live in. Terrorism is frightening because it is difficult to understand. Most people generally will want a better life, particularly if they have come from a place where they have been denied freedom and opportunity. It is human nature that when presented with the kind of opportunities on offer like we have in Australia that one seeks that better life. So the notion that someone might reject those opportunities, in favour of a life of violence and terror, is completely foreign to most rational human beings. But there are a minority of individuals, Islamic extremists, who do just that.

So how do we make sense of this? Not since the Cold War have we faced an ideology so incompatible with our own. We can all understand the notion of being committed to a cause more important than one's self. We might even grasp the concept of being willing to die for a cause. But imagine if your political ideology was violent and totalitarian with no room for opposing views of any kind. Then imagine you were committed to your political ideology with all the faith, devotion, and self-sacrifice of the most devout religious person. Your mind would be closed off and you would want for nothing in this life because of the promise of an afterlife and the threat of divine judgement.

Not even the most committed communist during the Cold War could boast that level of dedication. But for Islamic extremists, religion and politics are one and the same—not overlapping or interconnected, but completely the same. So how do we overcome the challenges this presents? How do we preserve our way of life and yet also change and adapt to meet this new threat? How do we protect our freedoms, including our religious freedoms which should always be protected, and yet combat the politics of Islamic extremists when the terrorists themselves cannot divorce the two? I would argue that we are still coming to terms with what we are up against. It does not fit into our known understanding of our shared world view. Our freedoms are being used against us in an unprecedented way—a way that barely makes sense to most of us—and we do not know how to respond. We can only win this fight on the battlefield of ideas, but we cannot fight an ideology if we do not understand it. Curtis Cheng, I salute you.

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (13:59): Today we pay tribute to Curtis Cheng, an accountant with the NSW Police Force, a father, a husband and a friend. I commend the member for Parramatta for moving this motion. It is more than six months since Curtis was brutally killed as he left work at the NSW Police Headquarters in Parramatta. He was not a police officer but he was killed for being a police employee. He was randomly selected by a terrorist intent on making a political statement and taking the life of a police officer. I attended the State funeral along with many of our colleagues. It was very moving to celebrate the life of someone who filled so many

others with happiness and by all accounts was a diligent and thoughtful man, well liked by his colleagues, who died in such terrible circumstances.

Curtis had worked in the Finance and Business Services Branch for 17 years. Like so many people in Sydney, he had migrated looking for a better life for his family and had a long and successful career in accounting here and overseas. He was born in Hong Kong, had studied in the United Kingdom and was a lecturer in economics in Hong Kong before migrating to Australia. At 58 years of age, with two adult children, Alpha and Zilvia, he should have had the opportunity to enjoy his imminent retirement with his wife, Selina. I was in Parramatta that afternoon. Parts of the city were put into lockdown, police helicopters and cars were everywhere and rumours abounded. We were warned that the gunman was on the run in Macquarie Street. This struck terror in everyone and then there was anger and confusion. Why the police? They are not involved in foreign military operations. Why Parramatta?

Parramatta is one of the most multicultural parts of Sydney and the world's major religions are welcome and practised close to the city centre. It has some of Australia's oldest churches, a big mosque, big Hindu and Buddhist temples and even a little synagogue. I represented the area around the police headquarters as a councillor from 1999, and many of my constituents in the Granville electorate work in the Parramatta central business district. I know it well. It is a vibrant, multicultural and friendly city, not dominated by any particular ethnic group, where people from more than 60 different countries and many different faiths have chosen to make Australia their home. It is not a place that is hostile to new migrants or an area characterised by the type of intergenerational disadvantage that breeds discontent and exclusion. That is why it was such a shock that such an attack could take place in Parramatta.

The local community, including the Muslim community, were saddened, confused and appalled. I spoke to Neil Khadomi from the Parramatta mosque about it over the long weekend. I was deeply concerned that blame for the attack would be attributed to the mosque, given Farhad Jabar had attended the mosque before shooting Curtis Cheng. I have known the congregation at the mosque for many years. They held prayers at Parramatta Town Hall for more than 15 years before they bought an entire floor of an office block to establish a mosque for Parramatta's office workers about five years ago. It is a large congregation. They have two services every Friday to fit in around 1,000 worshippers. The services are held in English as the congregation comes from across the world—from Bangladesh to Lebanon and Nigeria to Malaysia—and they preach a message of inclusion. If Farhad Jabar had paid more attention to the message at prayers at the Parramatta mosque he and Curtis Cheng would probably both still be alive.

The attack was carried out by someone claiming to be acting in the name of Islam, yet our Muslim community deplores such acts. This terrorist attack and the Martin Place siege resemble far more closely the Hoddle Street and Port Arthur massacres in their intent and effect than the teachings of any religion. Yet the religion of or other cultural influences on Julian Knight and Martin Bryant are never called on to explain those acts in the same way that almost every Muslim Australian is made to feel obliged to condemn such acts and clarify that it is not part of their religion. In the weeks after Curtis Cheng was shot, Merrylands police station was also threatened. Instead of going into lockdown, the Holroyd Local Area Command increased their foot patrols. Everywhere they went, people approached them to show support.

In particular, members of the Muslim community told them that such threats were un-Islamic—they stood with the police, not the terrorists. This might seem obvious but there are sections of the media and our society that would have one believe the opposite: that division and hatred are inevitable. They are wrong. So as someone who knows these communities well, I say on behalf of the community I represent that we condemn the murder of Curtis Cheng and deplore terrorism.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill) (14:04): Before I make my contribution I acknowledge the presence in the public gallery of our former Coalition colleague the Hon. Don Page. He was a great member for Ballina and a great representative of rural and regional New South Wales. I am sure that is what the Deputy Speaker would have said.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I was waiting to do so. We also welcome Liz to the gallery. It is lovely to see you both.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: The tragedy of the Parramatta shooting last October saddened and shocked the nation. A radicalised 15-year-old boy took the life of Curtis Cheng. The event was shocking, as all tragedies are, but this defied common logic and reminded us all of the extremely challenging times we live in. We acknowledge and respect the job that all police do—from Commissioner Andrew Scipione and my local area commander, Superintendent Rob Critchlow, to every serving member of the NSW Police Force. Indeed, from time to time I have likened their job to that of soldiers walking onto the battlefield because they do not know what challenges will face them on a daily basis—and sometimes they do not come home.

Curtis was an employee of the NSW Police Force. He was shot because a boy was targeting police at their building in Parramatta. Curtis Cheng was not a police officer. Indeed, he did not work in a job that we would associate with any significant risks. He was an accountant and had spent 17 years working in the finance department of the NSW Police Force. That makes this action even more deplorable. As I have said, there are certain risks associated with working as a frontline officer; one can reasonably expect to find oneself in dangerous situations. I commend our police officers for their work in protecting the community.

Curtis was just like the rest of us. He was 58 years old and had an office job. He was a father of two and, by all reports, was a humble, well-liked individual who was simply on his way home from work. One of the things about this tragedy that resonated with the wider community was the sense that he was just like anyone else; the sense that it could have happened to anyone in Parramatta that day. This is compounded by the fact that the attacker was 15 years of age. Teenagers go to school and play up. They give their parents headaches—I know that only too well, having raised two children—but they do not shoot people. It is hard for any rational human being to make sense of it all. Sadly, these are the extremely challenging times we now live in. Only this week this Chamber passed legislation to give police the opportunity to detain and question individuals as young as 14 years of age. It is alarming to think our police officers need those powers, but it reinforces what I have said in relation to the shooting of Curtis Cheng.

Following the tragedy I wrote to my local area commanders. I wanted to convey to them my gratitude and that of the community for the thankless and often dangerous work they do. I expressed my concern for the seemingly unprecedented challenges they now face in keeping our community safe. They are dedicated men and women who work day and night to ensure that we are all safe and secure. No-one becomes a police officer to get rich. They join up because they want to serve and are willing to put their life on the line to save others. So as we approach nearly a year since the sad shooting at Parramatta, let us spare a thought for Curtis Cheng and his family, and also for the brave men and women of the NSW Police Force—some of whom work in this building and keep us safe every day. Vale, Curtis Cheng.

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (14:09): In reply: I thank the member for Kogarah, the member for Seven Hills, the member for Fairfield, the member for Epping, the member for Granville and the member for Castle Hill, who all spoke eloquently and compassionately on this motion, for their support. The member for Kogarah said that there are those who wish to do us harm but that we must all stand together, united. He reflected on the words of Curtis Cheng's son, Alpha, who called not for vengeance but for harmony within the community. That is a great example of how a family can have the foresight to call for harmony and not seek vengeance even in such tragic circumstances. It shows what a man Curtis Cheng was to be bring up a son who could express such views.

The member for Seven Hills spoke about how everybody has the right to go to work and come home safely, and how the Police Force is the front line in protecting us all. He called the attack on Curtis Cheng an attack on peace and tolerance in our community, and said that we must remain strong and vigilant against such attacks. It was great to hear his personal reflections as a former member of the Police Force and his continuing support for the Police Force. The member for Fairfield also spoke about the need for the community to stand united and to be resilient in such difficult times. He reflected upon Alpha Cheng's description of his father as a gentle, loving person and a family man, who was held in the highest regard by his friends, family and colleagues.

The member for Fairfield spoke about Curtis Cheng's service to the NSW Police Force over many years and described his murder as a senseless act. He said that it was an honour to pay tribute to him at St Mary's Cathedral on behalf of the New South Wales Labor Party. The member for Epping reflected upon the tragedy and said that it was an attack on the social contract. He said that we must understand the problem in order to fix it. The member for Epping acknowledged that it is disturbing for many of us who have no concept of the value that some people put on extremist behaviour in the name of religion.

The member for Granville reflected on her experiences in representing her electorate and said that Curtis Cheng was just an employee who was in the wrong place at the wrong time when he was killed. She explained how Parramatta is a multicultural capital, whose residents come from about 60 different countries, that welcomes migrant communities. She also described the attack as shocking. The member for Castle Hill called the murder a tragedy and said how none of us expects to go to work and never return. No-one can understand that. The member spoke of the need for greater legislative powers to enable police to fill in the gaps so that those who would do these terrible things can be prosecuted. On behalf of the New South Wales Government I pay tribute to the life of Curtis Cheng.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that the motion moved by the member for Parramatta be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.15 p.m.

Distinguished Visitors

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I would like to welcome some very special guests to the Chamber this afternoon. I give a very warm welcome to Her Excellency Ms Connie Taracena, Ambassador of Guatemala, accompanied by her son Mr Rodrigo Hidalgo—I certainly enjoyed our earlier meeting—guests of the Speaker and member for South Coast. I also see in the gallery the former Premier of New South Wales the Hon. Nick Greiner, welcome.

I welcome former Minister and former member for Ballina the Hon. Don Page and his wife, Liz, to the Chamber, guests of the Deputy Premier, Minister for Justice and Police, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Racing and member for Dubbo.

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I welcome 15 members of the Hunters Hill Ladies Probus Club, guests of the Leader of the House, Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy and member for Lane Cove. I also welcome members of the USU Women's Committee, guests of the members for Maitland and Shellharbour

I would like to welcome participants, whom I met earlier, from the 2016 Kiama electorate student leaders forum, guests of the Parliamentary Secretary for the Illawarra and South Coast and member for Kiama, who has had a permanent smile on his face for a while.

I welcome to the gallery members of the Riverwood Community Centre, guests of the member for Lakemba. I also welcome members of the Granville Tamils Senior Citizens Association here today, guests of the member for Granville. I hope you enjoy this afternoon's question time.

Bills

FINES AMENDMENT BILL 2016

STATE REVENUE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2016

CRIMES (SERIOUS CRIME PREVENTION ORDERS) BILL 2016

**CRIMINAL LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (ORGANISED CRIME AND PUBLIC SAFETY) BILL
2016**

Assent

The SPEAKER: I report the receipt of messages from His Excellency assenting to the abovementioned bills.

Question Time

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMALGAMATIONS

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:23): My question is directed to the Premier. Given that last night, on the eve of his Government's dismissal of the Bankstown City Council this morning, Bankstown Liberal councillors, including your party's campaign director, Jim Daniel, voted to increase the height limit on land owned by convicted money launderer Carl Trad and his family, will you act to overturn this decision?

Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) (14:24): I am not going to respond to individual applications that I am not aware of in any way. Obviously councils can make all types of decisions. There are processes around those decisions and if it involves the planning Minister then obviously the planning Minister will consider all the circumstances of such a decision. I am not in a position where I can comment on individual applications, but appropriate processes and appropriate concerns must be met. Certainly that is part of the reforms that we put forward today.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMALGAMATIONS

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (14:24): My question is addressed to the Premier. How is the Government helping councils to put ratepayers first and deliver better services and community facilities?

Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) (14:26): I thank the member for his question and interest in good local government, which is exactly what this Government is

interested in. I have to say that it is a little something for the Opposition not to ask one question on local government reform over the past 12 months—certainly not of me—yet all of a sudden today, wakey, wakey—

The SPEAKER: If members do not cease interjecting they will be immediately placed on calls to order.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The good news is that we have decided today to take the side of the ratepayers. It is pretty simple: if there is an opportunity through bringing councils together to provide more child care, more community transport and additional sporting facilities in our communities, that is exactly what we are for. We are going to stand up for the ratepayers. We want stronger communities, supported by stronger councils, and that is what these reforms are about. We understand the importance of delivering those services to local communities and we want to provide more services and more infrastructure to them. We want downward pressure on rates, and that is exactly what this reform does today.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: We have announced 19 new councils to get on with the job of delivering stronger communities, additional services and more infrastructure into those communities. We have made nine in-principle decisions, with three being under consideration. This is great news for households, businesses and the people of New South Wales. We have seen where this has worked in jurisdictions very close to us such as Queensland and Victoria. There were concerns at the time but we have seen that the communities have benefited from those reforms. In addition, I saw that in New Zealand. Indeed, when Prime Minister John Key was looking at a number of councils in Auckland coming into a single council there were concerns and fears, but they were not realised and what we saw on the ground were better outcomes for the community. That is the experience of jurisdictions near us.

We are determined to make decisions that are in the interests of the State in the long term. We know that this is not an easy thing to do, but it is the right thing to do for the people of New South Wales. We have heard the Opposition talk about integrity. We have brought forward a number of improvements in the integrity of governance. We have put caps on donations when there were no caps on the amount of donations provided to local government. We will introduce those through legislation. As to pecuniary interest, we have ensured that not only anyone who has a pecuniary interest has to declare it but the entire council can no longer vote on it. It needs to be pushed aside to an independent person. This will start to bring confidence back to local government in this State.

We have seen too many examples of issues that have eroded community confidence. We need the strongest possible confidence in our local government sector and these reforms go towards doing that. I give a simple message to those in the community who participated in this: thank you. I thank those who have taken the time to participate in this very comprehensive reform. When Labor was in power and did this, it did it in the dead of night; it did not do any consultation.

We made a determination that we wanted to go to the community. We wanted a boundaries commission process to oversee it and that is exactly what we did. We want to thank the community for participating in this process and for listening to all of the arguments put forward. We have listened through the boundaries commission process. We understand that this is not easy. I can assure the House that every single member on this side of the House believes that in the long term this is the right thing for their communities and this is the right thing for the people of New South Wales.

MEMBER FOR WOLLONDILLY

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (14:30): My question is directed to the Minister for Local Government. Given that Liberal councillor George Greiss, the chairperson of Campbelltown council's planning committee, is a partner in the member for Wollondilly's Peri-Urban Strategic Planning Pty Ltd, and the member for Wollondilly's father, councillor Ted Rowell, is also a member of the planning committee, what action will the Minister take to ensure integrity in decision making at Campbelltown City Council?

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister can take the question, but it is highly dubious as to the standing orders relating to questions and the use of facts, unless they are absolutely necessary to make the question intelligible. I will allow the Minister to answer the question if he wishes to.

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Local Government) (14:31): I thank the member for his question. I would be willing for the member to provide any information through the appropriate channels if he has concerns about any council or councillor's actions here in the State of New South Wales. Is it not a good day when the Government is making changes around the integrity of councillors in New South Wales?

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: We want councillors to act honestly. We want councillors to put their communities first and not self-interest. What we have said today about some of the very important measures that we are introducing is that anyone who wants to act dishonestly or be on council for financial gain should consider something different because they are no longer wanted on council. The community does not want them.

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: What we are saying today is that if a councillor, general manager, relative or spouse is there to put a development application forward, it will no longer be considered by the council. Where we have seen mates making decisions, this will no longer happen. It will be referred to another body—a neighbouring council or a planning body.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: My point of order is relevance under Standing Order 129. The question related specifically to Campbelltown council. It would be good to hear how this applied to that council.

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: We will continue to take the necessary measures to ensure that the people and the communities of this State have confidence in their elected representatives.

REGIONAL COUNCIL AMALGAMATIONS

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (14:33): My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier. How is the New South Wales Government investing in regional councils?

Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Deputy Premier, Minister for Justice and Police, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Racing) (14:33): I thank the member for his very important question. Today is a milestone for the NSW Government in creating stronger regional councils so that our regional communities can thrive. Today is an important day for regional New South Wales. The New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government is delivering the most significant reform of the State's councils for more than a century. It is important for those in regional New South Wales to have the strongest councils possible. If we have strong councils then we have strong communities, and nothing is more important to The Nationals than that.

This will create new opportunities for employment, more opportunities and a greater focus on regional economic development, a greater focus on tourism, and more opportunities for business investment and funding for major projects. We want our regional communities to thrive, not just survive. As someone who has lived in regional New South Wales all my life, I know what our local councils mean to local communities. I understand the service local councillors give to their local communities, the passion they have for their communities and the dedication they show in their service to their local communities.

But local identity is not defined by council boundaries. Communities are not about a line on a map; they are about the people who live there. The villages that make up council areas will still exist under this reform. The local football team will still exist. The town hall will still hold community events. Community organisations will still operate and function and deliver for the communities they represent. A strong regional council has the ability to invest in the infrastructure and services that local families and communities need—something denied to them for a long time under those opposite.

The New South Wales Government understands that when it comes to this sort of reform there cannot be a one-size-fits-all approach, given the diversity of the regions. Our regions are unique and need to be treated as such. Proper reform can address the challenges many regional councils face—the tyranny of distance, declining populations in many small communities, financial weakness and skills shortages, to name but a few. New stronger regional councils will be transparent and accountable. They will be placed on the best footing to attack and address each of those threats. They will be a strong voice to advocate on behalf of their communities. They will be in a better position to partner with State and Federal governments on key infrastructure projects and those regional priorities that will keep them strong.

Each new regional council will receive up to \$5 million to meet the costs of merging and up to an additional \$15 million to kick-start new investment in community infrastructure through the Stronger Communities Fund. Councils will have significant support from our Government to ensure communities receive the full benefits of the reform we have announced. In Murrumbidgee, for example, the cash injection for infrastructure will amount to more than 90 per cent of that council's annual budget. That demonstrates the support under our reforms.

Under those reforms undertaken in 2004, visitors in the gallery may be interested to learn, forty-plus councils were merged by way of notice sent overnight by facsimile and there was not one dollar to support them. There was not one hour of support available to support them in their transformation under those mergers. That is how it operated under a Labor Government. Not one single bit of consultation occurred in 2004 under the Labor Government of those hypocrites opposite. Those hypocrites turned their backs on regional New South Wales for 16 years. They geographically discriminated against regional New South Wales for 16 years. That discrimination is over. That is not the way we do business in regional New South Wales. [*Extension of time*]

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Maitland to order for the second time. The member for Maitland will cease shouting. I call the member for Cessnock to order for the first time. Opposition members will come to order. I call the member for Maitland to order for the third time.

Mr TROY GRANT: Our stronger regional councils and their communities will get to decide how they spend community funds. They will not be dictated to; they will decide. Councils are the largest employers in many of our regional communities, which is something those opposite would not have a clue about. That is why we have put in place important job protections in the local government sector for regional communities. We have guaranteed that council employees below executive level who are affected by today's announcement will have their jobs protected. Let me make this clear—in the new regional councils in New South Wales jobs will be safe. People who work for their regional council today will wake up tomorrow and still work for that council. There will be no change. The only changes that will be made will be in delivering better services and more infrastructure and making our communities stronger—that is the change coming to regional New South Wales.

We need only look for an example at the success of the Tamworth Regional Council when it merged with Manilla, Barraba, Parry and Nundle. The result was a more efficient organisation for the benefit of regional ratepayers. Living in regional New South Wales, I understand that change is not always popular. Sometimes it is scary. But I can assure communities in regional New South Wales that this Government will never do anything to make them worse off. Our focus and dedication is on investing in regional New South Wales to make those communities better off in the long term.

The SPEAKER: I have an additional welcome for guests joining us for question time today. I welcome Amir Ohana, member of the Israeli Knesset, who is here on a study tour with young members of the Manof Forum, guests of the President of the Legislative Council, the Hon. Don Harwin.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMALGAMATIONS

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (14:41): My question is directed to the Premier. Do communities have to be in a marginal Federal Coalition seat for their concerns about the Government's politically motivated council mergers to be listened to?

Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) (14:41): The answer to that question is no; the answer is that every person in New South Wales will benefit from what we are doing. Every single community will benefit. Whatever way those opposite try to spin this, and they can spin this whatever way they like, the motivation on this side of the House is around one thing, and one thing only—that is, to look after ratepayers in this State. If we have smaller back offices then we have a capacity to put more services into the community. We on this side of the House are interested in opportunities for councils to put more childcare services into their community, to put more sporting facilities into their community and to put more community transport services into their community. That is what we are focused on. The member might be wondering what others have said about this today, and this is important. The Property Council of Australia said:

We congratulate Premier Mike Baird for having the political courage to take on a task that had been left in the too hard basket for decades.

That sums up all of those opposite—it was seen as too hard to deal with. It was in the too-hard basket. They were not interested. I agree that it is hard. But, do you know what? We on this side of the House are interested in doing what is right for the people of New South Wales.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: If it is difficult, we are prepared to consider it and to act on it; unlike those opposite who just flick it off the table. Those opposite could not care less about the people of New South Wales. It goes on and on. Stephen Albin, the Chief Executive Officer of the Urban Development Institute of Australia NSW, said:

It's a watershed moment that will vastly improve local governance for Sydney.

As it will in regional New South Wales. Those opposite are crying crocodile tears.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: All of a sudden those opposite are interested in this issue. They are not interested in this issue; they are interested in the political opportunity. That is all they are interested in.

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! Premier, have you completed your answer?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Yes.

The SPEAKER: It is too late for the member for Campbelltown to take a point of order. There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. Does the member for Lakemba wish to remain in the Chamber?

Mr Jihad Dib: I want to stay.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMALGAMATIONS

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (14:44): My question is addressed to the Minister for Local Government. How is the Government supporting and improving local government?

