



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Sixth Parliament  
First Session**

**Tuesday, 31 May 2016**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Visitors .....  | 1  |
| Visitors .....  | 1  |
| Private Members' Statements .....   | 1  |
| Motor Vehicle Repair Industry .....   | 1  |
| Wallsend Electorate Cost of Living .....  | 2  |
| dubbo electorate soap box challenge .....   | 3  |
| narellan rural fire service .....   | 3  |
| TRIBUTE TO William Currey, vc .....   | 4  |
| Pacific Highway Upgrade .....   | 5  |
| HASTINGS CO-OPERATIVE CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS .....  | 5  |
| CLIMATE CHANGE .....  | 6  |
| Albury Brave Hearts on the Murray Dragon Boat Club .....                                    | 7  |
| Newcastle Court House.....  | 8  |
| narrandera correctional facility proposal .....   | 8  |
| LIFESTART twentieth anniversary.....  | 9  |
| UNIVERSITY CAMPUS CULTURE.....  | 10 |
| National Schizophrenia Awareness Week .....   | 11 |
| Campbelltown Community Building Partnership Program Grants .....                            | 11 |
| Wollondilly Poultry industry .....  | 12 |
| Mulgoa Electorate Award Recipients .....  | 13 |
| Distinguished Visitors.....   | 14 |
| Distinguished Visitors.....   | 14 |
| Visitors .....  | 14 |
| Visitors .....  | 14 |
| Announcements.....  | 14 |
| Centenary of First World War .....  | 14 |
| Members .....   | 15 |
| Opposition Whips .....  | 15 |
| Appointment .....   | 15 |
| Members .....   | 15 |
| ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF ORANGE .....  | 15 |
| Resignation .....   | 15 |
| Vacant Seat .....   | 15 |
| Bills .....   | 15 |
| Terrorism (Police Powers) Amendment (Investigative Detention) Bill 2016 .....               | 15 |
| Public Lotteries Amendment (Keno Licensing) Bill 2016 .....                                 | 15 |
| Superannuation Administration Corporation (Pillar) (Authorised Transaction) Bill 2016 ..... | 15 |
| Assent.....   | 15 |
| Question Time.....  | 16 |
| AUBURN CITY COUNCIL AND MR RONNEY OUEIK.....  | 16 |

## TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Regional growth and investment .....   | 17 |
| local government Amalgamations .....   | 18 |
| state infrastructure.....  | 19 |
| Local Government Amalgamations .....   | 20 |
| REGIONAL SCHOOLS INFRASTRUCTURE.....   | 21 |
| POLITICAL DONATIONS AND SPENDING CAPS .....  | 22 |
| REGIONAL HOSPITALS redevelopment.....  | 22 |
| LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS .....   | 23 |
| Regional jobs and infrastructure .....   | 24 |
| Documents .....  | 26 |
| NSW OMBUDSMAN .....  | 26 |
| Reports .....  | 26 |
| Auditor-General's report .....   | 26 |
| Committees .....   | 26 |
| Legislation Review Committee.....  | 26 |
| Reports .....  | 26 |
| Petitions.....   | 26 |
| Petitions.....   | 26 |
| Business of the House .....  | 27 |
| Business Lapsed.....   | 27 |
| Motions Accorded Priority .....  | 27 |
| Pacific Highway Upgrade .....  | 27 |
| Consideration .....  | 27 |
| Local Government Amalgamations .....   | 28 |
| Consideration .....  | 28 |
| Pacific Highway Upgrade .....  | 29 |
| Priority .....   | 29 |
| Distinguished Visitors.....  | 33 |
| Distinguished Visitors.....  | 33 |
| Condolences.....   | 33 |
| DEATH OF THE HON. THOMAS LANCELOT LEWIS, A FORMER PREMIER AND FORMER<br>MEMBER FOR WOLLONDILLY ..... | 33 |
| Bills .....  | 42