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Local Government) (14:45): I thank the member for Parramatta for his question and commend him for his keen interest in ensuring that New South Wales has strong councils. I acknowledge the former Minister for Local Government the Hon. Don Page, who is in the public gallery and who was instrumental in reforming local government in this State. Today is an historic day for local government, for New South Wales and for local communities across this State. Today this Government has delivered for local communities what no New South Wales Government has been able to achieve in the past 100 years.

Our structural reform of local government will see 19 new councils begin operations today. I have given in-principle support to the creation of a further nine councils, subject to decisions of the courts. Administrators and interim general managers have been appointed to new councils and will stay on until the council elections, which are earmarked for 9 September 2017. Our plan is to create a stronger system of local government; a stronger system of councils in Sydney and regional New South Wales. They will be supported by the Government's investment of approximately \$500 million.

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: That is the largest investment ever given to the local government sector.

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: Change is never easy but it was well and truly overdue in New South Wales. Independent report after independent report has clearly demonstrated that New South Wales can no longer sustain 152 councils and that mergers will deliver significant benefits to local communities.

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: When I travel the State, ratepayers tell me they want to see their local roads, playgrounds and facilities upgraded. They want to see improved and efficient services being delivered. We must remember that councils exist to serve the community and we must always strive to deliver better value for ratepayers. The Government's merger proposals were informed by four years of consultations with councils, independent expert assessment, council merger preferences, and feedback from communities and stakeholders.

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: Independent analysis has projected that the local council mergers will deliver up to \$2 billion in savings to be reinvested in local communities, whether it be for more infrastructure, better services or lower rates. This Government has worked hard and is making the tough decision to create a system of local government fit for the twenty-first century; a system that is worthy of the people of New South Wales and will support our local communities to reach their full potential into the future. Today's announcement is part of a suite of reforms that this Government is initiating to improve the wider system of local government.

As the Premier said earlier, we will be introducing strong, new measures to strengthen council integrity to help restore confidence in the State's councils. Importantly, councillors will no longer be able to use their positions for their own personal financial benefit. Later this year we will be streamlining the Local Government Act to make important improvements to council governance structures. This Government understands that for local government reform to succeed it needs to work hand in hand with the local government sector. That is why every new council announced today will receive up to \$15 million from the Stronger Communities Fund to invest

in community projects such as pools, libraries, sporting fields, car park expansions or grants to junior sporting groups. [*Extension of time*]

Merged councils will also receive up to \$10 million to meet the costs of merging, with any remaining funds to be directed to community projects. It will be business as usual for residents and businesses in new council areas. Libraries will remain open and their hours will remain unchanged. Businesses in new council areas will continue to operate. With our rate protection policy commitment, residents of new councils should pay no more for their rates than they would under their old council for at least the next four years. On this side of the House we know that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to local government. We have been guided by the needs of each community and have put ratepayers first. These reforms are the result of a significant amount of hard work from many, many people and I thank each of them for their tremendous contribution to this State. Today marks a new era in the ongoing work to get councils working better for local communities. Our communities deserve the best services and infrastructure, and this Government is determined to continue to support our councils to deliver exactly that.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order.

MEMBER FOR WOLLONDILLY

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (14:52): My question is directed to the Premier. I refer to the announcement made by the member for Wollondilly on Facebook that he had breakfast with the Premier yesterday to discuss planning and development issues in the Macarthur area. Before this breakfast took place, did the member for Wollondilly disclose his commercial interests to the Premier?

The SPEAKER: Order! A question based on Facebook is probably outside the standing orders.

Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) (14:53): It is great that the member for Prospect has learnt that Facebook exists. It is nice development that he has gone onto Facebook. He has probably also worked out that some people enjoy having breakfast together. I know that he is used to eating alone, but it is okay to have breakfast together.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Yes, I have breakfast with members on my team; that is what a good team does. As those opposite will know, Government members have all types of discussions with other members of Parliament. That is entirely appropriate. I had discussions with other members of Parliament who were there as well. It was a good breakfast—thanks for asking.

REAL ESTATE INDUSTRY REFORM

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill) (14:53): My question is addressed to the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation. How is the Government protecting consumers through reforming the real estate industry?

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) (14:54): I thank the member for Castle Hill for his question. He is an outstanding advocate and a champion for all the things that are good in this world. On a personal note, I sit in front of the member for Castle Hill during question time. Some debates are nuanced and complicated, and he gives me a running commentary on what is taking place. I take this opportunity to thank him for his words of wisdom. The Baird Government is at the forefront of reform. Indeed, we are leading the way across this nation in reforming the real estate sector. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics the real estate sector in New South Wales is worth more than \$15 billion to our economy. That is why when we are introducing reforms we do so in a way that provides certainty to real estate agents, transparency to the marketplace and enhanced protections to potential homebuyers across the State.

In the past 12 months we have introduced landmark reforms in the real estate sector, including protections around sunset clauses and reforms in relation to underquoting. Today I am announcing another reform—that is, in relation to reducing the cost of pre-purchase inspection reports. Each of those reforms is the first of its kind in this country. They show that we are a reforming government and we are leading the way right across the country. For example, in relation to pre-purchase inspection reports members would know that every time you wish to buy a house, if you want to do your due diligence you would need to spend \$200 to \$600 on a pre-purchase inspection report.

The SPEAKER: The member for Keira will sit down. It is disrespectful to the Chamber to engage in idle conversation. The Minister has the call.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: You then go to the auction and wish for your best fortune to come your way, but many do not get the property at the time of the auction. That means you have wasted between \$200 and \$600 on a pre-purchase inspection report. One of the great values of being the Minister for Innovation and Better

Regulation is that I can start thinking creatively with the peer-to-peer service providers on how we can craft a solution. I note that visitors seated in the gallery are listening very intently. I imagine many of them have experienced these problems.

The SPEAKER: They are listening. It is only the unruly members in the Chamber who do not listen.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: Absolutely. The gallery listens, the Opposition does not. The Government will amend the Property Stock and Business Agents Regulation to provide greater assistance to prospective purchasers. We will require real estate agents to have a register of pre-purchase inspection reports in relation to the various properties they have on their books. On that register they will be required to put the name of the person providing the report and the contact details. Online platforms already exist—for example, Before You Bid and Eye-On that have the words, "If you want to share that report with somebody else, we will allow you to do that so you can defray your costs." For example, if I am going to buy a property, I get the inspection report for \$600 and I can then say that I am willing to share that report with 10 other people. So instead of it costing me \$600, it will only cost me only—

Ms Gladys Berejiklian: Sixty dollars.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: Thank God our sensible Treasurer knows her mathematics—we are in very good hands. This is a good and simple solution to a real problem that is plaguing consumers in the marketplace.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: Since becoming the Minister responsible for Fair Trading I have heard complaints time and again about having to pay for all these reports, many of which are not ultimately used. *[Extension of time]*

REINSW chief executive officer Tim McKibbin is doing outstanding work in collaborating with the Government to provide these reforms to the real estate sector and consumers. He has agreed with the need for simple pre-inspection reports. He said, and I quote:

Anything that puts more information in the hands of consumers to assist them in making a more informed decision when purchasing a home is something that the Institute supports and we congratulate the NSW Government on this important reform.

But the reform does not stop there. In the past 12 months this Government has done more for the reform of real estate agents and the protection of consumers than those opposite did in 16 years. Let us make no mistake about that. But the good news for the people of New South Wales is that the reforms will keep coming. The Government will continue to work with the real estate sector to make sure that we improve training standards and entry levels. This is another issue that the real estate sector and consumers have raised with me. We will work with them to make sure that we improve continuing professional development programs and training levels. If we can work with the sector to lift the base and get better protections for consumers and more professionalism in the sector, it will be great for the sector and consumers. It will also be absolutely brilliant for New South Wales, given that the real estate sector contributes more than \$15 billion annually to our economy.

NSW HEALTHY SCHOOL CANTEEN STRATEGY

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (15:01): My question is directed to the Minister for Education. Considering the Government committed to addressing the outdated NSW Healthy School Canteen Strategy more than two years ago, when will the Government act to finally improve nutrition and limit added sugar in school canteen food and drinks?

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI (Murray—Minister for Education) (15:01): I thank the member for his question as we as a modern society address childhood obesity and the health of young people generally in this country and in this State. I start by saying something of which we in New South Wales should be proud: Sydney University Professor Ian Caterson has been appointed as the president of the World Obesity Foundation. That is a great coup for somebody from this State. He is the son of Fred Caterson, a former member of Parliament for the electorate of The Hills in New South Wales.

We rely on international research by organisations like universities to inform the work the terrific Minister for Health in this State, the Hon. Jillian Skinner, has been doing on the health and wellbeing of young people—I will get to schools in a moment. One of the Premier's priorities is to reduce the number of overweight and obese young people in this State by 5 per cent over a 10-year period. The Health and Education departments, and other government agencies are involved in that worthy objective. My two children know about the Premier's target. Every time they reach for a packet of chips I say, "No, you cannot have those chips because we need you to help us reach Mike's priorities."

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order.

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: We should all take very seriously what our children eat. The sometimes foods—

Dr Geoff Lee: The sometimes foods?

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: —the hardly ever foods and the never foods. The NSW Healthy Canteen Strategy to which the member referred is a partnership between the three sectors in education in New South Wales and NSW Health. An enormous amount of work has gone into that strategy and I can provide the member with an update on the time line for its work. A report on the evidence to underpin a revised Healthy Canteen Strategy has been finalised, so it is timely that I should have been asked this question. Education and Health are preparing consultation sessions for metropolitan and regional New South Wales about this report and ways in which it can support health and nutrition in the schooling context, particularly through school canteens.

These sessions will be held in term two, 2016. Those consultations will include school principals and executives, parents, canteen managers, local health districts and other interested groups. During terms two and three resources will be developed to support schools to implement a revised Healthy Canteen Strategy. They will be tested with schools during this period to make sure that they meet the needs of schools and students. The department will work with its partners, including, as I have said, Health, local organisations, canteen operators, including parent and citizen associations, parents and friends federations in Catholic schools, and the other parent groups across the three sectors. Earlier today I had the opportunity to speak at a meeting where parent groups from the Catholic, independent and government sector had a conference. I think it was the first time we have had parent groups from the three sectors meeting together to talk about issues that are common to all parents. This would certainly be one of them.

Those groups are working together to support the implementation of these resources throughout the remainder of this year and beyond. The department will launch these new materials as part of a revised strategy during the latter part of 2016. I thank the member for his question. I know—like everybody here who has a great interest in the wellbeing of students at school, not only in their academic performance but in their general wellbeing—that a significant part of that is their health. The healthier a child is at school, the better they eat and the better they sleep at night. The better support they get outside of school, the better they will perform in school. They will learn more and will become constructive members of this community. I welcome the member's question and again thank him for his support.

COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENTS

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (15:06): My question is addressed to the Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Epping will be heard in silence.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: How is the Baird-Grant Government delivering for communities across the State, and related matters?

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy) (15:06): Let us buckle up. I thank the member for his question and commend his contribution to the successful policies of this Government and particularly his service to the community. Speaking of communities, give a big shout out to the residents of Hunters Hill who are in the gallery today. It is great to see them and I extend to them a very warm welcome. I note that today is the sixty-eighth anniversary of Israel's Independence Day. I congratulate Israel on its immense contribution to the world in science, technology, medicine and culture.

As members will be aware, the Premier recently visited Israel, leading a delegation that focused on strengthening ties in areas such as innovation, cybersecurity, and cutting-edge medical and financial services technologies. This Government is extremely proud of the vast number of achievements and improvements it has delivered to the communities of New South Wales after 16 years of failure and neglect under those opposite—16 hard years. The negative Nancies over there have no interest in representing their communities in this place by asking questions on policy matters. Every morning before question time the brains trusts over there—and I use that term quite loosely—meet to discuss tactics for the day. Each morning the same philosophy prevails: smear. Why? Because that is all they know. Is it any wonder they are labelled irrelevant? The only relevant question for those opposite is not how long Luke Foley has been in the job, but how long he has to go in the job.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: I point out that the question contained the words "and related matters", so it is very broad ranging.

Ms Jodi McKay: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The question was related to how the Baird Government is helping the community. I do not see how the information that is being given by the Minister has any relationship whatsoever to the question.

The SPEAKER: Perhaps by making comparisons with the Opposition. There is no point of order.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: Exactly; it is all about relevance, or a lack of relevance. We see that the Leader of the Opposition has already tried to nobble a very good shadow Treasurer, the member for Maroubra. The Leader of the Opposition has knocked him out of the way; he has crushed him, thrown him into the corner, put him in the dustbin, and he is holding him down.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 73. Any purported compliment from the Leader of the House upon me can only be taken as a slur.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: So far this year there have been 21 question times. The Opposition has asked 92 questions and, of course, the crossbenchers, who do a great job, have asked eight. Out of those 92 Opposition questions, guess how many questions of substance and policy have been asked? Is it 50? No. Is it 40? No. Is it 30? No—it is not even 20. The Opposition has asked 16 policy questions, and five of those were about the Federal budget, which is not even one per question time. Members opposite should hang their heads in shame because they are not only lazy but also loose with the truth.

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

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: They could ask, for example, how, after languishing at the bottom for 16 years, New South Wales is now the leading State in every economic indicator. That is a good question. They could ask the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure about the Metro project. They could ask the health Minister—who is probably the finest State health Minister in this country's history—about delivering in areas such as Lismore, Gosford, Kempsey, Bega and St George.

Mr Luke Foley: Point of order: We could ask where the member for East Hills is.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat or he will be removed from the Chamber.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: You are a grub—sleaze, smear. You are a grub, but you are not going to be there for long. Those opposite could ask the Minister for Regional Development and Skills—

Mr Jihad Dib: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 73. I ask that the Minister withdraw that comment.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order under Standing Order 73 because he did not name an individual.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I withdraw the comment and apologise to grubs everywhere.

Mr Clayton Barr: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! I will hear the next point of order, but if members continue to jump up without points of order simply to argue and shout into the microphone I will not entertain any further points of order. I will give the Minister an extra five minutes to answer the question if it suits me. Stop the clock. Does the member have a point of order?

Mr Clayton Barr: I always do. My point of order is taken under Standing Order 74. Madam Speaker, I am calling on you to intervene to prevent quarrelling across the table.

The SPEAKER: You should stop quarrelling with me for a start. The member will resume his seat.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: Sleaze and smear. They are rudderless and they are lazy. [*Extension of time*]

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order or I will extend the Minister's time by a further five minutes at my discretion because there are far too many interjections.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: And those opposite could also ask why we have the most magnificent Speaker that this Parliament has ever seen. That is a good question and it is true. The member for Prospect could have asked the wonderful Minister for Veterans' Affairs about the great work the Minister is doing in getting veterans back into work, which is tremendous. We come back to the point that those opposite, the members of Her Majesty's loyal Opposition, are letting down the people of New South Wales, and they will continue to do

that for another three, four or five terms the way they are going. I will leave the Opposition with this thought: Stop telling lies about us and we will stop telling the truth about you.

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order: I understand the word "lies" is unparliamentary.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Port Stephens will resume her seat. She was not called a liar.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: Potty mouth—don't you talk.

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order. It is Standing Order 73. The Minister is making a personal imputation.

The SPEAKER: I did not hear the comment.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: She swears in Parliament. It is in *Hansard*.

Ms Kate Washington: Quoting one of your developer mayors.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Port Stephens will resume her seat. I have asked her to resume her seat three times.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: There have been a couple of other medal presentations. We had State Emergency Service personnel in the House to receive awards from the Minister and there have been a couple of other presentations that have gone unnoticed. I thought I would take the time to acknowledge those. For example, here is one for Australia's death stare. That was just the other day. Here is another one, the League of Honour—

Mr Clayton Barr: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will resume his seat with the prop.

Mr Clayton Barr: On many occasions you have ruled props out of order in this House.

The SPEAKER: I certainly have. The time for questions has expired.

Committees

COMMITTEE ON LAW AND SAFETY

Reference

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (15:15): In accordance with Standing Order 299 (1), I inform the House that the Legislative Assembly Committee on Law and Safety has resolved to conduct an inquiry into violence against emergency service personnel, the full details of which are available on the committee's home page.

PETITIONS

The CLERK: I announce that the following petitions signed by fewer than 500 persons have been 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**.

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**.

Same-sex Marriage

Petition supporting same-sex marriage, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Pet Shops

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

The CLERK: I announce that the following petition signed by more than 500 persons has been lodged for presentation:

Local Government Amalgamations

Petition requesting that Kiama Municipal Council remain a standalone council, received from **Mr Luke Foley**.

Business of the House

SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS

Order of Business

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy) (15:16): I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to permit consideration forthwith of the motion of censure given by the Leader of the Opposition and to provide for the following speaking time limits:

- (i) Mover—10 minutes;
- (ii) Premier—10 minutes;
- (iii) one further Opposition member—5 minutes;
- (iv) one further Government member—5 minutes; and
- (v) mover in reply—5 minutes.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (15:17): Here they go again, the glass-jawed sissies in action. The two hairy chesters with the running strategy on the other side of the House have done what they always do in the face of any sort of serious questioning of their actions in government. No-one could say that in the past five years this Opposition has misused Standing Order 114. In fact, my recollection is that in the past five years this is the fourth or fifth time that it has been used. But on every occasion the response from the Government has been the same: It has been unwilling to stand in this place—the most public of places—to debate the motion for the full 70 minutes provided for in the standing orders. On every occasion the Leader of the House has walked into this place to move a motion to truncate the time limits for debate and to reduce the number of speakers, and he has been successful on every occasion. We can only conclude that those opposite do not want to hear the truth. They will not face up to valid criticisms from, what they term, insultingly, her Majesty's Opposition.

On every occasion that the Leader of the House has moved this sort of suspension motion, it has smacked of arrogance, but today that arrogance has been punctuated by cowardice because this Premier does not want to stand in this place for 70 minutes to hear the criticisms of his dog of a proposal to forcibly amalgamate communities and councils across New South Wales. And I do not blame them, because the proposal is an absolute dog. The backbenchers know it. There has been a near riot on the Government backbenches. That is why, over the past two weeks, the Premier has taken the time to selectively wine and dine, and have breakfast with members of his backbench who have been standing behind curtains and closed doors bagging the Premier and his proposals. They are the ones who will have to go out into the communities to sell this dog, but they will not be able to do that because councils and communities will struggle over the next two or three years to get themselves together.

This Government proposal will force communities together. We want to spend the next 70 minutes talking about the gerrymander from coast to coast in the State, punctuated mostly in the eastern suburbs, but also in the St George area, where councils have been carved up simply to look after the member for Oatley, who is afraid of Liberal Party branch members in Rockdale. We want to talk about the disparity in population in your neck of the woods, Madam Speaker. In the Illawarra, two neighbouring councils will have a difference in population of almost 300,000 people, which is absolutely unjustifiable. It is no wonder the Premier wants to duck and weave and get out the door instead of debating the merits of this important censure motion.

We want to talk about the communities of Botany and Rockdale, which will be destroyed when two councils that are separated by Australia's busiest airport and have nothing in common except General Holmes Drive are forced together. We want to talk about how the Government is setting up councils to fail, carving the industrial rate base out of the north of Auburn, putting it with the already cashed-up Parramatta and leaving a poor council in Holroyd and Auburn to fail. That is what we want to talk about this afternoon.

We want to talk about this Premier's cowardice, in how he lets the Salim Mehajers run wild across the State while refusing to take up the Opposition's offer to ban developers and real estate agents from sitting on councils. We offer that to the Government in the spirit of bipartisanship, but instead of debating such a ban those opposite want to get home early. We want to talk about the fact that the legislation imposes no bans on donations or expenditure. We want to talk about all of these important things and the people we represent want to talk about

them too. But the response of those opposite this afternoon is: We want to go home. Thank you once again for punctuating your arrogance.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy) (15:21): I make it very clear to all members that we know what this is: It is a political stunt. Those opposite have had years to raise their concerns in the House, yet they have not. Now, all of a sudden, when we have delivered—they wanted it because they know it is a good thing—they decide to pull this stunt. As usual, we have done our homework. There is nothing new about curtailing this stunt. In fact, I have found at least a dozen examples of the Australian Labor Party doing the same thing when it was in government. It is a normal procedure and we are quite entitled to follow it. I warn those opposite that we will keep a very close eye on the scope of this debate and we will take points of order, again based on precedence. If members opposite stray from the scope of this censure motion we will draw that to the attention of the Chair by taking points of order.

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

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: This is a very sensible suspension motion and I commend it to the House.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the motion moved by the Leader of the Government be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes50
Noes35
Majority..... 15

AYES

Dr Lee	Mr Anderson	Mr Aplin
Mr Ayres	Mr Baird	Mr Barilaro
Mr Bromhead (teller)	Mr Conolly	Mr Constance
Mr Coure	Mr Crouch	Mr Dominello
Mr Elliott	Mr Evans	Mr Fraser
Mr George	Mr Grant	Mr Gulaptis
Mr Hazzard	Mr Henskens	Mr Humphries
Mr Johnsen	Mr Kean	Mr Maguire
Mr Notley-Smith	Mr O'Dea	Mr Patterson (teller)
Mr Perrottet	Mr Piccoli	Mr Provest
Mr Roberts	Mr Rowell	Mr Sidoti
Mr Speakman	Mr Stokes	Mr Taylor
Mr Toole	Mr Tudehope	Mr Ward
Mr Williams	Ms Berejiklian	Ms Davies
Ms Gibbons	Ms Goward	Ms Hodgkinson
Ms Pavey	Ms Petinos	Ms Skinner
Ms Upton	Ms Williams	

NOES

Dr McDermott	Mr Atalla	Mr Barr
Mr Chanthivong	Mr Crakanthorp	Mr Daley
Mr Dib	Mr Foley	Mr Greenwich
Mr Harris	Mr Hoenig	Mr Kamper
Mr Lulich (teller)	Mr Lynch	Mr Mehan
Mr Minns	Mr Park	Mr Parker
Mr Piper	Mr Warren	Mr Zangari
Ms Aitchison	Ms Car	Ms Catley
Ms Doyle	Ms Finn	Ms Harrison
Ms Hay (teller)	Ms Hornery	Ms Leong
Ms McKay	Ms Mihailuk	Ms T. F. Smith
Ms Washington	Ms Watson	

PAIRS

Mr Gee

Ms K. Smith

Motion agreed to.*Motions***PREMIER, AND MINISTER FOR WESTERN SYDNEY****Censure****Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (15:29):** I move:

That this House censures the Premier for:

- (1) his politically motivated program of forced council mergers;
- (2) his failure to reform local government by not introducing integrity measures such as banning developers from elected office on councils and introducing caps on political donations and expenditure; and
- (3) failure to prevent conflicts of interest in council decision-making.

This is the day when the Premier and his Government have savaged democracy in our State. This program of forced council mergers has been an exercise conceived in political partisanship and today executed in partisanship. We should understand what has happened today. The citizens of 44 local governments have had their elected councillors and mayors sacked as of today and replaced by unelected dictators, handpicked by Premier Baird. In 23 local government areas they can expect the same treatment to follow in the weeks or months from now. This act is not in the interests of ratepayers. This program is in the interests of only the Liberal and Nationals parties.

Today we saw the greatest act of boundary rigging in Australian politics since the Joh Bjelke-Petersen's notorious Queensland gerrymander of the 1970s. What we will see in so many areas are boundaries drawn by the machine men in the Liberal Party to suit the Liberal Party's electoral interest. That is why so many backbench members of this Government who are not members of the ruling junta inside the Liberal Party have said to us, "It's Photios and Harwin, you know, who have drawn up the maps. It's Photios and Harwin, you know." This is the crudest of political manipulations; the crudest act of boundary rigging since Joh Bjelke-Petersen in the 1970s.

Let us look at a few of them. In the St George area three councils are saying, "Well, if the argument is economy of scale and capacity, we are up for a merger of the three councils in the St George district—Rockdale, Kogarah and Hurstville." The Government and Premier Baird, who speaks of capacity, economies of scale and efficiency, reject that; keep it smaller and put Rockdale together with a local government area [LGA] across a bay—across the other side of Botany Bay, separated by an airport. Why? There are too many Labor voters in Rockdale for the Liberal interest in St George and too many Labor voters in Botany for the Liberal interest in the eastern suburbs, so they draw up the gerrymander to maximise the Liberal Party's fortunes in St George and in the eastern suburbs. It is just an act of boundary rigging. Let us look now at Parramatta. Granville has been part of the city of Parramatta since 1947. No-one—not one community interest in Granville—said that they wanted to leave Parramatta City Council. They are purged because once again there are too many Labor voters.

So we get little blue-ribbon Liberal voting sections of The Hills and Hornsby shires added to Parramatta just to make sure of the result. And we get the lucrative rate bases of the Silverwater industrial estate and the Olympic Park commercial area added to Parramatta, with gerrymandered boundaries for the Liberals. So not only are the boundaries rigged for this council but also it is cashed up for all time. What do we see in Auburn? The council loses 40 per cent of its rate base—the industrial rates from Silverwater and the commercial rates from Olympic Park, which comprises 40 per cent of its rates base—and yet it keeps 89 per cent of its residents.

Those opposite are fond of quoting the Western Sydney director of the Sydney Business Chamber, David Borger. Well, they should quote him on this. He condemned the Government for creating, in an act of political partisanship, a Holroyd-Auburn-Granville council which, in his words, will be "poverty stricken". Those opposite should quote David Borger on that one. That is what is going on here. This is like some crude redistricting in Alabama, the deep south of America, where separate districts are drawn up for the well off and those on struggle street. There is a fair bit of need in Auburn, Regents Park and Berala. The council is being stripped of 40 per cent of its rates income. This revenue is being sent to a rich, cashed-up Liberal district—the city of Parramatta. And the battlers in Holroyd, Granville and Auburn are being left to fend for themselves without having the rate base to look after this needy community.

We will not stand for this. The next Labor government in New South Wales will ensure fair boundaries for Sydney's second central business district—the great city of Parramatta. I make that pledge today. I say to the

Premier, who does not even have the decency to front up for this debate, that he should understand what he is doing. This undemocratic, hyper-partisan and grotesque act of boundary rigging will not be left untouched by the next Labor government of New South Wales. The real reform agenda for local government that is needed is in the area of integrity. We need caps on donations and expenditure. Why is it that the Premier and I, every member of this Parliament and every citizen who stands for election to State Parliament, is subject to strict caps on donations and expenditure? It is thanks to a very worthy reform from the Labor Government. Yet people can run for a small ward of a suburban council where there are just no limits.

I heard the Premier today say that he is committed to integrity reforms. I lay down the following challenge: I challenge him to implement caps on donations and expenditure for this September's local government elections. If he puts those through the Parliament, to have them in place in time for the September 2016 local government elections, he will have our support. We will rush it through the Parliament on its next sitting day—through both Houses. The Labor Opposition will agree to any and all bills to accelerate passage of that vital and necessary integrity reform. We can pass it through the Parliament in its next sitting week. My challenge to the Premier is to introduce the same caps on donations and expenditure for every candidate for the 2016 and 2017 local government elections as those that apply to the Premier himself, to me and to every person who is a member of this Parliament. That is the integrity measure we need.

The third part of this motion censures the Premier for failing to prevent conflicts of interest in council decision-making. We saw that terrible reform in the first year that this Government came to office. It just let rip. It sent a message by legislation. It changed the law. It said, "If you have a conflict of interest, you can pursue it on the local council you sit on." That was the reform, and it was mind-boggling. How did the situation we saw in Auburn happen? Councils were given a great big green flashing light from Macquarie Street saying, "Let rip. Self-interest rules on local councils." And so that is what happened.

Now we see the crocodile tears of those opposite. They say they are committed to integrity but they have not dealt with conflicts of interest. How is it that Jim Daniel, a bloke facing court, knew last night what was going to happen to Bankstown City Council today? Those opposite should at least pretend they have severed their links with the member for East Hills and his campaign director. This bloke knew last night. They cobbled together the numbers to pass through an increase in height limits for that fine, upstanding citizen, one of the most upstanding money launderers and heroin traffickers this State has ever seen, Carl Trad. He is a political ally of the member for East Hills.

In Wollondilly the member for Wollondilly is establishing a business with the chair of the Campbelltown council planning committee. Who else sits on it? The father of the member for Wollondilly. Things are crook in Tallarook. Under this Government, local government is riddled with corruption from this Government's allies in municipalities across the suburbs of Sydney. That is the real reform agenda we need for local government—not this hyper-partisan, grotesque, crude, Photios-orchestrated act of boundary rigging that belongs to 1970s Queensland or 1930s Louisiana. The Premier ought to be censured by this Parliament today. If we ever thought he was just another politician, we have proof of it today. He stands condemned. [*Time expired.*]

Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) (15:41): I am happy to speak in debate on this motion because I respect the Parliament and obviously I respect the right of anyone to move a motion like this. Having said that, I can only deduce that this is a stunt. In the 12 months since the election how many questions has the Leader of the Opposition asked me about local government reform? I can tell the Parliament how many—none. So all of a sudden today the Leader of the Opposition comes into this Chamber with his confected rage. We on this side of the House know that this is about only one thing for him—it is about politics and opportunism.

We have outlined a whole range of options that are going to make a difference to ratepayers across the State. The only reason we are doing this is that we strongly believe there is an opportunity to provide more services, to provide more infrastructure and to put downward pressure on rates in local committees across New South Wales. Those opposite do not want to pay attention to this but I have outlined very clearly why we are doing this. I used one example to demonstrate the opportunities that we see here. Deniliquin and Conargo are two great communities doing great things with two councils supporting them. At the moment the chambers for those councils and the works depots for those councils are in one town—Deniliquin. We think there might be an opportunity for those two communities to come together to produce more outcomes for their communities. Those are the sorts of sensible things we expect to come out of this.

If we look across the State we see variances in development application approval times from about 40 days all the way to 110 days. We want best practice to roll out across the State. Having more staff with more responsibilities sharing best practice means we have a chance to make a big difference in local communities and the overall economy, and we think that is a good thing. More strategic thinking and having the best staff given greater responsibility is a great thing for the people of New South Wales. What we see from the Leader of the

Opposition, time and again, is absolute populism. He has no character. He does not stand up for what he believes in. I remember the debates we had in this House about the lease of Port Botany and Port Kembla. What did the Opposition do in those debates? Opposition members came into this Chamber and said, "No way, we are not interested; we are not going to agree to it."

Are Opposition members against that? Yes, they are all against it. When the member for Auburn became Leader of the Opposition he said, "I know I voted for it, but now I am against it." That is what we hear from Opposition members time and again; there is no consistency. The people of New South Wales know that Opposition members were against it. We had assets of \$3 billion on our books but we received \$5 billion—an additional \$2 billion for the people of New South Wales. Opposition members should stand up for and do the right thing by the people of New South Wales. This Government is prepared to do that but we know that Opposition members regularly oppose this Government's attempts to do the right thing.

Opposition members have opposed every saving measure that we have introduced. What have those measures meant for the people of New South Wales. Through those savings we have been able to deliver the Gonski reforms and allocate additional funding to our schools, which is what responsible governments do. All that Opposition members do is oppose this Government's proposals. When they have an opportunity to support this Government's proposals they either say, "I am for it now", or they say, "I am against it". There is no consistency and Opposition members have no character. This Government is prepared to do the right thing by the people of this State. I do not need to spend much time on poles and wires, but that is another great example of Opposition members shedding crocodile tears and campaigning against it. They wanted to deny this State \$20 billion in infrastructure. Since occupying the opposition benches they have said, "No, we do not want that. We do not want the Sydney metro."

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Marshall): Order! I call the member for Keira to order for the third time.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Do members remember the Labor Government's metro proposals? They were going to deliver the CBD Metro. What a little ripper. Opposition members have moved a motion to censure this Government when they should be censured for throwing \$500 million down the drain. That is the sort of censure motion that should be moved in this House. What a disgrace! Everywhere I went internationally I was asked, "What sort of government does that?" and I replied, "It's a very special one". Today we should be censuring Opposition members.

Rather than focusing on relevant issues Opposition members come into this Chamber, move censure motions and attempt to smear this Government. I do not know anyone who is more against public transport than members of the Opposition. They cannot stand public transport and do not want it. When the Liberal-Nationals Coalition put forward its proposals for the CBD and South East Light Rail project, Opposition members pulled out their infrastructure documents and said, "We are for the CBD and South East Light Rail project." However, after the election the member for Keira referred to several reports and Opposition members said, "That is it; it is over." They do not want the CBD and South East Light Rail project. They do not want the CBD Metro or the WestConnex project. They do not want Sydney or New South Wales to get moving, but this Government does. We want New South Wales to get to the top. New South Wales has gone from number eight to number one, which is where it belongs. New South Wales is leading on jobs, economic growth and consumer confidence.

That is the sort of New South Wales that this Government wants. In addition, under Treasurer Berejiklian, net debt has fallen and we have a cash surplus. Debt is going down, expenses are under control and we are investing in the things that matter. I am proud of what we are doing in health under our great Minister for Health. We have not only a record infrastructure program but also money for more nurses—6,000 additional front-line staff in our health system. That has come about because we have been prepared to take the hard decisions to get our budget under control and to invest the money where it is needed.

The Opposition opposed all these saving measures. Under the Labor Government debt was through the roof and it had no capacity to pay for infrastructure. This Government has done all that for the people of New South Wales. The motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition is a good example of how Opposition members approach policy. The Leader of the Opposition wants to hold this Government to account but we all remember what the Labor Government did in relation to coal seam gas. When Labor was in office it threw licences around like confetti. It gave licences to anyone who wanted one, which covered 60 per cent of the State, but it did not tell anyone in the community. Everywhere we went we found coal seam gas licences with no protections or safeguards in place.

It was left to this Government to clean up Labor's mess. We proudly bought back those coal seam licences and put protections in place. This Government is fixing all the problems left behind by Labor. The Leader of the Opposition is welcome to engage in such stunts but this Government is determined to do what is right for the

people of New South Wales. If there are things in the too-hard basket we will pick it up and resolve them if it is in the long-term interest of the people of New South Wales. The Labor Government did not do that; it just pushed them off to the side. We are prepared to deal with all the things in the too-hard basket. If the Leader of the Opposition continues to take directions from Sussex Street we will continue to get smear after smear. This Government is proud to be delivering reforms and returning integrity to government. Councils will be amalgamated to provide more opportunities for our communities because that is what a responsible government does.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (15:51): And so it comes to pass that after a 10-minute diatribe the Premier scarcely mentioned the words "local government". Not even this Premier can defend the indefensible. The Premier and everybody in New South Wales will know that today is a milestone and it should be marked. This is the day when this Premier, whose image was so carefully styled and hidden over the past five years, displayed his arrogance for all the world to see. By no stretch of the imagination can anyone describe this as reform; this is a bludgeoning of democracy and it is bargain basement politics at its best. Government backbenchers know it as they are the ones who have to go into their communities and defend the indefensible. This is one pig that they cannot put lipstick on. It is a grotesque abuse of power but, worse still, it is a lost opportunity.

Many people in New South Wales and on this side of the House want genuine local government reform. We wanted local government reform guided by the principles of an equal distribution of resources and rates, in partnership with communities and not against them, and without disregarding their views. We wanted local government reform and consideration given to a growing Sydney so we could avoid the worst international examples of broken communities. Communities of interest are important but they have been completely ignored by this Government. But we have seen none of this. What a shame and what a disgrace. Some of us are willing to take the Premier at his word because his early mutterings on local government reform were encouraging. He was going to establish an independent panel of experts to look at the important issue of local government reform.

Mr Luke Foley: Photios and Harwin.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: The Leader of the Opposition said Photios and Harwin. However, before them Professor Graham Sansom looked at these mergers and we were willing to give him the benefit of the doubt. What does he say about this brainchild of the Premier? He says that the proposed overhaul of the State councils fails a test of "good reform" and that it is a "crab-like step sideways"—I think he is being generous there. He spoke damningly of this Government and this Premier and said:

I think the government's announcement really fails the test of carefully structured strategic reform...

...some of the changes I find extremely hard to understand what on earth they are meant to achieve other than presumably some political objective.

Opposition members are not saying that; that is a statement by the Government's independent expert. We believe there are three good indicators of prospective local government reform: an equitable and equal rate base so that each citizen in every local government area is resourced equally; an equal population, or as close as possible given the rural disparities in this State; and the preservation of communities of interest. Let us see how we go against those three tests. Let us see what the Government has done, for example, to Auburn and Holroyd councils. The Government likes to trot out former Labor Minister David Borger, who is a chief cheerleader for local government amalgamations. What did he say about that bastardisation of an amalgamation? He said it will create a poverty-stricken suburb. He said that forcing the neighbouring Auburn and Holroyd councils together was nonsensical and would create a city with a low rate base, no commerce or industry and no central district. He said:

We don't want to create a council of poverty to the south of Parramatta. What we need is a united council that includes a large rate base and the ability to fund regional infrastructure.

But he has lost, the residents have lost and the gerrymander has won. Between Wollongong and Kiama councils there is a population disparity of 200,080. That was a rabbit out of the hat simply to save the member for Kiama, but it will hang around his neck and his other warren members for years to come. I have already mentioned Botany and Rockdale councils. This legislative infection will roll across the State for the next three years. It will hang around this Premier's neck for the remainder of his premiership, and it is entirely self-inflicted.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Marshall): Order! I remind the member for Keira that he is on three calls to order.

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (15:56): This censure motion should be seen for the shabby, political, attention-grabbing stunt that it is. Those opposite purport to be committed to opposing council amalgamations. But how many questions have Labor members asked in the past 12 months about council amalgamations? Zero. They have asked not a single question. If there is a vested interest, Labor is there to defend it. Who can you trust

to defend and protect overpaid politicians in this State? Labor. Who can you trust to featherbed union interests across this State? Labor. Who can you trust to defend the interests of overpaid and underworked general managers across this State? Labor.

It is little wonder Labor is defending general managers because they have formed a new union and a number of delegates are very upset about the amalgamations. For example, the general manager of Port Stephens Council, on his \$302,000 a year ratepayer-funded salary, is very upset about being disenfranchised. Perhaps the general manager of Wyong Shire Council, on his \$465,540 a year ratepayer-funded salary, is very concerned about losing his job. So is the general manager of Holroyd City Council, on his \$324,000 a year ratepayer-funded salary. But luckily for the general manager of Woollahra Municipal Council, Luke Foley is out to defend him and his \$322,793 a year ratepayer-funded salary.

Labor was not always opposed to amalgamations. In fact, those opposite were once the true believers when it came to amalgamations. In 2000 Labor amalgamated Concord and Drummoyne to form the City of Canada Bay council. Labor caused the amalgamation of the Sydney City and South Sydney councils. Labor forced the amalgamation—this is my personal favourite—and created the Clarence Valley Council. The mayor of Clarence Valley is in the Chamber today. How did he find out about it? I will tell the House about the extensive consultation that occurred in that case. He got a text message from Tony Kelly the night before. That is how the council found out about the amalgamation. Labor was so committed to it that Harry Woods, who was the Minister at the time, said, "It will benefit ratepayers."

Labor used to care about ratepayers. What has happened? What did that great defender of integrity and Labor values, Tony Kelly, who was the Minister forcing the amalgamations, have to say? He said, "I intend to change local government. I have a unique opportunity and I intend to make sure that when I am finished local government in New South Wales will be able to better serve ratepayers of this State." Even Tony Kelly wanted to look after ratepayers. The reality is that Labor has no integrity on this issue. Those opposite are hypocrites. Some 26 amalgamations occurred on their watch—amalgamations that they championed and believed in. We on this side of the House will always put the interests of ratepayers first and we will always defend better infrastructure and more services for communities at lower costs. That is exactly what this policy is about.

I am proud to stand behind the Premier and to support this policy. I am also proud to stand behind the Minister for Local Government. Those in my community and others across New South Wales are not interested in Labor's defending special interests. They are not interested in Labor's defending those poor, underpaid general managers on huge taxpayer-funded salaries. They are interested in government providing the services and infrastructure they need and deserve at a lower cost. They are not interested in hands being put in the pockets of ratepayers; they are interested in government giving the money back. That is exactly what this policy does and that is exactly what this Government will stand up for. That is why I defend the Premier.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (16:01): I seek leave to make a contribution to the debate.

Leave not granted.

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (16:02): In reply: We know a policy is in trouble when the Premier has to spend nine of his 10 minutes talking about everything but the policy in question. For nine minutes we heard about ports, electricity, rail, Gonski funding, hospitals, coal seam gas—anything and everything but local government mergers. The Premier and his colleague claimed that I and my colleagues have asked no questions about this policy issue of forced local government mergers in 12 months.

Mr David Elliott: You haven't.

Mr LUKE FOLEY: The boofhead opposite interjects. Let me quote from *Hansard*:

Mr LUKE FOLEY: My question is directed to the Premier. Will the Premier now admit that certain councils will be forced to merge against their will?

On another day, I quote:

Mr LUKE FOLEY: My question is directed to the Premier. Given that the Government has legislated to render her ineligible to sit in Parliament, changed the City of Sydney's voting system and now plans to redraw its boundaries, what will he not do to drive Sydney's Lord Mayor from elected office?

On another day, I quote:

Mr LUKE FOLEY: My question is directed to the Premier. Will the Premier introduce caps on political donations for local government elections as recommended by Dr Kerry Schott's expert panel on political donations?

On another day, I quote:

Mr LUKE FOLEY: My question is directed to the Minister for Local Government. I refer to a letter signed by the Minister to an elected mayor which says that the amalgamation of councils should only be as a result of mutual agreement, it should not be forced by State Government intervention. Why has the Minister broken his promise?

On another day there was a question from my former deputy, Ms Linda Burney, to the Minister for Local Government on forced mergers. On another day there was a question from my former deputy, Ms Linda Burney, on forced council amalgamations and the maps being drawn up before being shared with the public. On another day there was a question from the member for Strathfield to the Minister for Local Government regarding caps and donations on local government spending.

On another day there was a question from the member for Granville to the Minister for Local Government. On another day there was a question from the member for Maroubra to the Minister for Local Government. On another day there was a motion to be accorded priority moved by the member for Heffron. On another day there was a motion to be accorded priority moved by the member for Maitland. On another day there was a motion to be accorded priority moved by the member for Londonderry.

One can count on one hand the number of members of the Labor team who have not got up and asked questions and moved motions about forced council mergers. Yet the big lie comes from those opposite that we have not raised the issue once. I have just quoted chapter and verse the many occasions when members on this side of the House, including me, my former deputy, my current deputy and members of my shadow Cabinet and caucus, have stood up on behalf of the people of this State for the principle of democracy in local communities. We know what happened today: It is all about the Federal election. It is about getting the Libs off the hook in Gilmore and The Nats off the hook in New England. If you do not live in a Federal Coalition marginal seat, bad luck, the Premier will not listen to you.

The Premier had 10 minutes to state his case and he said not a word in defence of the crooked boundaries in St George, the eastern suburbs and the western suburbs; not a word in defence of the policy to rip Granville out of Parramatta and create a gerrymandered second central business district under permanent Liberal Party control; and not a word on integrity reforms. Note how the Premier would not commit to introducing vital integrity reforms of caps on donations and expenditure for this year's local government elections. Nothing tells us more about the agenda here—which is about the Libs and the Nats controlling local government in New South Wales—than the refusal to introduce the same caps on donations and expenditure that the Premier, I and all of us in this Parliament are subject to.

The next Labor government of New South Wales will allow communities to determine their future, and, mark my words, that will include the right for citizens in forcibly merged areas to vote on demerging. And we will listen to the democratic voice of the people and abide by their decision. Unlike The Nationals, we will stand up for people in the Monaro, in Port Stephens, in Gundagai, in Wellington, in Dubbo, in Oberon, in Orange, in Blayney and in Bathurst because we know The Nats have sold them out. The Premier deserves to be censured. *[Time expired.]*

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Marshall): The question is that the motion of censure moved by the Leader of the Opposition be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes34
Noes51
Majority.....17

AYES

Dr McDermott
Mr Chanthivong
Mr Dib
Mr Harris
Mr Lulich (teller)
Mr Minns
Mr Warren
Ms Car
Ms Finn
Ms Hornery
Ms Mihailuk
Ms Watson

Mr Atalla
Mr Crakanthorp
Mr Foley
Mr Hoenig
Mr Lynch
Mr Park
Mr Zangari
Ms Catley
Ms Harrison
Ms Leong
Ms T. F. Smith

Mr Barr
Mr Daley
Mr Greenwich
Mr Kamper
Mr Mehan
Mr Parker
Ms Aitchison
Ms Doyle
Ms Hay (teller)
Ms McKay
Ms Washington

NOES

Dr Lee	Mr Anderson	Mr Aplin
Mr Ayres	Mr Baird	Mr Barilaro
Mr Bromhead (teller)	Mr Connolly	Mr Constance
Mr Coure	Mr Crouch	Mr Dominello
Mr Elliott	Mr Evans	Mr Fraser
Mr George	Mr Grant	Mr Gulaptis
Mr Hazzard	Mr Humphries	Mr Johnsen
Mr Kean	Mr Maguire	Mr Notley-Smith
Mr O'Dea	Mr Patterson (teller)	Mr Perrottet
Mr Piccoli	Mr Piper	Mr Provest
Mr Roberts	Mr Rowell	Mr Sidoti
Mr Speakman	Mr Stokes	Mr Taylor
Mr Toole	Mr Tudehope	Mr Ward
Mr Williams	Ms Berejiklian	Ms Davies
Ms Gibbons	Ms Goward	Ms Hancock
Ms Hodgkinson	Ms Pavey	Ms Petinos
Ms Skinner	Ms Upton	Ms Williams

PAIRS

Mr Robertson	Mr Gee	Ms Haylen
Mr Henskens		

Motion negatived.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Marshall): Orders of the Day (Committee Reports) will now be proceeded with.

*Committees***LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE****Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 18/56**

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Marshall): The question is that the House take note of the report.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (16:15:0): I thank the House for the opportunity to speak about the Legislation Review Committee's eighteenth digest for the Fifty-sixth Parliament. The committee commented on six of the 10 bills introduced into Parliament last week and one regulation. I will speak about the committee's comments on three of those bills. The committee highlighted several issues in relation to the Crimes (High Risk Offenders) Amendment Bill 2016. The bill adds further violent offences to those that can lead to an offender being subject to continued detention or extended supervision once their sentence of imprisonment ends.

In 2006 the then Legislation Review Committee considered the primary bill that established the continued detention and extended supervision framework. At that time, the committee raised concerns about the potential impacts of the scheme on deprivation of liberty through arbitrary detention, and the departure from the criminal burden of proof in determining whether to continue detention. The former committee also questioned whether continued detention would constitute a de facto double jeopardy on a convicted individual. The current committee reiterated these concerns, but noted that this particular bill is largely technical in nature. The committee also observed that the bill will extend to offences committed before its commencement and persons in prison before that date. The committee referred this issue to the Parliament.

The committee raised two issues with the Emergency Services Levy Insurance Monitor Bill 2016, which establishes a new Emergency Services Levy Insurance Monitor with various advisory, monitoring, investigation and enforcement functions. The committee referred to Parliament provisions that potentially impact on a person's right against self-incrimination by requiring them to provide certain information in spite of this privilege. The committee noted the bill provides that the monitor is not subject to the control or direction of any Minister. However, the bill also states that the Minister administering the Act may publish a general direction in the *Government Gazette*, which the monitor must comply with. The committee referred this issue to Parliament to consider whether such guidance should be subject to parliamentary scrutiny.

The Terrorism (Police Powers) Amendment (Investigative Detention) Bill 2016 will authorise the arrest, detention and questioning of persons suspected of being involved in recent or imminent terrorist attacks. The committee raised a number of concerns in relation to this bill, including that individuals may be arrested, detained and questioned without being charged and such individuals would not be taken before a court as soon as practicable, as is regularly the case. The committee also flagged the broad definition of a terrorism suspect and noted that the definition includes retrospective acts. The committee observed that suspects may be detained for up to four days by the police and up to 14 days with the authorisation of the court.

In addition, the committee was concerned that some persons between 14 and 18 years of age could be subject to detention under the bill and that contact with specified legal representatives may be prohibited in some cases, with the authorisation of the court. However, the committee also acknowledged some of the safeguards in the bill, including that a senior police officer, independent of the investigation, is required to review regularly whether the detention should continue. Various safeguards relating to minors and other vulnerable persons will also apply in the circumstances. Nevertheless, the committee referred the bill to Parliament for further consideration as to whether the impacts on rights and liberties are proportionate to the circumstances. That concludes my remarks on this digest. I thank the committee staff and members for their input. I commend the digest to the House.

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (16:18:4): I speak on behalf of the Labor Opposition in contributing to debate on the Legislation Review Committee's eighteenth report of the Fifty-sixth Parliament. I thank the secretariat who support the committee. They continue to do a very professional job assisting the committee in its deliberations. In relation to the current digest, I simply add that the Labor Opposition moved a motion in committee in relation to one of the regulations, the Workers Compensation Amendment (Return to Work Assistance) Regulation 2016. The committee had observed the following:

The regulation prescribes certain circumstances in which an employer responsible for work injuries is not liable to pay compensation to the relevant employee.

The Labor Opposition moved to strike out the words after that which simply sought to explain away the problems the committee had identified with the regulation. The Labor Opposition sought to refer the matter back to the Minister. The motion was lost on the numbers. Nevertheless, as usual we thought it was important to make our point when the committee identifies problems with regulations or bills and the Government majority on the committee seeks to sweep them away. I also make a point about the work of the committee. It is now the practice of the committee—and it is a fine initiative—that when it identifies an infringement of any rights or liberties under the Act it is commenting on it refers them to the relevant Minister for comment. At the end of our March deliberations this year, the committee had written on 10 separate occasions to Ministers about various bills that were before the House.

As of 3 May, we had received only one reply. That was from the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation, who provided his usual considered and prompt response. I note that for the record. But that is only one out of 10. As of 10 May, we had received only one more response. The committee is waiting on more responses and I note that most Ministers generally fail to refer to any comment made by the committee in its deliberations when speaking to bills that they introduce in the House. Again, I remind the House that the committee does important work vetting legislation to protect the rights and liberties of the people of this State. The Government has a majority on the committee. I think it is less than respectful for the Government to ignore the work of the committee and fail to respond when the committee writes to Ministers, and for Ministers to fail to refer to the reports of the committee when they speak to bills in this House. I will say more about that practice in the future. [*Time expired.*]

Report noted.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Marshall): Orders of the Day (Committee Reports) having concluded, the House will now consider the matter of public importance.

Matter of Public Importance

INTERNATIONAL NURSES DAY

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (16:23:5): I am pleased to present this matter of public importance to recognise International Nurses Day, which is celebrated on 12 May each year. This date is an appropriate time to recognise the invaluable work of nurses as it is the birthday of Florence Nightingale, arguably the world's most well-known nurse and an historical figure who helped shape the image of nursing we have today. I also recognise a couple of former nurses, the member for Lake Macquarie and the member for Port Macquarie, who now sit in this place and care for their community in a different way. International Nurses Day provides an

opportunity to reflect on the vital work and round-the-clock care that nurses provide to more than 1.5 million patients in New South Wales public hospitals each year.

New South Wales is home to more than 48,000 nurses and midwives who work within our health system to provide 24-hour a day care, support and guidance to their patients. This care does not go unnoticed, with nursing continually ranked as one of the most trusted and respected occupations. This is confirmed each year in the Roy Morgan Image of Professions Survey. In this survey nursing has been ranked the most ethical and honest profession for 22 years in a row. In the latest edition of this survey, conducted only a few weeks ago, more than 90 per cent of respondents ranked nurses number one, a figure that has been growing in recent years—perhaps not something politicians or lawyers can lay claim to.

International Nurses Day is also a time to recognise those groups that advocate on behalf of our hardworking nurses and midwives. The NSW Nurses and Midwives Association was founded in 1931 with the support of well-known feminist Jessie Street, who saw the improvement of nurses' wages and conditions as a feminist cause, and quite rightly so. As people who care for their community, it is no surprise that the nursing community and its association has not been afraid to speak out on wider issues in society, including the health impacts of climate change, the importance of paid parental leave, the ongoing fight for a fair tax system and the negative consequences of a privatised health system.

Nurses heal us when we are sick and work to heal our society as well, and I thank them for their efforts. Nurses have come a long way in New South Wales. Together they have achieved professional rates of pay that reflect their skills and importance to the overall economy. They have fought for nurse-to-patient ratios, which ensure a higher standard of care and they have helped to establish the role of a nurse practitioner in New South Wales, the first State in Australia to recognise the additional role that nurses can play in alleviating pressure on our health system.

I know that nurses across New South Wales today are fighting against the Turnbull Government's \$57 billion in cuts to health, including the \$650 million cut from Medicare bulk-billing incentives, such as the GP tax by stealth, and the fees for blood tests, scans and pap smears. Nurses know that this GP tax by stealth will push more people away from their general practitioners and primary health care, and into the already clogged emergency rooms in our overstretched hospitals. They see the impact this has on patient care as people defer getting treatment for longer and longer until they need urgent and much more expensive care.

The additional fees that the Turnbull Government will impose on people seeking blood tests, scans and pap smears will result in patients delaying regular testing, which could leave them vulnerable to diseases that could have been more easily prevented if caught early. It is not just the Turnbull Government that is not watching out for nurses. Only a few weeks ago the New South Wales Government made the decision to remove the requirement for registered nurses in aged care facilities to be on duty 24/7. This has been compounded by the Federal Government's \$1.2 billion cut in funding from nursing home residents with complex needs.

I know that families across New South Wales are comforted to know that their loved ones are cared for by staff who are able to respond to any emergency. These are our nurses. In time that confidence will erode if cuts like this continue. The privatisation of disability services has also put a great number of vulnerable members of our community under a cloud and with deep concern for their future. Again, it will be the nurses who step up to fill the need. International Nurses Day is an excellent opportunity to reflect on the future of health care both under the New South Wales Government and the Federal Government. Any move that limits the opportunity for patients to be cared for by skilled and respected nurses is to be viewed with concern; unfortunately, there are too many instances of this as we speak. I thank nurses who are working now and I thank all nurses who have worked to care for our sick, our injured and also our communities.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): It being 4.30 p.m. the matter of public importance is interrupted for discussion on the 10,000 signature petition.

Petitions

LIQUOR LAWS REFORM

Discussion

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:29): I stand here with all of my people, or at least a good few of them in the gallery, to present this petition to keep Sydney open, which demands smarter solutions for our city—solutions that will keep Sydney safe and open. Nearly 12,000 people have signed this petition—a huge number—which shows the dedication and passion of Sydney's music, arts and creative communities, venues and businesses within Sydney as well as Sydney locals. The tragic nature of the incidents that took place in our city that the Government used as justification for the introduction of these laws are undeniable. Let us be clear: There are

serious concerns about alcohol-related violence and antisocial behaviour that need to be addressed in our community.

The thousands of people who have signed this petition to keep Sydney open know there is a need to address these concerns. They do not want to be unsafe on Sydney streets, but the answer is not to punish everyone. The answer is not to say that we want to lock down our city and our nightlife. We do not want to see extreme violence or even drunken dickheads and drunken behaviour on our streets. But we know that punishing everyone for the offensive behaviour of a few, for shutting down our vibrant nightlife and local businesses rather than targeting the specific problem, is not the answer. The Greens had been advocating smarter solutions for dealing with alcohol-related violence, regulation of the liquor lobby and the zoning and density in our city long before the Sydney lockouts were introduced.

We opposed the imposition of the lockouts at the time because we saw—and we know—that it punished the whole community rather than addressed the specific problem; it shut down our nightlife and our city. But just like the thousands of Sydneysiders who have spoken out against the lockouts—many of whom I acknowledge in the gallery today and I thank them for being here—we have been ignored by the Government. They will note the attention being paid by the Baird Government in the Chamber right now to the thousands of people who signed this petition and to the tens of thousands of people who spoke out on social media about this. Why has the Government refused to trial alternative measures? Why have we not seen the introduction of 24-hour transport on weekends to assist people who want to get out of the city? Why have we not talked about zoning restrictions that limit venue size or venue density? And why, oh why, are the casinos exempt? Perhaps Casino Mike has the answer for that one.

We have seen successive New South Wales governments minimising constraints on the alcohol industry and instead punishing the people. How convenient that the lockout boundaries happen to miss Sydney's existing casino, The Star. One may have noticed that they also conveniently etch around Barangaroo, the site of the city's next gambling hub. It is not hard to see why the Premier has been nicknamed Casino Mike. The Government is punishing entertainment venues, small bars and people who just want to be up all night for good fun. I agree the statistics show that there are now fewer violent incidents in the lockout zones, but that is because our streets are empty. It is because the Government has shut down our vibrant nightlife and our after-hours city is now a ghost town. There are better ways to stop drunken violence and antisocial behaviour. There are ways to address this and keep our vibrant, pumping, exciting city a place where people can visit and lose themselves to dance, just like it used to be. Do people remember that?

We do not want a *Midnight City*—no offence to M83; we want to be a city with all-night disco parties where we can dance the way we feel. I need to give a shout out to everyone who has done tremendous work in collecting signatures for this petition—12,000 and they are still coming. I expect we will see another debate in this House very soon to keep Sydney open because the signatures keep coming in. It is impossible to name everyone who has been a part of this campaign, but I acknowledge the work of Tyson Koh from Keep Sydney Open, along with the Keep Sydney Open volunteers. I thank the many musicians, artists, local businesses and local venues, many of whom rallied to collect signatures for the petition to establish this discussion.

Although it might be a stretch to say that we built this city on rock 'n' roll, nobody can deny that our music, arts and creative communities provide our city with a beating heart and they are suffering under the punitive lockout laws that were enforced across Sydney's central business district, Kings Cross and Oxford Street. Our music, arts and creative communities, and the locals who fight for them, are not ready to give up. We will fight for our right to party late into the night if we want to and the New South Wales Government must not stop the thousands of people who signed this petition, the thousands of people who rallied on our streets and the tens of thousands of people who engaged on social media to share their opposition to the lockouts.

We love the nightlife; we love to boogie and we know that there are integrated solutions that will keep our streets safe. While these days I might be going to bed early, we do not want Premier Mike Baird to tell us what time we should go to bed. The Greens do not support the Sydney lockouts as we believe they place onerous restrictions on every member of our community. Hundreds of thousands of people have made submissions to the lockout review and these people must be heard. The Baird Government must pay attention to them. We must let it happen. Do not lock Sydney down. Keep it open; keep it safe.

[*Interruption from gallery*]

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Melanie Gibbons): Order! I remind those in the public gallery that the Parliament does not tolerate clapping in the Chamber and I ask that everyone resist the urge to clap in the future. I thank the public gallery for its understanding. The audience has been very good so far, so I thank them for that.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (16:34): It gives me great pleasure to make a brief contribution to this discussion. The New South Wales Government recognises there is strong community interest in the regulatory measures applying to licensed premises in the Sydney central business district [CBD] and Kings Cross. That interest comes from people who work and perform in licensed venues, patrons and others who are also involved directly and indirectly in Sydney's night-time economy—taxi drivers, Uber drivers, fast-food outlets, retailers, convenience stores, cultural institutes and landmarks. Sydney after dark is as diverse as it is unique, with its coveted harbour-side setting.

The broad level of interest in Sydney after dark is reflected in the 10,000 signatories who signed the Keep Sydney Open petition that was lodged by the member for Newtown. That high level of interest is also reflected in the 1,800 submissions that were made to the independent statutory review of the liquor laws, which is being conducted by the Hon. Ian Callinan, AC. Most of those submissions are now available on the liquor law review website. Mr Callinan has been asked to review a number of liquor law reforms that were introduced in 2014 to help improve community safety. These reforms extend to the 1.30 a.m. lockout and 3.00 a.m. last drinks applying to licensed premises in the Sydney CBD and Kings Cross precincts, the 10.00 p.m. restriction on all takeaway liquor sales and the risk-based licence fee scheme applying to all licensed premises.

The review's terms of reference include an examination of the impacts of the reforms on public safety, as well as the impacts on business, patrons and the broader community at large. The Callinan review is being guided by evidence, and by the experience of the people of Sydney. In addition to receiving a large number of submissions, Mr Callinan has also been meeting with key stakeholders to hear firsthand about their experiences, both good and bad, and the impact of the regulatory reforms. This is consistent with the Government's intention that the review be independent, open, transparent and conducted at arm's length from Government.

The Government's series of roundtables, which are looking at ways to improve the safety and vibrancy of Sydney's night-time economy, will also provide a report to the Callinan review next month. Mr Callinan will provide his report to the Government in August. The Government will consider the findings and recommendations made by the Callinan review before providing a formal response later in 2016. And if there is still any need to state the obvious, the Government will not pre-empt the review's findings, which will be based on evidence and, of course, the experiences of those who have participated in the review. Again, I thank the member for Newtown for lodging this petition and for providing another avenue for those with a strong interest in Sydney's after-dark economy and night-life to be heard.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (16:38): I make a brief contribution on behalf of the Opposition in respect of this important petition. I congratulate the member for Newtown on bringing this petition to the House and all those who have signed it. One of the very good initiatives over the past few years of this Parliament, and this Government, to give credit where it is due, is the provision that allows 10,000 signatories to bring an urgent matter before the House for debate. To have a petition signed by 10,000 people is no mean feat.

I remember when I was a Minister, first as Minister for Roads and later as Minister for Police, in a former Government discussing alcohol-fuelled violence on many occasions with the police and other stakeholders. There is no doubt that, since the discovery of alcohol, alcohol and testosterone have been a very poor mix. There was a problem in certain areas of Sydney and in certain areas of New South Wales with, and I call them this because I think there is no better phrase, drunken yobbos misbehaving—hurting other people, ruining property and ruining other people's nights out, amongst other things.

In 2008 Premier Nathan Rees took the bull by the horn. He introduced measures to make licenced venues more safe. I remember that within 12 months of those reforms being enacted the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research issued a report that said there had been something like a 30 per cent fall in on-licence alcohol-fuelled assaults. That was a good measure and it was supported on a bipartisan basis. The challenge then became how to deal with off-licence premises. In areas such as Kings Cross I think there were just too many drunken people in a confined space with no management. It was a recipe for disaster. Unfortunately for all of us, some of those disasters occurred.

I do think, without being too political, that the great flaw in these lockout laws is that they were conceived and introduced in haste. Premier Barry O'Farrell recalled Parliament and we all rushed back here in January to debate them with very little community consultation. It has been that lack of consultation, as much as anything, that has led to great concerns, and there are serious concerns. I remember a lovely fellow who lived in my electorate whose name was John and who ran a newsagency on Oxford Street. As soon as the lockout laws were introduced he came to see me and he said, "This is going to kill my business. I rely on passing trade at night to keep the business alive." That business has gone now. I think he just closed the door and walked out. So there is a problem, and we as a Legislature have a responsibility to look at this, to do something about it and to get the balance right; and we are committed to doing that.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (16:41): I welcome the many people with us in the gallery today who are here to listen to this discussion, and I thank them for their strong advocacy in getting this petition to 10,000 signatures. I thank them all for the way in which they engaged with politicians and the community to raise awareness of the impacts created as a result of the lockdown laws. I will start where the member for Maroubra finished by saying that of course we are dealing with legislation that was rushed through this Parliament and that was imposed in my electorate without any consultation. Indeed we do know that it has had impacts.

I welcome the fact that the Government is now taking an evidence-based approach to the review, and I thank the member for Drummoyne for his very measured contribution to this debate. I thank the Government for the way in which it is engaging with the sector to improve these laws. I thank the member for Newtown for her strong commitment to improving these laws and Sydney's night-life. More than 10,000 people signed this petition, about the same number attended the Keep Sydney Open rally in February, and constituents continue to express to me how Sydney's night-life is suffering as a result of the lockdown laws.

The Live Music Office reports that live performance venues in the lockdown zone have lost 40 per cent in revenue from gigs, and these venues have decreased spending on live performance by 15 per cent. There are fewer places to go, with live music venues like the Flinders, the Backroom, FBI Social, Spectrum and Q Bar having closed; and I understand that the 1.30 a.m. lockdown now acts as a closing time. Sydney is an attractive place to live and visit partly because of its arts and culture scenes, which are heavily supported by the night-time economy. If bands and artists cannot get gigs, they will move elsewhere. If the night-time economy becomes mediocre, fewer people will move here or visit.

I acknowledge that there have been public safety benefits from the restrictions, with a drop in hospitalisations and assaults, and believe that we can improve the laws in a way to maintain these benefits while allowing night-life to flourish. A number of restrictions apply in the inner city, including the 1.30 a.m. lockdown, the 3.00 a.m. cessation of service, a freeze on new liquor licences, temporary and long-term banning orders, identification [ID] scanners in Kings Cross, the three strikes policy, responsible service of alcohol [RSA] marshal requirements, risk-based licensing and drink limits. Many studies have shown that blanket lockdowns do little to curb violence and that earlier closing times reduce assaults. Interestingly, the 1.30 a.m. lockdown is reported to be doing the most damage to Sydney's night-life.

Venues that promote a rich social fabric for our city that do not contribute to violence and antisocial behaviour should not be subject to the same restrictions as those with a history of violence and poor management. A more sophisticated approach to dealing with outlet density than the liquor freeze is needed, which in the environment of lockdowns has prevented much-needed diversity. Instead we need saturation zones to enable new and different venues to open while preventing hotspots from emerging. Licensing should be renewable to encourage good management. I have long supported laws to reduce violence and antisocial behaviour associated with late-night trading. However, I opposed the lockdowns because I was concerned that they went too far. It has now been more than two years and it is clear that the laws need improvement to ensure that Sydney has a safe, civilised, diverse and vibrant night life scene. I support the petition and commit to working towards this goal.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (16:44): By leave, I speak in debate on the lockdown laws. The amount of pressure this issue has placed on this Parliament and on all political parties has been remarkable. The result has been onerous for the Sydney community. It is important to remember that at the time this debate was taking place, it was supported by News Limited and the *Daily Telegraph*, Fairfax and the *Sydney Morning Herald*, the Labor Party, and the Liberal Party. I am proud to say that the Independents and The Greens were the only ones that voted against this legislation and we are continuing with that campaign.

When we voted against the legislation, there was a tsunami of criticism. The legislation was supported by every major media outlet. There was a huge amount of opposition to the lockdown laws and the range of provisions that were introduced as a result of the tragic circumstances that occurred in Kings Cross. It is important that the legislation be reviewed and we will have a review, thanks to members of the public. The Government has realised there is opposition from the community, the business sector and people who are fighting for their right to party. Those people are having their say in this petition. Even though we are having this debate today, the Government saw the thousands and thousands of petitions.

I welcome the comments of the member for Drummoyne about the review. It is an opportunity for the Government to save face and for us to make it clear that the lockdown laws are not working. The balance is not right. I welcome the comments of the Labor Party member for Maroubra. We heard an important statement today when he said that Labor must get the balance right. Until this point, members in this place have said there is no going back; we are saving lives; we are stopping people from being killed. We must have a more nuanced debate that recognises that the balance is not right. All of us resolve to do that in a calm and respectful way that includes the families, medical practitioners, police, and emergency service workers who have been involved in this debate.

We must recognise that this legislation is flawed. As has been highlighted, people are enraged that the casino was excluded. It demonstrates that the law reflects power rather than good public policy. As the member for Balmain representing the inner west, I am committed to do my best with all members of Parliament and to work with goodwill to ensure this review is successful. I call on members of the public to make submissions to the review inquiry. It is our opportunity to make the Government come to its senses and to make Sydney the live, vibrant, powerful and passionate place we know it can and should be.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Melanie Gibbons): I thank the people in the gallery for their understanding of the procedures of the House. Discussion of the 10,000 petition having concluded, the House will return to the matter of public importance.

Matter of Public Importance

INTERNATIONAL NURSES DAY

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (16:48): On International Nurses Day we thank the 49,000 nurses and midwives for the skill and compassion they bring to their work in public hospitals and public health facilities around the State. International Nurses Day, held on 12 May, commemorates the birthday of the world's most famous nurse, Florence Nightingale. The theme for 2016 is Nurses: a Force for Change: Improving Health Systems' Resilience. International Nurses Day follows 2016 International Midwives Day, held on 5 May, which recognises women and newborns, who are the heart of midwifery.

More than 2,000 graduate nurses and midwives, including 40 Aboriginal graduates, have begun careers this year at 132 New South Wales Hospitals and health services, with more than one quarter working in rural and regional hospitals, and that is great news for regional New South Wales. Prior to coming to Government in March 2011, the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals promised to boost the nursing and midwifery workforce by 2,475 in its first four-year term. There are now 5,300 extra nurses and midwives working in the New South Wales public health system, taking the State's nursing and midwifery workforce to more than 49,000.

I take this opportunity to thank the nurses and midwives at the Manning Base Hospital in the Myall Lakes electorate. They do an outstanding job, often in difficult circumstances, as do all nurses across New South Wales. It is interesting to note that in the 10 years up to 2014, the number of nurses injured on duty was just over 46,000. In the same period, 16 nurses were killed on duty. When that is compared to other emergency services, not including the Police Force or Fire and Rescue NSW, the next highest statistic is 6,500 people that were injured on duty and 10 that were killed on duty. Those other services include Rural Fire Service, ambulance, Corrective Services, State Emergency Service and a number of others. It is interesting to note that a parliamentary committee is looking at the sentencing of assailants of emergency workers, including those I mentioned, and nurses will also be included.

Nurses are at the front line. They often deal with people who are highly agitated, have a mental illness, or have drugs in their systems. In every sense of the word, they are at the front line, and they should be recognised. Nurses are the backbone and foundation in any health facility in New South Wales, whether it be the general public hospital, a psychiatric unit or other units in health. The doctors rely on them to find out what is happening in the hospital or medical institution 24 hours a day. The nurses listen to what their patients are saying, how it affects them and they are able to convey that information to the doctors. They do a fantastic job across the State and doctors would not be able to do their work without them.

In the Myall Lakes electorate, the health sector is the number one employer of nurses, whether they work in public hospitals, with general practitioners or in private facilities. The community relies upon the expertise and skills of nurses in all of those facilities. They exercise their expertise and skills every day, often in trying circumstances. On this day, International Nurses Day, we recognise and thank our nurses.

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (16:52): I endorse the comments of the member for Port Stephens and the member for Myall Lakes, and add my voice to the discussion on this matter of public importance, which is the annual celebration of International Nurses Day. We know that the work of nurses in our society is vital, whether it is emergency ward nursing staff caring for people in acute need, midwifery nurses preparing expectant mums to deliver newborn babies, or respite and palliative care nurses who are looking after people with long-term and often terminal illnesses. We owe much to the nurses of New South Wales. They carry out back-breaking work under some of the most stressful circumstances one can imagine.

They work long hours, overnight, on public holidays and throughout the weekend. They do this because they are devoted to the care of people who are in need. They are devoted to the principles of providing universal, world-class health care to any person who requires it. I have been fighting alongside the Nurses and Midwives Association, especially Blue Mountains nurses, for many years. I want to ensure that nurses are paid a good wage, are given respect and dignity in the workplace by their employers, and that patient care outcomes and safe nurse

to patient ratios are front of mind for hospital and nursing home administrators, not the subject of budget bottom lines and profit margins.

The work of nurses is not made easier by the agenda of conservative governments such as the Baird Government. The Baird Government is cutting services in local hospitals and is failing to legislate for registered nurses in aged-care facilities 24/7. It is presiding over chaotic emergency wards and chronic understaffing of acute mental health units and making it easier for private nursing home operators to cut costs and lower patient care standards. It is timely on International Nurses Day for members of this House to reflect upon their own role in supporting the good work of nurses. We should not be looking to make the work of nurses more difficult; we should not be turning a blind eye to the needs of patients; and we should be doing everything we can to support the wonderful people who dedicate their working lives to caring for others. So thank you to the nurses and on International Nurses Day know that you have the support and admiration of your communities and society more broadly.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (16:54): In reply, I thank members representing the electorates of Myall Lakes and Blue Mountains for their contributions to this matter of public importance, International Nurses Day. I endorse the comments of the member for Myall Lakes who said that nurses are very much on the front line of our health system and are often placed at risk. He said they need to be acknowledged not only for their courage and bravery in this setting but also for the care they provide. I also very much endorse the comments of my friend and colleague, the member for Blue Mountains. She said that nurses work hard doing backbreaking work. She also said that quality of care is critical but it is at risk under the current Federal and State conservative governments due to significant cuts to our health system.

We need to have comfort in our health system that quality models of care drive good patient outcomes. It is our nurses who drive these important ratios and quality checks and balances in the system. They are the ones at the front line who have to cope with limited resources day in, day out to try to achieve the best outcomes for people who are at their most vulnerable. On International Nurses Day we thank our nurses for what they do, the care they provide and their ongoing commitment to the health of our community.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Melanie Gibbons): The matter of public importance having concluded, community recognition statements will now be proceeded with.

Community Recognition Statements

MAKAYLA AND KYE CORNALL, WORLD BAREFOOT CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (16:57): I inform the House that Cundletown sister and brother Makayla and Kye Cornall have been selected to represent Australia in the World Barefoot Championships in Wisconsin in August. Both skiers were selected in the Australian side following the national championships where Makayla finished second in the junior girls and Kye third in the open men's. Kye also represented Australia in the junior boy's division at the world titles finishing third overall. The Cornalls train almost every day on the Dawson River at Cundletown, a magnificent tributary of the Manning River and the Manning Valley. I congratulate them both on their selection.

HUNTER REGION BOTANIC GARDENS THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (16:58): I wish a happy thirtieth birthday to a wonderful asset that sits within Port Stephens and benefits the entire Hunter region. Last week I was privileged to attend the thirtieth anniversary celebration for the Hunter Region Botanic Gardens where the history and importance of the gardens were recognised, as were its major financial supporters, Hunter Water and Tomago Aluminium. When one visits the botanic gardens, it is difficult to imagine that everything you see there now was not there 30 years ago.

The Hunter Region Botanic Gardens are cared for by more than 100 volunteers, who design, plant and care for the themed gardens, cultivate rare and endangered plants, collect and protect seeds, and maintain and expand more than six kilometres of walking tracks. They run numerous events throughout the year including a children's discovery day and school group activities. I congratulate and thank the current chairman, Kevin Stokes, his committee and the army of volunteers whose hard work, vision and energy, over the past 30 years, have cultivated and conserved Hunter plant species for the benefit of current and future generations. Happy thirtieth birthday Hunter Region Botanic Gardens. May you flourish and prosper for many more years.

LIBERATION OF SHUSHI ANNIVERSARY

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (16:59): Last Monday was of particular significance to people of Armenian background in my electorate, and beyond. On 9 May 1992 during the quest for achieving freedom and independence from Azerbaijan, the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh, or Artsakh as it is known in Armenian,

liberated the town of Shushi. Shushi, which is 600 metres above sea level, is just five kilometres south of the heavily populated capital of the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh, Stepanakert. When fighting broke out in the region, the Azerbaijani military stronghold at the time used the high ground to shell the capital, where thousands of civilians lived. To regain control of Shushi was a momentous task for the Armenians, which included soldiers climbing up the cliff sides of the town unexpectedly.

Movements for independence can be both peaceful and tragic, unfortunately involving war and death. In that context, I acknowledge the importance and significance of the liberation of Shushi for the Armenians, and the integral role it played in helping to establish an autonomous Nagorno-Karabakh, which celebrates its twenty-fifth anniversary of independence this year. I also note that the Parliamentary Armenian Friendship Group has supported the rights to self-determination of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh, and expressed strong concern at recent Azeri aggression in the region.

WOLLONGONG SPORTING GROUPS FUNDING

Ms NOREEN HAY (Wollongong) (17:00): I recognise a number of Wollongong sporting groups that have been successful in their application for funding from the 2016 Local Sport Grant Program. I am pleased to see that funding is to be distributed amongst a diverse range of clubs and organisations. From sports field security fencing to timing equipment and football ground upgrades, a vast variety of skills, interests and age groups have been catered for. I take this opportunity to extend my congratulations to: Wollongong Olympic Football Club and club president Chris Agno, Wollongong United Football Club Inc. and president Peter Vrtkovski, Illawarra Dragon Boat Club and committee member Sue Humphreys, Athletics Wollongong Inc. and President Michael McClelland, Illawarra Division Rugby League Inc. and manager Chris Bannerman, and Country Rugby League of NSW and regional administrator coordinator Angela O'Toole. I look forward to seeing the results from this funding, and I hope it will assist to increase regular and ongoing participation opportunities in sport and active recreation in Wollongong.

TRIBUTE TO JESSICA CLARK

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (17:01): There are no limits to stopping some people from doing what they love, and for Jessica Clark, these words could not be any truer. Jessica Clark, who is 17 years old, became visually impaired as a result of chemotherapy to treat eye cancer at the age of 10 months, but she has not let that stop her from dominating the courts in goalball. Goalball is a sport designed specifically for visually impaired athletes, and consists of a team of three who score goals using a ball with bells embedded on the inside. Jessica's natural talent for the sport is inherent as she played only approximately five games before being selected for the New South Wales Junior team in the National Championships.

Since then, Jessica has represented Australia in the Youth World Championships in Colorado Springs, and taken part in five national championships, three Australian invitational cups, four New South Wales State Championships, the World Youth Championships and is currently in the squad representing Australia with the ultimate aim of competing once again in the United States of America. And would you believe that she has achieved all of this in just four years? To cap that off, this year, Jessica is one of 59 recipients of the Variety Scholarship Program which provides assistance to talented children who are disadvantaged or living with a disability, to achieve their full potential and to follow their dreams. Jessica's achievements are incredible, and prove to us all that with hard work and determination, the sky is not the limit. I congratulate Jessica on her wonderful achievement, and wish her good luck as she works towards representing Australia once again.

JAMES CONNOLLY AND SEAN MAC DIARMIDA

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (17:02): I recognise that today, 12 May, is the 100th anniversary of the execution, or to use a better phrase, the murder by the British military of James Connolly and Seán Mac Diarmada. One hundred years ago they were the last two surviving signatories of the Proclamation of the Irish Republic which had been read out on the steps of the Dublin general post office to commence the Easter Uprising. They were shot by a firing squad. Connolly had already been injured in the fighting and had to be tied to a chair to be shot. They were shot as a result of court martials which were a complete sham—the documents that relate to the court martials show there was one page of documents for each of their murders. Connolly at the time was the commandant of the Dublin Brigade of what had been the Irish Volunteers and became the Irish Republican Army. He was the military commander of the republican forces at the general post office. Both are now celebrated as heroes and martyrs for Irish freedom. They are both heroes to those of us who want a 32 county Ireland. Our time will come: Tíocfaidh ár lá.

WRAP WITH LOVE

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (17:03): I offer my congratulations to a wonderful group of volunteers who I had the pleasure of meeting recently. Wrap with Love is a knitting group who meet once a

week at Yamba making rugs for those less fortunate within our society. The group has been going since 1995 and in conjunction with a similar group in Maclean make an average of 400 rugs a year. Every couple of months the rugs are bundled up and are transported free of charge by Blanchards Haulage of Grafton to the Wrap with Love centre in Sydney where they are despatched to those in need. This is a truly wonderful group who are giving back to those in need.

SECONDARY STUDENT LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (17:04): I recognise the Maitland students who have participated in the Secondary Student Leadership Program in the New South Wales Parliament over recent months. The program is a great opportunity for student leaders from all over New South Wales to come together to discuss leadership, become aware of democratic processes and experience the environment of Parliament House and Government House. I sincerely congratulate on their promotion to student leader and thank for attending the program Lucy Gooch and Ruby Bell from All Saints College, St Mary's Campus; Olivia Cowie, Freya Proctor, Mitchell Budden and Jackson Woodbine from Maitland Grossman High School; Thomas Wright, Nathan Markey, Chelsea Grant and Sara Van from Maitland High School; Liam Faustini and Melissa Travis from Rutherford Technology High School; Kristina O'Brien and Anu Fowosere from Hunter Valley Grammar School; and Brodie Smith and Thomas Escott from Maitland Christian School. I also thank the years 5 and 6 groups from Maitland Christian School who visited the House last week.

ALBURY ELECTORATE EVENTS

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (17:05): I congratulate Raelene Brodie on her 20 years of involvement with the Lavington Springdale Heights Community Centre. When Raelene moved to Albury with her family in 1996 she visited the community centre as a way of meeting other mothers and she ended up taking on the job of coordinator in 1998. She describes the centre as a beacon which became her rock and is now like a second home. I thank Raelene for her wonderful years of service to her community.

I also congratulate Jack Hurley, Tim Sigmund and Sam Cowen of Possum Works, Albury, who have designed the Firetail unmanned aerial system, which is a low-cost drone designed to capture images and information from disaster zones in order to target relief. They entered the Pacific Humanitarian Challenge run by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and out of 130 inventions from around the world they were successful in being one of five winning teams to share in \$2 million. The money will be used to perfect the project for use in the Pacific islands. What a great validation for this innovation hub concept in Albury!

TRIBUTE TO JENNA JONES

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (17:05): I recognise 14-year-old Jenna Jones of Faulconbridge in the Blue Mountains, who recently won six gold and three silver medals at the Australian Age Swimming Championships. She also broke nine Australian and 10 State swimming records at the championships. Jenna is now on Swimming Australia's Road to Rio Team for the 2016 Paralympics. With her new coach, Nick Robinson, Jenna is pushing beyond nine swimming sessions and at least two gym workouts each week. I recently attended the Springwood Swimming Club annual presentation awards evening and gained a deeper appreciation of how incredibly proud our community is of Jenna. When she was in kindergarten Jenna was diagnosed with cone-rod dystrophy; she is sight impaired. She will compete in the S13 class for vision-impaired swimmers. In the House today I pay tribute to Jenna, her coach, and her fabulously supportive family. Go well, young Jenna. We salute you and wish you every success.

NORTHERN TABLELANDS WETHER TRIAL CUP

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (17:06): I congratulate Steve and Robyn Johnston of Oakhurst, Deepwater, on being named the inaugural winners of the Northern Tablelands Wether Trial Cup at the presentation on 28 April this year. The Johnstons participated in a three-year long trial as a collaboration between Northern Tablelands Local Land Services and the Department of Primary Industries, which allowed local breeders to benchmark the performance of their flocks against other producers in the district. The Johnstons' wethers averaged the highest value for combined wool cut and carcass value calculated on average dollars per head. I commend Steve and Robyn for their passion for the sheep and wool industry and for displaying excellence as producers.

TRIBUTE TO DR LAUREL WILLIAMS

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (17:07): I formally recognise Dr Laurel Williams of Belmont. I recently had the privilege of nominating Dr Williams for the NSW Aboriginal Woman of the Year award because I believe Dr Williams's work deserves to be formally acknowledged. Dr Williams has dedicated much of her working life to improving the lives of Aboriginal people and advocating for justice and equality. Though retired,

she continues her advocacy through her passion as an educator, and remains the longest-serving active life member of the NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group. In the past Dr Williams travelled all around New South Wales, working with teachers and students to promote cultural diversity in schools. She has also worked as an academic at the University of Newcastle, where she completed her PhD. Dr Williams has held a number of Aboriginal advisory positions for organisations including Newcastle City Council and the University of Newcastle. She was also formerly the Director of the Wollatuka Institute. In the 1990s Dr Williams represented New South Wales as co-commissioner in the Inquiry into the Stolen Generation. These days, she operates a small business in Lake Macquarie— [Time expired.]

MARONITE COLLEGE OF THE HOLY FAMILY

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (17:08): I congratulate the Maronite College of the Holy Family, Principal Sister Margaret and Deputy Principal Sister Irene on their wonderful Anzac Day ceremony. The service began with a rendition of the national anthem, followed by prayers. I congratulate student Brianna Azar on the wonderful introduction she gave in which she explained the meaning of Anzac. Mr Hayman then led the students in a special musical performance of Cold Chisel's *When the War is Over*. I congratulate students Mona Katrib, Adrian Harb and Jennifer Katrib on their contributions to the ceremony. I also congratulate the peer support leaders and Director of Welfare Mr Khattar. Sister Margaret does a wonderful job as principal. I congratulate the college on its work in our community and commend the Maronite Sisters.

PAGEWOOD BOTANY FOOTBALL CLUB FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (17:09): I extend my sincere congratulations to the Pagewood Botany Football Club, which recently celebrated its fortieth anniversary with a 24-hour gala day on its home ground of Jellicoe Park. I was glad to join thousands of members, former members and supporters from my community to commemorate that very special occasion. Pagewood Botany Football Club is not just an ordinary football club. It not only provides football events for thousands of adults and children but also invests significant time and effort to raise money for local charities. On its special day the club raised \$13,000 for the Windgap Foundation, which has cared for people with intellectual disabilities locally for more than 60 years. Indeed, the committee itself and its members voluntarily support Windgap and routinely raise tens of thousands of dollars for many other local charities such as the Sydney Children's Hospital. Whilst their considerable benevolence serves only to enhance our community, they are always fighting the jealousy associated with their success—even from the peak body, Football NSW. I extend my appreciation, and that of our entire community, to the wonderful and dedicated volunteers and members of Pagewood Botany Football Club who do so much for the community.

TRIBUTE TO FIONN MOLLOY, BUS DESIGN COMPETITION WINNER

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (17:10): I congratulate Central Coast student Fionn Molloy of Kincumber High School on winning the Bus Design Competition. Regional Youth Support Services [RYSS] called for local artists to submit a design for its bus. The design needed to reflect diversity of the region, the energy of our youth and the land's Indigenous qualities. Fionn Molloy's design answered the criteria. He won the competition and was presented with \$500 from Regional Youth Support Services. It is the intention of RYSS to use the bus to address the needs of our local youth on the Central Coast and deliver opportunities across the region. Fionn's design is unique, using beautiful colours incorporating a whale in an underwater design with the words "Aspire, Create and Live". I commend Fionn Molloy for his inspirational design.

LLANDILO RURAL FIRE BRIGADE SIXTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (17:11): I acknowledge the 65 years of service of the Llandilo volunteer Rural Fire Brigade, which was celebrated on 20 April. Western Sydney is no stranger to the threat of bushfires. We owe a debt of gratitude to the men and women of the Rural Fire Service for the tireless work they do in keeping our communities safe. Sixty-five years is a fantastic achievement for this group. Congratulations are particularly in order for Percy Denton, who won a number of awards including a life membership to the New South Wales Rural Fire Service. On the night we were joined by Assistant Commissioner Jason Heffernan, and Richard Petch from the local district command. A special thanks must go to Councillor Kevin Cramer, my colleague on Penrith City Council, for his tireless support for and membership of the Llandilo Rural Fire Brigade. I congratulate everyone who was involved on the night and again thank the Llandilo Rural Fire Brigade for the amazing work it does in our community.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMALGAMATIONS

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (17:12): I congratulate the Kiama and Shoalhaven communities on winning their battle for both councils to stand alone. I thank Premier Mike Baird for listening to our community in its concerted campaign. I particularly thank Rob McKinnon, chair of the Keep Kiama Council Local Committee, and Vivien Marriss, Ian Pullar, Bruce Elder, Kim Elder, Peter O'Neill, Rod Cork, Sandra McCarthy, Darrell

Clingan, Andy Farrell, Nick Hartgerink, Cliff Mason and Stephen Groves for their hard work. I also thank Mayor of Kiama Brian Petschler and Mayor of Shoalhaven Joanna Gash and their respective general managers Michael Forsyth and Russ Pigg. I thank all the staff who worked so hard on the submission to convince the Government that our councils can and should stand alone. I hope this ends any future speculation about a possible merger of Kiama so that the councils can continue to operate and serve the community. I thank and commend for her hard work my friend and colleague Shelley Hancock. Together we fought this battle and together our communities have succeeded. Both councils will now stand independently and alone.

TAMIL RESOURCE CENTRE SILVER ANNIVERSARY

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (17:13): I acknowledge the silver anniversary of the Tamil Resource Centre. On Sunday I joined hundreds of people from the Tamil community as well as the member for Strathfield and the member for Parramatta to pay tribute to the Tamil Resource Centre. A decade after the Jaffna Library was famously destroyed during the Sri Lankan civil war, the Tamil community came together to establish a library and resource centre to keep the Tamil language alive in Australia. Tamil is one of the oldest living languages in the world, dating back 5,000 years with a wealth of poetry and literature. The resource centre was first established in Homebush. It grew and was relocated a few times before moving to Mays Hill in the Granville electorate, where it now houses more than 8,000 books and other resources for the community, just near the beautiful Murugan temple, which also serves the Tamil community. It is a massive achievement to keep a voluntary organisation running and serving the community for 25 years. I congratulate Dr Manomohan, all the executive and all past and present volunteers on their efforts.

CRONULLA ELECTORATE AWARD RECIPIENTS

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Heritage, and Assistant Minister for Planning) (17:14): I congratulate Cronulla Sharks Leagues Club on being awarded the emergency services award at the 2016 Clubs and Community Awards. The club was recognised for the assistance it provided to local residents and families following the Kurnell tornado late last year. A 24-hour evacuation centre was established at the club following the event, which was deemed a "catastrophe" by the insurance industry. The club hosted around 300 State Emergency Service volunteers and services personnel for lunch and dinner, with recovery efforts carrying on for several days after the storm cut a swathe through Kurnell. The club also received a highly commended award in the education category for the Broaden Your Horizons Career Expo for local high schools.

I also congratulate the Tradies, which was awarded the environment award at the 2016 Clubs and Community Awards. Tradies was awarded for its innovative sustainability awareness and conservation iPromise To Be More Sustainable program. The program encourages small changes such as reducing the use of plastic bags, walking to the shops instead of driving or switching to energy efficient light globes. Tradies topped off its award with a highly commended for its sponsorship of the Hazelhurst Regional Gallery and Arts Centre. I congratulate both these outstanding organisations.

LAO NEW YEAR FESTIVAL

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (17:15): On 17 April 2016 I had the pleasure of attending the Lao New Year Festival at the Lao Buddhist Temple at Bonnyrigg Park. I have attended this festival for many years and I always enjoy seeing the traditional Lao costumes, the various food stalls on offer and the wonderful cultural performances. This festival is an opportunity for families to get together, pray to the Lord Buddha and reflect on the year ahead. Water plays a vital role in this celebration as it signifies renewal. Water is used to bless the statue of Buddha and it is poured on the hands of elders, asking for their blessing for the year ahead. I also presented 15 Seniors Awards in acknowledgement of their contribution to the temple and the local community. The awards are but a small vote of appreciation for their dedication. I thank Mr Deth Sysengrath, President of the Lao Community Advancement NSW Co-op Limited, and Mr Senphume, President of the Lao Buddhist Society of New South Wales, for their tireless support for the Lao community.

DR DHARMICA MISTRY, NSW YOUNG WOMAN OF THE YEAR

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (17:16): Today I congratulate Dr Dharmica Mistry, an inspiring scientist from Jannali, who was named the 2016 NSW Young Woman of the Year in March. Dharmica won the award for developing a new type of breast cancer screening technology that could revolutionise early breast cancer detection. An exceptional researcher, Dharmica's exciting work currently has 90 per cent accuracy rates in detecting the presence of the most common form of invasive cancer through the study of blood. The five-year survival rate for women diagnosed with breast cancer is 89 per cent and improvements in survival are attributed to early detection. Without her persistence, unfailing optimism and drive, a transformational global test may have never been developed. Dharmica is an inspiration to young women considering a future in medical research and

microbiology. and she is most deserving of this prestigious award. Her work is remarkable and her dream of significantly transforming women's health worldwide through medical innovation is fast becoming a reality.

HOMELESSNESS

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (17:16): On Thursday 5 May, after completing my duties in this House, I had the privilege of sharing a carriage on the 10.45 p.m. train from Central to Newcastle with a number of my fellow citizens, including five for whom the carriage was their bedroom. I thank those five citizens for allowing me to share their bedroom until about 12.27 a.m. when I left the train at Ourimbah station. It appears the New South Wales transport system is now configured to accommodate a large number of citizens in finding a bed. I counted some 50 to 60 people who had bedded down rough in the public area of Central station and many more were in the gardens outside. I acknowledge my fellow citizens sleeping rough that night for reminding me that when members on both sides of this House speak of our achievements we should not forget that our society, as presently arranged, has an unacceptable number of citizens without a bed. It is our responsibility to do more.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN HIGHFIELD HENSLEY

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (17:17): I pay tribute to the late John Highfield Hensley of Roseville. John had a full life of 87 years and was a thinking man who engaged in life and with those around him. His intellect was sharpened through years as a teacher at various schools, including Willoughby Girls High School, North Sydney Boys High School and Forest High School, where he retired as principal. He co-authored numerous textbooks, particularly on economics, and was a keen reader. John was generous with his time and he was community-minded—characteristics instilled in him through his rural upbringing. He had a clear desire to contribute to public policy formation and improve society. John often wrote in a constructive and polite way to politicians, including me, with well-articulated suggestions or insights. He was a real gentleman who truly appreciated the value of education. At John's memorial service on Monday, I was privileged to hear from his four children as well as a former student and friend. John Hensley is survived by his widow, Heljo, children and grandchildren. Beyond his family, John's legacy as a teacher and community contributor will live on for generations to come.

SCHOOL FUNDING

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (17:18): On Saturday 7 May, I was honoured to be in the audience as the Hon. Bill Shorten launched the publication, "Getting Results—Gonski Funding in Australian Schools". This publication incorporates 24 real life examples of the positive difference the so-called Gonski funding, needs-based funding, has made in schools. In my electorate of Lakemba the need for equitable funding is highlighted by the fact that every school has been the recipient of equity funding. Schools in my electorate, representative of the different educational sectors, have seen the changes that are possible when schools are adequately funded. The cliché is that education is the great leveller. I for one can speak of the differences it can make; it is a lived experience. The phrase being stated is simply, "I give a Gonski". I commend Federal Labor for having the conviction to stand up for the most needy and to put the money required into ensuring all Australian children have the same opportunity, regardless of where they live and how much their parents earn.

STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE CADET OF THE YEAR

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (17:19): Today I congratulate Rebekah Moussa from Wattle Grove on being named the 2015 NSW State Emergency Service Cadet of the Year. The State Emergency Service Cadet program started in 2008 and more than 2,500 cadets have completed their training over the years. Interestingly, I note that almost 50 per cent of cadets are female, which is a great achievement in itself. I was honoured to join Rebekah, her family and the Minister for Emergency Services in Parliament to acknowledge Rebekah's contribution and passion for community safety and service. The Acting Commissioner of the State Emergency Service spoke of Rebekah's high leadership abilities and her passion to support and inspire her peers. Volunteering and community service are the foundations of a community, and I am happy to see so many young people, like Rebekah, leading and participating in them. I again congratulate Rebekah on her outstanding achievement and wish her all the best for the future.

EAST LAKES FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (17:20): I acknowledge Gillian Sain for her unwavering dedication to the Eastlakes Family Support Service for more than 30 years. Eastlakes is a not-for-profit organisation that provides information, counselling and parenting strategies on a one-to-one or group basis to families with dependent children in the Lake Macquarie area. Through confidential and professional services they focus on strengthening and supporting families and building on family members existing skills. Gillian actively participated in the establishment of the Eastlakes Family Support Service in 1984 as an associate member of the management committee. She was then the administrator from 1987 until 1995. After her retirement, Gillian

rejoined the management committee and has since been the president. The success of services like Eastlakes relies on the generous community spirit of people like Gillian who dedicate their time and expertise. I commend Gillian for all her hard work and devotion.

TRIBUTE TO TOM TESORIERO

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (17:21): I inform the House that Forster resident Gaetano Tesoriero, better known as Tom, celebrated his 101st birthday on 12 April. Tom was born on the Italian island of Panarea and arrived in Australia in May 1925. After finishing his school studies as a 10-year-old, he opened a fruit and vegetable shop in the Sydney suburb of Croydon. He credits his long life to a diet of fresh food. Tom married Olive more than 75 years ago and they have three children aged 75, 68 and 59. Olive has been at his side the whole time, apart from his service in the 7th Australian Infantry Battalion where he served in the Solomon Islands and Bougainville. Happy birthday, Tom.

RELIANCE MEDICAL PRACTICE

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (17:22): I was delighted to attend the opening of the new Reliance Medical Practice at North Wyong. This state-of-the-art practice will have up to 15 doctors providing a comprehensive service. The new practice definitely has a wow factor, through the creative skills of talented interior designer Martha Karas-Wright of Karas Design—it is stunning. This is an entirely new experience for a medical centre—namely, introducing a unique method of welcoming patients via their concierge process. The practice offers bulk billing, general practice services, pathology, a flu vaccination clinic, skin cancer clinic and a unique sleep study clinic with home testing. It also has a dedicated team of professionals whose primary focus is on their patients. I congratulate the Reliance Medical team, particularly Dr Rob Beckwith and Chief Executive Officer Julie Abdilla.

TRIBUTE TO NICHOLAS LAPSLEY

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (17:22): The majority of us do not have to think about when to get out of bed in the morning, put on our clothes and listen to the radio, but these are daily obstacles for 15-year-old Nicholas Lapsley. Nicholas was born with cerebral palsy and severe hearing loss but that has never stopped him from achieving incredible things in his life. Today I acknowledge Nicholas's incredible determination which has led him to take on the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award and, in his own words, "keep trying my best at everything I attempt". The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award is designed to help young people build skills to equip them for life. Many of these challenges are physically taxing, but they have not stopped Nicholas from participating in the Bronze Award in his determination to make the most out of life.

Through this award he has participated not only in swimming but also in water sports and ski camps. He has even experimented with making short films. The lessons learned through participating in the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award are priceless. Nicholas remembers being nervous at first, but quickly gained confidence in himself through stepping out of his comfort zone. He is an astute reminder that those like him are capable of independence. The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award is one of six children's charities supported by NSW Kids in Need. Nicholas is nothing short of admirable as he continues to take on life's many challenges with gusto. I wish Nicholas all the best for his future. I look forward to watching this star continue to shine.

OLYMPIANS DAVID AND EMMA MCKEON

Ms NOREEN HAY (Wollongong) (17:24): I extend my congratulations to 23-year-old David McKeon and 22-year-old Emma McKeon, a brother and sister duo originally from Wollongong, who are both off to the Rio Olympics after qualifying swims at the recent Australian Swimming Championships. David and Emma will become the first brother and sister to swim for Australia at the same Olympics since John and Ilsa Konrads in 1960, 56 years ago. Neither are strangers to competing internationally. Emma won four gold medals and two bronze medals at the 2014 Commonwealth Games, including an individual gold in the 200 metre freestyle and three relay gold medals. David competed at the 2012 London Olympics, and at the 2014 Commonwealth Games he won gold in the 4 x 200 metre freestyle and silver in the 400 metre freestyle. In Rio, Emma will compete in the 200 metre freestyle and the 100 metre butterfly and David will compete in the 400 metre freestyle. I wish them both the very best of luck for their events. I am sure they will be bringing home the gold.

ALLANAH PITCHER, LITTLE ATHLETICS NATIONAL RACE WALKING CHAMPION

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (17:25): I congratulate Miss Allanah Pitcher from Terrigal on the Central Coast on taking out first place in the Little Athletics Nationals for the 1500 metre race walking. Allanah is 12 years old and a year 7 student at Terrigal High School. She broke the record when she competed in the Little Athletics nationals in Adelaide. Allanah took up race walking when she was 10 years old and she has gone on to compete at the Federation competition in Canberra each year and at the NSW Athletics in Perth in the Junior

Youth Championships. While long distance running is one of her favourite sports, race walking has become her top priority. I have no doubt that we will see Allanah Pitcher representing Australia at the Olympic Games one day in the very near future. We wish her all the very best for the junior world titles.

WARATAHS RECRUITMENT MARCH RE-ENACTMENT

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (17:26): On Sunday 29 November 2015, I was very pleased to support the Waratahs March Re-enactment, which, importantly, highlighted the efforts of the volunteers of 1915 and the ultimate sacrifice given by many. The Waratahs Re-enactment Committee received particularly good support from Roads and Maritime Services, NSW Police, Wollongong Local Area Command, Lake Illawarra Local Area Command, Wollongong City Council, Shellharbour City Council, Kiama Municipal Council, Sutherland Council and Shoalhaven City Council, as well as local traffic and special events personnel.

The event included three marches: Nowra to Bomaderry, which is now the longest community march in the city's history; the Berry march and service; and the Gerringong march and service. They were all joined together by Lachlan Valley Railway steam engines and carriages, which transported participants from Bomaderry and Berry and then to Gerringong and back. I thank Clyde Poulton, chairman of the Waratahs Re-enactment Committee, and Robyn Florance, who did an outstanding job as events coordinator on the committee. It was a very memorable and historical event which was enjoyed by all, particularly the historians in our area who wanted to remember the service of so many in an important event in our city's history.

MAITLAND ELECTORATE ANZAC DAY EVENTS

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (17:26): I thank all the RSL clubs in my area, particularly East Maitland RSL and Maitland RSL, and the Morpeth community, who put together a fantastic Anzac Day service and a wonderful parade of the types of animals that served in the war. Vietnam veterans, headed by Max Lantry, played a big role in the Anzac Day events. I commend the Lochinvar community for its commemoration; Beresfield RSL, which helped many people in Woodberry, Thornton and Chisholm to commemorate the special day; and particularly the Gillieston Heights community, who were stranded last year but took the initiative to start their own Anzac Day commemoration and have continued that tradition this year. It was wonderful to see. I also thank the students of Metford Primary School and the Hunter River Community School, who joined together for an wonderful opportunity to explain the Anzac spirit to all. The events were amazing and I congratulate our community.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Melanie Gibbons): Community recognition statements having concluded, private members' statements will now be proceeded with.

Private Members' Statements

TURIA PITT AND INTERPLAST

Ms SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast) (17:28): This afternoon I congratulate a truly extraordinary South Coast resident, Turia Pitt, on her completion of the Ironman Australia triathlon event in Port Macquarie on 1 May this year. Many members will be aware of Turia Pitt's story of survival and perseverance. In 2011, while competing in an ultra marathon, Turia was caught in a bushfire. She suffered severe burns to 65 per cent of her body, underwent more than 200 operations, fought back from a two-month long coma and spent a total of 864 days in hospital. Her injuries were extensive and doctors did not believe she would survive, let alone run again.

I first met Turia when I was teaching at Ulladulla High School. It struck me then that she was a remarkable student and a talented athlete. Since she left Ulladulla High School I have followed her story, watching closely as she goes from achievement to incredible achievement, despite the setbacks she has faced. She is an incredibly determined and passionate young woman. Some members may recall that I previously addressed the Chamber in 2014 to inform the House of Turia's nomination for the NSW Premier's Woman of the Year Award, an award I am proud to say she would later go on to win. She also has been nominated as a finalist for Young Australian of the Year, has released a memoir, travels the world giving motivational speeches, and was declared the official Australian and New Zealand ambassador for the charity Interplast.

It was in support of this charity that Turia competed in this year's Ironman challenge in Port Macquarie. She swam 3.8 kilometres, cycled 180 kilometres and ran 42.2 kilometres, conquering a grand total of 226 gruelling kilometres in order to raise money and awareness for Interplast Australia. First established in Australia in 1983, this not-for-profit charity was originally a joint venture between the Rotary Club and the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, offering free reconstructive surgery to people in the Asia-Pacific region. Interplast now operates in 17 partner countries, continuing to provide teams of medical volunteers, from surgeons and nurses to physiotherapists. They organise all of the required medical equipment and supplies to reduce the burden on the

host country, as well as ensuring that quality post-operative care is available for each patient once the medical team departs.

It is estimated that 143 million people worldwide go without urgently needed surgical attention each year. More than 99 million of those cases occur in the Asia-Pacific region. Interplast's medical professionals work tirelessly towards reducing these numbers. They treat congenital conditions such as cleft lip and palate, burns, scarring and trauma injuries, as well as tumours and soft tissue deformities. Often people suffering from these disabilities find themselves more vulnerable to poverty as they are unable to attend school or work to support their families. Many will also lose their lives to such injuries because they are unable to access or afford the required surgeries.

For those selected for treatment, which is often only a relatively simple surgery, the immediate and permanent transformation has a remarkably positive impact, not only on the individual themselves but on their families, friends and the broader community. Interplast further supports those countries through its scholarship, training and mentoring programs. Working to build the capacity of local health professionals and create a sustainable health system, Interplast offers training programs such as peri-operative and post-operative nursing, wound management, microsurgery, occupational and speech therapy, and anaesthetics.

Interplast's mission proves an enormous task both logistically and financially. Yet the work it carries out is so vital to improving the quality of life for the millions so severely affected by treatable conditions. Turia has often commented that if she had lived in any of the developing countries where Interplast now works she would not have survived her injuries. Hence, when Interplast was announced as Ironman Australia's 2016 official charity partner, Turia set about fundraising for the charity, achieving almost \$55,000 in donations.

It is Turia's incredible fighting spirit and never-give-up attitude that make her both the perfect Interplast ambassador and Ironman participant. Entering one of the world's most physically challenging competitions, she managed to finish in 13 hours and 24 minutes—one hour better than she had expected. It was no small feat for someone who was forced to learn to walk again. It was the goal of competing in an Ironman challenge that Turia attributes to motivating her through the recovery process. Turia was driven by a desire to show the doctors who had told her she would never run again that one day she would complete in an Ironman challenge and regain her independence.

In preparation for the event she trained 16 hours a week, often waking up at 3.30 a.m. to fit in long bike rides and training sessions. Having now fulfilled her dream of completing an Ironman challenge, Turia will tackle the Kokoda track later this month, once again in support of Interplast. It has been a truly motivational experience to be able to share in her inspiring journey of recovery. I wish her the best of luck for her future endeavours, as well as her fiancé Michael Hoskins. She is a truly remarkable South Coast resident and former student of Ulladulla High School. I know her very well and I watch her with great pride. She is a wonderful, wonderful woman.

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (17:33): I thank the member for South Coast for raising the story of an incredible Australian. We throw around the word "hero" all too often, but in Turia's case it is warranted. What a remarkable story of bravery and survival. A talented, beautiful engineer, she suffered horrific burns when she was trapped in a bushfire whilst competing in the Kimberley Ultramarathon. What is remarkable about Turia's story is not being caught in the fire but her refusal to be defined by it. We can all learn from Turia's courage and inability to accept defeat in any way, shape or form. Tonight I would like to add my thanks to Turia. I thank her for what she has done to support the Interplast organisation. Every dollar that she raises goes towards helping those most in need. But, more importantly, I thank Turia for her example to all of us. She represents what is best about her community on the South Coast and, indeed, what is best about our country.

HEATHCOTE ELECTORATE ANZAC DAY SERVICES

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (17:34): Today I acknowledge the myriad Anzac Day commemorations held in the Heathcote electorate in 2016. On Anzac Day we come together to recognise the sacrifices made by the men and women who fought and died for Australia. It is a chance for us to appreciate the subsequent freedom and quality of life we all enjoy as a result of those sacrifices. Each year I am proud to provide an Anzac Day publication to the people of Heathcote, which is delivered to every resident in the electorate. I thank the Helensburgh and District Historical Society and the Sutherland Shire Historical Society for their submissions this year, including stories of some of our local heroes from Helensburgh, Scarborough and Stanwell Tops.

One of those heroes was Scarborough miner Private Charles McGoldrick. Charles was the grandson of Benjamin and Margaret Rixon. Thirty-eight of their descendants fought in the Great War and, unfortunately, eight were killed, Charles among them. The family's strong military history is depicted in a photo montage displayed at the Australian War Memorial. Another hero was Augustus "Gus" Hendrickes, who was one of nine men from

the Helensburgh district who enlisted in the Waratahs recruiting march that stopped at Stanwell Park in December 1915.

The other men who joined up on the same day were Thomas Atkinson, William Barrie, Maurice Lewis, Charles McGoldrick, Frederick Myles, David Owens, Ernest Trevethan and Mark Wheatley. Mr Lewis, Mr Owens, Mr Trevethan and Mr Wheatley were the only ones to return to Australia. The Heathcote electorate was home to many other men and women who fought and died for Australia. It was a privilege to bring some of their stories to the people of Heathcote. I was overwhelmed by the positive feedback about the 2016 *Spirit of Anzac* brochure that I received from my constituents.

This year in my electorate there were many Anzac Day activities. An Anzac Day dawn service was held at War Memorial Reserve in Bundeena. In Engadine on 17 April there was an Anzac march at John Keenan Park and a service at the community war memorial, as well as the Anzac Day dawn service at the community war memorial. In Heathcote there was an Anzac Day dawn service at Club Heathcote. In Helensburgh there was an Anzac Day dawn service at the war memorial in Charles Harper Park. The Menai Anzac Day dawn service was held at Parc Menai, and the Stanwell Tops Anzac Day dawn service was at Lions Memorial Park. In Sutherland there was an Anzac Day march and a service in Peace Park. At Woronora River the dawn service took place at the Woronora River RSL Sub-Branch war memorial. I was honoured to represent Heathcote, on behalf of the Government, at Anzac Day activities at Bundeena, Engadine, Menai and Woronora River to pay tribute to the brave soldiers who fought on behalf of us all.

BREAST CANCER

Ms NOREEN HAY (Wollongong) (17:37): Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer among women in Australia, excluding non-melanoma skin cancer. One in eight women are at risk of developing breast cancer in their lifetime. There are approximately 60,000 people living with breast cancer in Australia today. On average, eight women die from breast cancer each day in Australia. It is estimated that this year 15,934 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer. By 2020, 17,210 women are projected to be diagnosed—an average of 47 women every day. Men also develop breast cancer, although the occurrence is rare, accounting for about 1 per cent of cancer cases. Approximately 145 men are diagnosed with breast cancer in Australia each year.

More than two in three cases of breast cancer occur in women aged between 40 and 69. Australian women diagnosed with breast cancer have an 89.6 per cent chance of surviving five years after diagnosis. The spread of cancer to other organs is the main cause of death from breast cancer. Once cancer spreads to other parts of the body, only one in five women survive more than five years. However, more women are surviving breast cancer. In 1994, when the National Breast Cancer Foundation was established, 76 of every 100 women diagnosed with breast cancer were still alive five years after diagnosis. Today that figure is 90 out of every 100. Improvements in survival are attributed to earlier detection of breast cancer through regular mammograms. Women who are diagnosed at an earlier stage of the disease generally have higher survival rates than women diagnosed with more advanced breast cancer. Early detection can significantly improve breast cancer survival rates by allowing physicians and oncologists time to treat the cancer appropriately.

A McGrath Breast Care Nurse is a registered nurse with specialist training and qualifications in breast care. They coordinate care for people with breast cancer and provide information, support and referral to services. Breast care nurses also help families in Australia through breast cancer by providing invaluable physical, psychological and emotional support from the time of diagnosis and throughout treatment. They provide information about treatment options and details of breast prostheses and breast reconstruction, and can link patients to support groups and wig libraries. This support is provided free of charge and can be accessed through self-referral. Jane McGrath was passionate about the need for more breast care nurses to support families experiencing breast cancer in Australia. She said:

It was in 2003 when I was re-diagnosed with breast cancer that I realised the importance of having a breast care nurse, something I was fortunate enough to have access to for the first time. Someone who could answer the questions only a nurse could answer whilst also being the support I needed to unload my frustrations and emotions.

Having access to a breast care nurse allowed me to be Jane McGrath, the friend, the mother and the wife—not just Jane McGrath, the breast cancer patient.

Training and funding a full-time breast care nurse costs almost \$400,000 over four years. There are 36 McGrath Breast Care Nurses located across New South Wales. To date, 110 McGrath Breast Care Nurses across Australia have helped to support more than 44,000 Australian families. On Tuesday it was great to see question time go pink in support of this great cause when we all added a splash of pink to our attire and united in support of the McGrath Foundation's annual "Pull On Your Socks" campaign. Mine were pink with polka dots. I am very proud of them. All the money raised will go towards funding McGrath Breast Care Nurses.

Hugh Bateman's pink tractor trek for breast cancer care set off from Mudgee on 9 October 2015 and ended back in Mudgee on 31 October 2015. Along the way, the pink tractor pulled into Wollongong, Port Stephens, Port Macquarie, Coffs Harbour and Muswellbrook. There was also a stop here at Parliament House on 20 October. The pink tractor trek raised just under \$378,000 to help fund specialist breast care nurses. Hugh has raised more than any other individual for the McGrath Foundation in its 10-year history. I call on everyone here to do everything they can to support fundraising for breast cancer sufferers and breast care nurses.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I thank the member for Wollongong for bringing that topic to the attention of the House.

MACQUARIE LEGAL CENTRE

NAN TIEN TEMPLE

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (17:42): I bring to the attention of the House the exceptional work being done in Western Sydney by two community organisations. Macquarie Legal Centre is about to record the 100,000th client assisted by its legal practice, which is only one of the many programs Macquarie operates. The total number of clients it has assisted in the past 16 years is even higher. I am very proud that the centre is in my electorate. Over the years the legal centre has assisted thousands of people who would not otherwise have had access to legal services. Macquarie helps the disadvantaged and vulnerable, those living on low incomes, Indigenous Australians, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and victims of family and domestic violence. I have referred clients to the service and I can report on Macquarie's professionalism; it certainly achieves results.

In my former role at the University of Western Sydney, now renamed Western Sydney University, I worked to establish a new program, the Parramatta Community Justice Centre, as a partnership between Macquarie and WSU. The centre is located at Parramatta Local Court to provide easy access for clients. An integral part of the program is to show law students how legal work is done. Students assist the Macquarie lawyers and in so doing learn valuable lessons about legal practice. Macquarie is also an award winner. In 2010 WSU presented an award to Maria Girdler, Manager of Macquarie Legal Centre, for her support in the establishment and development of the clinic. This was followed in 2012 by another WSU award, a community award, for Maria's outstanding community service and leadership.

In 2011 Macquarie University recognised the centre for its contribution to student learning. In 2012 the tenancy team won a ZEST award, given by the Western Sydney Community Forum, for its excellent advocacy. In 2015 Sue Underwood, one of Macquarie's court support staff, was awarded Youth Worker of the Year. In 2016 Franya Repolusk, Coordinator, Western Sydney Tenants and Advice Service, was nominated in the Women of the West awards for her work serving the tenants of Greater Western Sydney. Franya has been described as "a true ally of the vulnerable, having saved countless tenants, boarders and parks residents from homelessness". I congratulate Maria Girdler and all her team on their dedication and service to the community.

The Nan Tien Temple is located in the Parramatta electorate. It is an exemplar of community leadership, under the guidance of Venerable Man Ko, Chief Abbess of Fo Guang Shan, Australia and New Zealand. The Nan Tien Temple, Buddha's Light International Association [BLIA] and the Nan Tien Institute continue to go from strength to strength, with temples in Parramatta, Hurstville, Chatswood and Berkeley. These provide a centre for Buddhist worship and community activity. The Nan Tien Temple, the BLIA and the Nan Tien Institute are devoted to the teaching of humanistic Buddhism, following the principles of peace and harmony. Nan Tien follows the principle of three good deeds—first, do good things; secondly, say good words; and, thirdly, think good thoughts. Those Buddhist principles are something members should learn as well. I congratulate Nan Tien on all its good work in the community.

Last weekend I attended the Buddha's Birthday Celebration and Multicultural Festival in Tumbalong Park at Darling Harbour. This is an annual celebration. There were thousands of people in attendance. It was certainly a multicultural, multi-faith celebration. I congratulate the venerables and all the volunteers, especially the volunteers from Buddha's Light International Association. I congratulate the President of BLIA, Mr Francis Wong, on his dedication and leadership and thank him for all his hard work. Many people worked on the Buddha's birthday celebrations, which take months to prepare. It is a very important and professionally run event. On behalf of the New South Wales Government I congratulate Nan Tien on all its work in the community, especially the venerables, the reverend sisters and the volunteers, led by Francis Wong.

TAREE RAIL SERVICES

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (17:47): I advise the House that train services and staffing at Taree railway station will continue. I thank member for Oxley for assisting me in advocating for the services and staffing to be maintained at Taree railway station. I also thank Minister Constance for listening to

our submissions and advocacy. In March I attended a briefing with the Minister. After listening to people's concerns and meeting with a delegation of staff from Taree railway station, I wrote to the Minister about the matter. I also made statements to the public and in the media on 12 April, later in April and on 9 May. I spoke numerous times on local radio and on television. I thank the public, especially those who signed the petition saying that they wanted to save the staff and the railway station. In particular, I thank Wendy McHugh, OAM. She liaised with my office on the wording of the petition to ensure that the services remained.

People in the Manning Valley and the Great Lakes and other passengers who use the train services may be assured that there will be no cut to staff numbers or train and coach services serving Taree railway station. Despite an active program of deliberate misinformation, the review by NSW TrainLink has confirmed the following for Taree railway station. First of all, the six full-time staff positions will remain—there are six full-time staff positions there now and there will be six full-time positions there into the future. Secondly, all trains arriving and departing will be met by staff, even the train arriving at 1.30 in the morning. Thirdly, there will be no changes to train and coach services. The current timetable will continue. Fourthly, onboard customer service teams and/or coach drivers will continue to provide assistance with customer queries and luggage, and help the aged and the disabled. Fifthly, additional safety measures, including the installation of closed-circuit television [CCTV] and customer help point technology, will provide real-time, 24/7 security assistance.

Customers will still be able to purchase tickets at Taree railway station during staff operating hours and there will be no change to timetables. Customers are increasingly choosing to purchase their regional train and coach tickets from home with 24/7 online access, or over the phone with extended contact hours, and that will continue. As I said, on 12 April I made a statement in which I stated, "There are six full-time staff and there will continue to be six full-time staff," and that is the case. From the start, I said that the aim was to ensure the business remains sustainable and viable. I am pleased that the staff and services at Taree will remain.

Now the campaign being pursued by people with political aims must stop as it is running Taree down. The union-led demonstration, with the local Greens candidate, held the other day demonstrated that. After the demonstration many people came to me and asked, "Why are we closing down the station?" There was never any intention to close the station. They asked me, "Why are we stopping the trains?" There was never any intention to stop the trains. They inquired, "Why hasn't the local member made a statement?" As I said, I made statements on 12 April, later in April and on 9 May, and that does not include my radio appearances. They ignored these obvious facts.

I am pleased to advise the people of the Manning Valley and the Great Lakes and other train users on the North Coast that the Government has allocated \$7.5 million in this year's State budget to kick-start the planning process to replace the ageing XPT fleet. Those who are playing political games with this issue should remember that during the 16 years of Labor governments there was no planning for new XPT trains. There is now under this Government. The XPTs are getting close to their use-by date. Passengers deserve to have state-of-the-art trains with modern and comfortable seating, and dining, sleeping and entertainment options, including wi-fi—and that is what we intend to deliver. The carriages will have enhanced security and better access for the elderly and people with disability. We want the trains to be more reliable and to travel at faster speeds. I am pleased that the money is in the budget to commence that process.

WALLARAH 2 COALMINE

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (17:52): Why does the Baird Government hate the people of Wyong so much? That is the question I often get asked as I walk in the street, because the Government refuses to keep Barry O'Farrell's promise to stop the Wallarah 2 coalmine. People might remember his promise—"no ifs, no buts, a guarantee". People might remember the promise that "If necessary, special legislation will be introduced into the Parliament to protect the Wyong water catchment". That promise was made at the 2007 and 2011 elections.

Mr Ron Hoenig: I remember seeing a photo of Barry O'Farrell in the T-shirt.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I have that photo here with me. The Liberals then inflicted the former member for Wyong, Darren Webber, on the electorate. He would go around to all the different public meetings telling people, "Don't worry, the mine will never be approved." Well the public cast its opinion in regard to his behaviour by voting me back in as the local member on first preferences. You see, Labor kept its promise; I kept my promise. The mine application under Labor was refused. The Liberals, whether O'Farrell Liberals or Baird Liberals, have never kept their promise. I introduced a private member's bill that the Liberals could have supported. It was about them keeping their promise.

Instead they have allowed this coalmine project to rise from the dead time after time, and it is once again raising its ugly head. I throw out a challenge to the Government. The current application that has just been lodged intends to use land owned by Transport for NSW and Roads and Maritime Services and Crown land for a coal

conveyor for loading coal for rail transport. This is public land. The Government can say "No", and send a message to the community that finally it is listening and using common sense and will back them and the Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council. The Government can finally keep Barry O'Farrell's promise.

Our community continues to see the after-effects of Eight by Five and the Free Enterprise Foundation in questionable decisions made between 2011 and 2015. People have lost trust in the Baird Government. I have called on all Federal members and candidates to state their position regarding the coalmine. Emma McBride from Labor and Abigail Boyd from The Greens have given an absolute undertaking that they will oppose this mine that threatens our important water catchment. The Liberal member for Dobell, Karen McNamara, was a bit less definite. She has had three years to campaign on this matter and she has been silent. Ms McNamara was the campaign manager for Darren Webber so in many respects she is complicit in the State Liberal betrayal of that solemn promise—remember "no ifs or buts, a guarantee" and legislation if necessary to protect the water catchment. I will let the electorate of Dobell judge the inaction of Ms McNamara.

I call on the Government and the Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy to reject the use of any public land to allow this project to proceed. They must reject the latest application from Wallarah 2, which would see coal loading occurring 150 metres from the backyards of residents at Bluehaven. One can imagine the dust and noise from trains braking and coal cars being loaded close to a densely populated residential area. This Government needs to finally listen to the people and understand that this project is a no-goer and the community does not want it. I have not opposed coal projects in the past, at Mandalong and others that extended into the north of Wyong shire, but this project is just plain wrong.

It will come to the surface near residential areas and, more importantly, it is beneath the Wyong water catchment. We cannot take the risk that the science is wrong and that in 20 years, when the population exceeds 400,000, the Central Coast will have no water supply. More than 50 per cent of our water comes from that catchment area. I call on the Government to finally listen to the community, the Aboriginal land council and local residents. The Government should read the science that calls into question mines such as this under important water catchments. The Government should finally do the right thing and oppose this new application. I call on it to do so.

WESTERN SYDNEY ARTS AND CULTURE

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill) (17:57): I have spoken on many occasions in this House about Western Sydney's thriving arts and cultural institutions. A few weekends ago I had the privilege of representing the Deputy Premier, and Minister for the Arts, the Hon. Troy Grant, at the opening of the stage production *Swallow* at the Riverside Theatre in Parramatta. Written by acclaimed playwright Stef Smith and directed by Kate Champion, the play takes the audience on a journey through the lives of three different women battling their own distinct personal troubles. Within minutes of starting, the audience is told of the issues faced by each character. Rebecca, played by Megan Drury, is furious that her ex-partner has left her for another woman and she turns that anger on herself. Sam, played by Valerie Berry, is struggling with a gender crisis, not sure if she is Sam or Samantha. Anna, played by Luisa Hastings Edge, has locked herself in her apartment, afraid to face the outside world.

Though ostensibly unconnected, these women's lives start to weave together in ways that allow them to heal and find a path forward in life. With only the use of three different kinds of seats, some mood lighting and a revolving illuminated block that serves as a door, the women express their pain and anguish—individually at first then slowly they find their lives intersecting. Rebecca and Sam meet over coffee and strike up a tentative relationship; Rebecca seeks refuge from her ex at Anna's door; and Sam needs access to Rebecca's door from Anna to pass on a new phone number. The play is a compelling take on modern issues that challenges the audience's preconceived views on matters such as gender, mental health, self-doubt and identity. I take this opportunity to thank and congratulate all the cast and crew involved.

Some well-deserved mentions go to designer Anna Tregloan, composer and sound designer Max Lyandvert, lighting designer Verity Hampson, production manager Jack Horton, stage manager Charlotte Barrett, assistant to the director Kate Worsley, associate sound designer Katelyn Shaw, and costume and stage finishing Kate Aubrey. As the inaugural production from the new National Theatre of Parramatta, previously known as the Riverside Theatre, *Swallow* is a fantastic indication of the calibre of performances that are on display in the cultural hub of Western Sydney. I also place on record my great appreciation for the work and advocacy of Rob Love, Director of the National Theatre of Parramatta.

On the same weekend I attended another event that celebrated cultural diversity in Western Sydney: the San Giorgio Martire Di Festival in Kenthurst, which I have been delighted to attend every year for the past decade. The San Giorgio Martire Di Festival is a celebration by the Italian Australian community who come from Martone in Calabria and whose patron saint is San Giorgio. The annual festival attracts nearly 10,000 people who come

together to celebrate their culture and tradition while celebrating what it means to be Australian. For years I have had the utmost pleasure to share in the hospitality and kindness displayed by the thousands of hardworking Italian Australians who attend the festival, many from my electorate but just as many who travel to join the celebrations.

I have had the good fortune of being raised in Western Sydney among many people of Italian heritage. I have witnessed their culture of hard work, dedication and commitment to family that has seen many of those from the Italian community prosper in our great country. This festival is a testament to those who maintain their Italian heritage and proudly call themselves Australian. I especially thank Nicolas Pappalo, OAM, and the Associazione San Giorgio Martire di Sydney for their tireless efforts in ensuring the annual tradition of the San Giorgio Martire Di Festival is upheld. It is always my great pleasure to join people such as the Hon. Morris Iemma and my colleagues the member for Drummoyne and the member for Ryde, who are of Italian background, who always support this festival in my backyard. It is a wonderful occasion that highlights the great culture we celebrate across Western Sydney.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMALGAMATIONS

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (18:03): It is my pleasure to thank the Premier of New South Wales for his decision in relation to the proposed amalgamation of Kiama and Shoalhaven councils. In December 2015 I received a phone call to advise that there would be a proposal to merge both councils coming out of the Fit for the Future process, which found that Shoalhaven City Council was fit and that Kiama council did not meet the Fit for the Future criteria. I advised the Government from the very beginning that this was not a proposal I could support. In 2012 I made it very clear that Kiama is a community that respects the services provided to it and welcomes warmly the work of Kiama council in its communities. It is the same in the Shoalhaven. They are two very distinct communities, both very beautiful but both very different.

We have engaged in a process of public hearings and consultations, and no doubt the communities of both councils have turned out in significant numbers to voice their concerns. Both communities made very strong representations. I attended a number of public meetings of more than 1,000 people—the biggest I have seen during my time as a member of Parliament. We saw excellently articulated and argued submissions that addressed the criteria the Government requested the community to consider. Of course, the delegates report has finally made the recommendation that the Government not proceed with the proposed amalgamation.

This result did not happen by accident. I have to say that this is not the first time I have taken on my own side of politics in order to secure a result for my community. I advise the House that it will not be the last time, because it was my community that put me into Parliament and it is their interests I will always represent. No matter the cost to me personally or politically, it is important that the views of my community are heard in this Chamber. That is, after all, what they sent me to Parliament to do. I must thank a number of people who worked assiduously and were dedicated to securing today's outcome. I sincerely thank Keep Kiama Council Local Committee chair Rob McKinnon and members Vivien Marriss, Ian Pullar, Bruce Elder, Kim Elder, Peter O'Neill, Rod Cork, Sandra McCarthy, Darrell Clingan, Andy Farrell, Nick Hartgerink, Cliff Mason and Stephen Groves for all their work and effort.

I know many times throughout the campaign they did not know whether I was fair dinkum. Many claims were made and concerns were raised that I could have been doing more or I should have been doing something different. I hope that the outcome we have achieved today is evidence enough that the trajectory we established allowed us to arrive at the destination we sought. I particularly thank the Mayor of Kiama, Brian Petschler. He is a good friend and colleague and an excellent mayor who served as the general manager of Kiama council before coming back as the mayor. He worked very hard to procure this outcome and I know that he will be delighted with the result. I also thank Kiama general manager Michael Forsyth and his staff for their efforts. From the public hearings to the meetings, this issue ignited the Kiama community like none other I have seen. I thank the Mayor of Shoalhaven, Joanna Gash, and her councillors, who also worked incredibly hard to bring about this result. I also thank general manager Russ Pigg, who made an incredible contribution to this cause.

It would be remiss of me not to mention my parliamentary colleagues, particularly my friend and neighbour Shelley Hancock, the member for South Coast. Together we worked hard to make clear to the Government what we wanted for our communities. There is no doubt that I could not have done this without her. I thank upper House President Don Harwin, who is a resident of Vincentia. He was instrumental in ensuring that the Government received our message loud and clear. I also thank my crossbench colleague and long-time friend the Hon. Paul Green from the other place. He made his views on this matter incredibly clear.

In this place we are often confronted by people who say they are not going to vote for us. That is part of politics. I certainly heard that on many occasions throughout this campaign. The thing I found very difficult was people suggesting that they may have lost faith. I grew up in my community and have lived and worked there all my life. I can deal with people saying that they are not going to vote for you, but to hear that they do not trust you

is entirely different. I know that people felt very deeply about this issue. I hope that today's result is testament to the community that I came here to represent their views and get outcomes for them. As a result of this decision today I know that the residents of Kiama and the residents of the Shoalhaven will for many years enjoy a council that represent their interests

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (18:08): I acknowledge the significant efforts of the member for Kiama in standing up for his community on this issue and many others. It would be a struggle to find a more committed or dedicated member of this place. I have known the member for Kiama since I was 18—we all have our crosses to bear. He is a formidable political operator—one of the best I have come across. The talents he displayed in the Young Liberals have been turbocharged since he came to this Parliament. He gets results every day of the week for the people of Kiama. Whether it is fighting for more funds, improved infrastructure or better services, I do not think there is a member of Parliament who could achieve more than Gareth Ward. He is tenacious and relentless. The result that Kiama residents have received today is testament to that.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (18:09): Today I urge the Government to review the Affordable Rental Housing State Environmental Planning Policy provisions that refer to boarding houses because of the invasive effect it has on local government planning and because of the quality of affordable housing it permits to be built. Whilst this policy may have been introduced with the well-meaning intention of creating a wider range of housing options and driving the construction of more affordable housing stock, it has had some unfortunate consequences. These provisions are not only delivering a poor quality of accommodation and having a deleterious impact on low-density residential communities but also hampering the administration of responsible local government.

Affordable housing in New South Wales is in a sorry state. As at March 2011 the median price of a house in Sydney was \$600,000. Now the median price is above \$1 million. Parents in my community tell me about how their children who work and study full time cannot afford to leave home. I speak to students and young people who are desperate to achieve independence but are hampered by the hand they have been dealt. The Affordable Rental Housing State Environmental Planning Policy was intended to spur further development and make it easier to build affordable housing, but I have to wonder whether any of its authors have ever set foot in one of the boarding houses that developers are now forcing onto our communities. Because of the tiny amount of space that a resident living in a boarding house has access to and the insufficient supply of vital resources such as recreational spaces, kitchens, bathrooms or a laundry, living in a boarding house looks distinctly more like a punishment than a helping hand. Unbelievably, a single room in a boarding house can be as small as 12 square metres and a dual room 16 square metres.

Over the years there has been a proliferation of applications to councils for boarding houses that clearly are, first and foremost, commercial businesses that exploit poor planning laws and take advantage of low-income earners. Recently I joined more than a dozen residents in my electorate outside the site of a proposed boarding house in Kingsford. Keep in mind it was just one of more than 20 boarding houses currently pending in the Randwick local government area alone. A number of unlawful boarding houses are also being discovered. Aside from the fact that this woeful building will be a nightmare for those living inside it, the State environmental planning policy provides for regulations to operate in this State that will enable developers to overwrite a council's local environmental plan.

Developers can build boarding houses in low-density residential areas so long as they are within 400 metres of a bus stop and one car spot is available for every five rooms. The result is that in an area like Kingsford, which has absolutely no available on-street parking, only nine off-road parking spaces will be introduced for 55 new residents. I guess this is the New South Wales Government's version of Joe Hockey's "poor people don't have cars" opinion. The building will have no setback from the small footpath on the street, insufficient space for waste disposal and insufficient laundry access. It will be built along the property line and a neighbouring unit block will dwarf it in size and block all sunlight.

It cannot be an acceptable outcome that because of errant provisions in this legislation a council cannot stop a bad development from occurring. Affordable housing should not be a punishment for those who rely on it; we should demand better standards from developers and empower local governments to make their own decisions about what will work in their communities. The Government needs a better policy. The former planning Minister reviewed the policy in 2013 but made no changes. Several weeks ago I discussed this matter with the current Minister and suggested a review of the policy because of its impact. In my view the Government should empower local councils to determine whether boarding houses will work in specific locations so that poor planning outcomes can be avoided. This policy needs to be reviewed urgently.

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning) (18:14): I thank the member for Heffron for his contribution and his concern for his community. I heard only part of his contribution but I will read the balance

in *Hansard*. Affordable housing is a crucial part of all our communities. Everyone wants it, but it can cause challenges at a local level. The Government is constantly looking for ways to ensure that social affordable housing is made available to more people so we have an equitable city. Importantly, our housing policy should provide opportunities for everyone, not just those who can afford to purchase their own homes. I take on board the need to be sensitive and responsive to local concerns. I note that the Affordable Rental Housing State Environmental Planning Policy was introduced by the Labor Government and this Government will always be looking for opportunities to make the laws simpler, fairer and more effective.

RICHMOND VALLEY ECONOMY

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (18:15): Tonight it is my pleasure to inform the House about the positive impacts of the massive infrastructure spend by the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government in mid Richmond in my electorate, and about the great work the Richmond Valley Council is doing in welcoming business to its local government area. The \$4.5 billion investment in the long overdue duplication of the Pacific Highway will boost local jobs, create growth and increase prosperity. We frequently hear the Prime Minister speak about the importance of jobs and growth to our economy. This investment by the Federal and New South Wales governments is a classic example of that. The Federal Government is contributing 80 per cent of the funding and the New South Wales Government the remaining 20 per cent. This project would not have been achieved without the hard lobbying of Kevin Hogan, the member for Page.

Recently the Richmond Valley Council gave the green light for temporary workers' accommodation at Evans Head and Woodburn. This, combined with the Pacific Highway upgrade, an airport, a new quarry, new residential developments, and the rollout of the national broadband network, is a clear indication that the local economy of the lower river region of the Richmond Valley is in for a tremendous boost. I commend Richmond Valley Council for its focus on bringing jobs and prosperity to the local government area. The council is committed to being a key enabler in the economic future of the Richmond Valley, and economic development and local employment are its top priorities for the community.

The Federal and New South Wales governments are doing their bit to stimulate the local economy, but the Richmond Valley Council has also been innovative and progressive. In September last year the council was named Large Employer of the Year because of its innovative youth training scheme. It won ahead of stiff competition from organisations such as McDonald's and Westpac that employ more than 10,000 people. It won because its training program provides jobs for young locals in a traditionally high youth unemployment area. It has also addressed its ageing staff issues and provided locals jobs in the council. The youth employment strategy, which is based around its scholarship, apprenticeship and traineeship programs, has been embraced by the existing staff, who act as mentors to the young employees.

The council put on 15 young people last year and a further 15 this year. This has been well received by the staff and the community, and is changing the culture at the council for the better. It is very pleasing to see the council recognise the value of the public infrastructure investment in the region and enhancing that investment by supporting projects that will have a positive impact in the region. The council is looking forward to the future and the extraordinary potential of the Richmond Valley area. General Manager Vaughan Macdonald said:

These are exciting times for the Mid Richmond, and Council will work with its communities to capitalise on the opportunities presented, particularly from the Pacific Highway bypass project.

He also said that projects that bring substantial change to a community will always attract some attention, and many in the Coraki, Woodburn, Broadwater and Evans Head communities are looking forward to the employment and economic benefits those projects will provide. He said the projects were expected to create hundreds of jobs, as well as boost retail and visitor numbers. Richmond Valley Council is certainly doing its bit to boost things by investing in a place manager for the mid Richmond, installing free wi-fi in the main areas of towns, refurbishing the Evans Head Customer Service Centre and library, modernising the valley's visitor information centres, and upgrading roads, sports fields, and parks and reserves, including picnic areas with barbecues.

Tourism is also a big focus for council, and over the past few years it has been investing to ensure that visitor numbers increase. This investment has included ongoing financial support for the Evans Head Aviation Museum, and events such as Beef Meets Reef, the Great Eastern Fly-in, the Evans Head Fishing Classic, and the Woodburn Riverside Festival. It is great to see that the New South Wales Government also values tourism in the lower Richmond; it has invested \$5,000 in the Evans Head Fishing Classic this year. The Pacific Highway upgrade has had significant impacts on the communities it is passing through and once those works are completed the by-passing of communities often leaves them isolated. Council is very confident that the mid Richmond will get through the Pacific Highway upgrade and emerge stronger than ever. I will work closely with council and the State Government to ensure that that is the case.

SENIORS WEEK

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (18:20): Seniors Week is an opportunity to recognise the valuable contribution that older people make to our local community. It is also a time to share experiences and stories with one another. Many events are held during Seniors Week, ranging from the Premier's Gala Concert to technical events. There is an event for everyone. However, some go unrecognised for their contribution not only to the community but also to others. I asked my local community to nominate those people they believed had made a contribution and I was delighted by the number of nominations I received. In my local area I presented 23 Seniors Awards. I will now mention a few of those award recipients.

Ms Aga Ge received an award for the tremendous work she does for our local community. Aga is the head of the Multicultural Seniors Association. The association provides services such as English classes and dancing classes and a place for people to socialise. The association has expanded from Cabramatta to other suburbs such as Artarmon, Auburn, Berala, Burwood, Redfern and Regents Park. I personally recognised Aga for her achievement and contribution to the community at the Seniors Week celebration in Auburn. Sid Hugen received an award for his outstanding work at Bonnyrigg Men's Shed. Sid is an inspiration to the community and has been the backbone of the Bonnyrigg Men's Shed. He has helped a variety of communities in my electorate. The Men's Shed also allows students from local schools to gain hands-on experience in industrial design.

I was pleased to award 10 people from the Lao community who had been nominated for their contribution to advance the Lao Buddhist Temple at Bonnyrigg. The temple is a place of worship for the growing Lao community and there is a high demand for their services. Many of these volunteers have continued to work hard to serve the local community by preparing meals for those who attend the temple and organising events at the temple. I again congratulate all of the Seniors Awards recipients on their hard work in our local community and elsewhere to help improve the lives of others.

PARRAMATTA AND HOLROYD COUNCILS

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (18:24): Today I was sacked as a councillor by press release and proclamation. Since 1999 I have served as a councillor on Parramatta City Council. The ward I represented until today, the Arthur Philip ward, covers parts of the Granville, Parramatta and Seven Hills electorates. I had been looking forward to giving a farewell speech at the end of my term but, as that has now been effectively denied, I want to pay tribute to the achievements of Parramatta and Holroyd city councils—two really effective councils that do not deserve to be sacked. On Monday night my 16 years of service on council was formally recognised, along with that of my Labor colleague Pierre Esber and my Liberal colleague Andrew Wilson, as was the 20 years of service of Parramatta's first female lord mayor, Lorraine Wearne.

Parramatta is growing and thriving as Sydney's multicultural centre and second or dual central business district. That growth has been fostered and led by Parramatta City Council. Whilst I have often thought council could do better at protecting its unique heritage, with the only eighteenth century buildings on the Australian mainland and a World Heritage listed park, an effort is being made to maintain its heritage as the city grows. Parramatta is so much more than a central business district. The suburbs I have represented—Parramatta, North Parramatta, Mays Hill, Westmead and Wentworthville—are great neighbourhoods and great communities.

Having a less locally focused council will not do them any favours at all. I have been really proud to support the unique initiatives Parramatta council provides, such as the pensioners free lawn mowing service, free entry to Parramatta pool for seniors on Tuesdays—a pool this Government is demolishing with no replacement—and the fantastic free seniors Christmas parties across the city. The same can be said for Holroyd and its councillors. Holroyd is really close to its community; only a council like that could convince more than 10 per cent of its population to sign a petition to keep the council. Holroyd is one of the only councils I know with a real estate agent councillor—Nasr Khafroni—who has a fantastic and totally unblemished reputation. Holroyd, like Parramatta, provides unique and valued services over and above those required under the Local Government Act, particularly in promoting responsible pet ownership. I can only assume all these unique services will be cancelled and the community will be worse off as a result.

I have enjoyed representing my community as a councillor. I have worked hard, have been re-elected three times and have served as lord mayor and deputy lord mayor. I established council's audit committee and served on that committee for 10 years. Not all councils have audit committees but I think they should. I have learned a lot from the professional financial experts who served on the committee with me, and we drove improvements across a wide range of areas, from cash handling to information technology security. I also introduced better development application notification procedures, which remain in place today, and water and energy efficiency reforms, which have been built upon over the years.

Like all former lord mayors of Parramatta, I was keen to reorient the city towards the river and improve the river and its surrounding environment. This has been a huge triumph for Parramatta City Council over the past 15 years, but, unfortunately, this State Government has not paid close enough attention to it. The Government's plans for relocating the Powerhouse Museum to the Riverbank have not fully considered the publicly endorsed strategic plan for that space. The illustrations suggest that instead of turning the car park into an enhanced public domain linking the central business district directly to the river, alongside iconic public buildings, it will be just the museum. I hope the Government rethinks and redraws these plans to make sure the Powerhouse Museum compliments the work that has already been done to make the river foreshore a great attraction.

Despite our political differences, the Parramatta councillors sacked today have all worked for the city. All are committed to Parramatta Square and share a vision for its success. It has been a long journey and hopefully it is a vision that a future council will share. Unlike other local government public-private partnerships, this project has been well guided, even in the face of huge obstacles. Instead of digging ourselves into a deeper hole to get the project done at any cost, we took more sensible but sometimes embarrassing steps for the benefit of the city. We withdrew from a partnership that was going nowhere, with a partner that no longer shared our vision and wanted to compromise, at great cost to the community. Other councils would have buckled at this point, but we resisted that temptation and instead went back to the market. Now we have genuine progress and I am hoping that this will continue.

I am one of many councillors who have been sacked today, but my service pales in comparison to that of Parramatta's Lord Mayor, Paul Garrard, who has served the Granville community for more than 40 years but whose service is ending today. How disgraceful sacking someone like that who is willing to work with this Government to make Parramatta a better place and to transform the council. I have voted for and against Paul Garrard to be lord mayor and, despite our political differences, I have great respect for him. He has one of the best strategic minds in local government and he has a passion for Parramatta, but he represents the ward that has been excised from Parramatta and is to be combined with Holroyd and Auburn to form a dirt-poor mess with almost no commercial or industrial rate base.

Auburn City Council has already been effectively sacked, and rightly so. My community does not want to be in a council with it. The only positive in today's announcement is that the two excellent general managers at Parramatta and Holroyd are staying on at the new councils. But I am not sure whether it is congratulations or commiserations to Mery Ismay taking on Auburn. As for Holroyd, there is great rivalry between Parramatta and Holroyd councillors, but also mutual respect. I know how hard they work, and I have already put on record the great job former mayor Greg Cummings did in the Hands Off Holroyd campaign. I particularly acknowledge the work that former Councillor Coleman has done as my representative on the Traffic Committee. Working with former Councillor Lisa Lake has also been a great pleasure. Her efforts in keeping the Wentworthville pool open were enormous, and her commitment to making sure the upgrade of the Wentworthville town centre is an improvement and not just some high-rise hell developers free-for-all is to be commended. None of us deserved to be sacked, and the community I represent does not support the new Cumberland Council. Today is a sad day for Granville and Holroyd.

NEWCASTLE LIGHT RAIL

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (18:28): Today I speak of the concerns of the Newcastle community about the light rail that is planned for Hunter Street. The Newcastle Light Rail Review of Environmental Factors was unveiled in Newcastle recently and is now open for community consultation. After being told countless times by the Premier and the Minister for Transport that Newcastle should be "grateful" and how "lucky" we are that this Government is focused on us and is offering us a "world-class" revitalisation plan, Novocastrians are speaking out about the suggested light rail plan and their concerns about the impact of light rail on Hunter Street.

Former politicians and political aspirants, such as the former Newcastle City Council Lord Mayor Jeff McCloy and former Newcastle—now Paterson—candidate Karen Howard, have both panned the light rail route. *Newcastle Herald* journalists, past and present, have questioned the proposal, and community members have flocked to forums and information presentations to ask, "If this is for Novocastrians, why do they not get a say in how it will happen?" Most recently, a community group called Keep Rail On Corridor [KROC] has formed and there has even been a suggestion to block the proposed Hunter Street light rail route and have the preferred existing heavy rail corridor used in its place. I attended and spoke at the group's inaugural meeting on Monday night, which was attended by more than 200 concerned community members and New South Wales Greens upper House member of Parliament Dr Mehreen Faruqi. Dr Faruqi argued that the agenda is driven by big money and a really insatiable appetite for privatisation. She said:

There is no transparency, no community consultation, and the routes have changed willy-nilly based on what the vested interests want.

And she is not wrong. But the group that will be most affected by this decision and that is not being consulted is Hunter Street businesses. Last Friday I met with a group of Hunter Street business owners who were concerned about the future of their businesses. They are worried that between the construction phase and the implementation they will be out of business. I met with the business owners to ask them whether they know what is planned and how they feel about it. Why will the Government not talk to small business? We discussed all the possibilities for these business owners, solicitors and real estate agencies and the impacts they are likely to endure, such as the loss of more than 280 on-street car parking spaces; traffic reduced to one way each way; reduced space for wide footpaths and outdoor dining; and reduced cyclist and pedestrian safety. They were all vocal about what they were going to do when the construction started.

A well-known real estate agent in Hunter Street is now considering moving his office and 35 staff out of the street. His concerns are valid, considering the reason for removing the rail line was to open up the city and to "increase connectivity". But many of the light rail proposals are unworkable, including the projected 100-millimetre raised rails dividing Hunter Street—something that Transport for NSW has told me is not going to happen as part of the George Street light rail project. A respected solicitor criticised the lack of consultation with businesses. He stated that light rail built on the existing rail corridor would have a much lesser impact on businesses and would result in fewer businesses closing down or relocating. He also added that when the Gold Coast light rail was being constructed it had a huge impact on businesses.

So the question to be asked about this proposal is: Once the Government has revitalised Newcastle with light rail and has removed all the car parks from Hunter Street, what part of Hunter Street will remain viable? Will any businesses be there to experience the "increased connectivity"? Even former Lord Mayor Jeff McCloy, who was the loudest voice in getting the light rail down Hunter Street, has a proposed light rail stop right outside his pub and has now done a complete backflip on the issue.

Newcastle has quite a strong bridal precinct. It is the alternative to many brides taking the long drive to Sydney and it is a one-stop shop for all a bride needs, with easy parking. Bridal store owners came to speak to me recently and told me that they are concerned about people picking up dresses and accessories when they can no longer park outside and drop in. Quite simply, people will drive to Sydney and those businesses will go under. But why? Why does the Government want to cripple Newcastle businesses in order to put in an ill-placed light rail route? Why did the Government not consult with the businesses that will be affected? Why will the Government not concede to using the existing rail corridor or to allowing for mixed running, which council wants?

The Government has ignored its own departmental advice, which strongly advised in Cabinet document 71 to run the light rail down the rail line. There are so many questions and too few answers—that seems to be the theme for the Newcastle light rail. The project has been the cart before the horse from the beginning because of this Government's failure to plan or consult with the community, and with government departments working in isolation and not with each other. I will continue to stand by the businesses on Hunter Street and I will do all I can to ensure that their voices are heard.

CAMPBELLTOWN ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (18:34): I speak about the importance of road and transport connectivity in Campbelltown, across the Macarthur region and across New South Wales. The controversial former Chief Executive Officer of Apple, John Sculley, once said in a keynote speech to Harvard business students:

The future belongs to those who see possibilities before they become obvious.

In my electorate of Campbelltown and in the Macarthur region more broadly that could not be more true, especially in relation to congestion on Narellan Road. For too long, governments have opted for the obvious and easy option of spending hundreds of millions of dollars to upgrade Narellan Road without implementing a long-term solution to improve network connectivity. Narellan Road represents a disappointing broader political culture whereby public representatives focus on short-term, popular decisions rather than on those that deliver the best outcomes in the long term.

Fuelled by the understandable fear of electoral retribution, public representatives advocate for a short-term fix that may appear to be a solution but in reality rarely results in more than a photo opportunity. This has been ongoing for many years and we are witnessing the consequences. The opportunity has been passed up to provide a solution that delivers broader economic and productive social benefits. Reducing congestion in Campbelltown and the Macarthur region would bring benefits not just to mums and dads, who would spend less time on the road and more time at home with their families. Equally important are the economic benefits that a well-planned road network strategy would bring to our region by facilitating higher levels of commercial activity and increased productivity.

I have long been an advocate for the Menangle to Spring Farm link road, with entry and exit ramps to the Hume Highway and a connection through to Appin, as the highest priority infrastructure project in the developing Macarthur region. With the development of thousands of new homes to the south of Campbelltown planned for the next decade, the link road would provide a second connection between the local government areas of Camden and Campbelltown while significantly reducing the number of cars funnelling onto Narellan Road—which currently causes the traffic nightmare that many local families, workers and businesses experience daily. In addition to the Menangle to Spring Farm link road, a number of infrastructure projects would improve connectivity in the Macarthur road network. Connecting Badgally Road to Gregory Hills Drive in the west and to Broughton Street via a rail overpass in the east, as well as a rethink of the Raby Road junction with the Hume Highway at Eagle Vale, would deliver increased social and economic outcomes through a significant reduction in congestion.

Public transport is an important part of the policy mix for solving Campbelltown's congestion issues. When the car park at Campbelltown station is full by 6.30 on most mornings, it is no wonder that people choose to drive to work rather than catch the train. Expanding the commuter car park at Campbelltown station, along with providing more frequent, regular services to Parramatta and the central business district during peak periods, would encourage thousands more local residents to get out of their cars and onto the public transport network, which would also ease local traffic.

George Canning, who became the United Kingdom's shortest-serving Prime Minister when he died after just 199 days in office, said that "indecision and delays are the parents of failure". More than 12 months have passed since the Baird Government was re-elected. The Government promised to build the Menangle to Spring Farm link road and to add 450 extra parking spaces at Campbelltown station. Disappointingly, while the budget is almost upon us, all we have seen so far is the indecision and delay of which the former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom spoke. We must hold the Government to account and make sure that its indecision and delay do not breed the failure of which Canning warned. I welcome the Minister for Planning to the House at the close of my private member's statement. I appreciate his consideration in taking the time to brief me on plans for the areas to the south of Campbelltown. I believe in working cooperatively wherever possible. In the best interests of my community I call for more action and fewer words.

INDIAN INDENTURE SYSTEM 139TH ANNIVERSARY

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (18:39): This is an important year for Fijian Indians in my electorate and across New South Wales, as it marks 100 years since the end of Girit. Girit is not widely talked about, commemorated or celebrated. I understand that many people do not know of it or its significance for Fijian Indians. This week, on 14 May, we mark the 139th anniversary of the Indian indenture system. The system was introduced in Fiji by the British during the time of the empire and became widely known as "Girit"—a mispronunciation of the word "agreement" by the non-English speaking Indian labourers. On 3 March 1879, 373 male and 149 female labourers set sail from Calcutta aboard the ship *Leonidas*. They arrived in Fiji on 4 May. These were the first "Giriteers", who would go on to help shape the Fijian Indian culture.

On reaching Fiji the Giriteers were kept in quarantine on Nukulau Island before being allocated to the plantations. On the day of allocation, the recruits were formed into groups so that plantation owners could transport them by boat to their destinations. The largest number of Giriteers were allocated to the Colonial Sugar Refining Company of Australia, which operated sugar mills and had its own sugarcane plantations. In 1884 the first group of Giriteers had completed their contracts, and 60 per cent of them decided to stay and create a life in Fiji. In 1916 the indenture system was officially abolished by Britain, with the last shipload of labourers arriving in November aboard the *Sutlej V*. It was the eighty-seventh ship to bring labourers to Fiji from India. Between 1,879 and 1916, 60,553 labourers were transported to Fiji.

Today, some 139 years after the first Giriteers were transported to Fiji and some 100 years after the abolition of Girit, we know that, unfortunately, they worked in substandard conditions. Despite this, their contribution to Fiji's economic, social and cultural advancement has been immeasurable. This is just a small piece of the history of Girit and the Giriteers, but it is significant to the greater history of Fiji and to Fijians' cultural identity. With the food, religion, culture and work ethic they brought with them from India, they were able to shape the cultural identity of Fiji. They have helped to enrich the multicultural society that makes Fiji the wonderful place it is today. Through immigration they have brought another culture to Australia that we have embraced.

As a State member of Parliament I, like other members, am often invited to events and ceremonies, but I particularly enjoy the ones hosted by different cultural groups. I enjoy the opportunity to learn more about their culture and history. As I have stated previously in this House, the Liverpool region is a melting pot of culture. In Liverpool there are 160 nationalities, speaking 150 different languages. I am especially interested in the positive work of different cultural groups in my area. This Saturday night I will be pleased to join the International Girit

Association in Australia and its president, Mr Krishna Raju, to celebrate Fijian Indian culture at the commemoration and awards night marking 100 years since the end of Girit. This event will celebrate and acknowledge the contribution that Fijian Indians have made to our community through business, volunteering and community development.

Mr Raju—or Raju as he is often called by his friends and the local Fijian Indian community—has shown a great deal of passion for and dedication to his community. He hosted one of the largest festivals that I attended in Liverpool last year, Fiji Day 2015, which celebrated the forty-fifth anniversary of the Independence of Fiji. He works continually to bring his community together. I truly admire that. I was pleased recently to present to Mr Raju with a cheque for the celebrations on Saturday night. We are all looking forward to attending, and I know the importance of the celebration to his community. I emphasise the importance of Girit to the Fijian Indian population in New South Wales and within my electorate. I thank Mr Raju and the International Girit Association in Australia for bringing together our community to celebrate and acknowledge our local Fijian Indians.

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (18:44): I commend the member for Holsworthy on making, yet again, a magnificent private member's statement. She spoke in particular about Indo Fijians. I put on the record that the NSW Parliament Asia-Pacific Friendship Group last night held a function in support of those affected by cyclone Winston in Fiji, which was a most unfortunate recent disaster. The member for Holsworthy attended the function last night to support the fundraising activities for the benefit of that community. I commend the NSW Parliament Asia-Pacific Friendship Group for the great work it does, and the efforts of various members of this Parliament last night.

INGLESIDE COMMUNITY

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning) (18:45): Tonight I make a private member's statement about the community of Ingleside, within the greater community of Pittwater. As members would appreciate, and as is true of many of the wonderful electorates we represent, my community of Pittwater is passionate about the beautiful natural heritage—and in fact the built and cultural heritage—of which it has custodianship. The community is very defensive and protective of the incredible natural environment that we get to share and steward on our way through this world.

In many ways, we have one of the most beautifully sculptured pieces of coastline and bushland found anywhere in the world. The ribbon of little coastal villages that hugs the Pacific and the incredible geomorphological feature of Pittwater itself create some of the most extraordinary environments. It is one of the truly mega diverse areas of our continent. I understand that the area of Ingleside alone, an area of about 700 hectares, has greater biological diversity than the United Kingdom.

Driving through this area is a little like driving through the communities of Carmel, Big Sur or Sausalito in the United States. It is a little like Cinque Terre in Italy or the Jurassic Coast of the southern coastline of Britain. It reminds me of the drive from Dili to Manatuto in Timor-Leste. It is one of the most beautiful places and an area that I am incredibly passionate about. I certainly encourage all members to take the opportunity to visit Pittwater; and when they do, they will go through the quirky little area of Ingleside. I mention this area in particular because it is the focus of a lot of concern in the community about what the future holds for this incredible part of the Pittwater landscape.

I put on record my view that this is the gateway to Pittwater. It is an incredibly important part of the community. It is an area that has been subject to conversations about rezoning since the early 1960s when the blue hatch zone was put in place. I think that was back in 1961. It contains some incredible heritage. There are 25 identified highly significant Indigenous heritage sites. There is the incredible Baha'i temple, one of just seven in the world. The incredible Baha'i community brings such peace and diversity to the Pittwater community. There is also more recent archaeological evidence, like the mysterious Carl von Bieren's powder works, after which Powder Works Road is named. The incredible little Ingleside house was built out of the remnants of the powder works after, sadly, it blew up.

There are so many stories of the amazing people who have helped shape the character of Ingleside. It is incredibly important that we respect and protect it, restore the environment and use the opportunity that growth can bring to make the community more accessible and to shine a light on some of the wonderful activities that happen there. Camp Kedron, a Christian children's campsite, has been operating there for many decades and bringing joy to children from across Sydney and New South Wales. The Ingleside Scout Camp is right next door and just on the threshold of the Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park. It is an incredible site and provides incredible opportunities, and many great things have been done there for many decades.

There are many great peri-urban services—things like the Animal Welfare League NSW, Monika's Doggie Rescue and Wirreanda Nursery. These are important groups in of our community that provide opportunities for employment and for social interaction and development, as well as carrying out the important task of improving animal welfare. I acknowledge the great work at the Ingleside shelter and of people like Sam King. She is providing young people with opportunities for employment and more employment locally.

I am pleased to say that with the plans for Ingleside we are looking at more than 300 hectares being set aside—that is, around one-third of the site—for environmental conservation. Another third of the site will be left largely as it is, and then there is the opportunity for a vibrant new community right at the gateway to Pittwater. It is a precious part of our environment and an area that I certainly am keen to work with the community to preserve for future generations.

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (18:50): I commend the member for Pittwater for his private member's statement. As someone who drove the Big Sur coastline in January this year, I can attest to his comparison between parts of Pittwater and parts of that stretch of the west coast of America. In addition to highlighting some of the features and the wonderful character of the Ingleside area, including its position as the gateway to Pittwater, the member for Pittwater also demonstrated his strong appreciation of heritage and the environment. I put on the record that not only are his constituents lucky to have him as their local member but also we are lucky as a State to have him as our Minister for Planning.

He appreciates the importance of heritage and the environment and balances those considerations, along with the obvious importance of sensible development of our State. I have no doubt that the character of not only Ingleside and Pittwater but also New South Wales will be enhanced through his involvement in the various processes. He has highlighted happily some of the particular features of his local area that, through his involvement and the involvement of other locals, are being enhanced today. I congratulate him on all his work and his statement today.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Private members' statements having concluded, and in accordance with standing and sessional orders, the House stands adjourned until 12.00 noon on Tuesday 31 May 2016.

The House adjourned at 18:52.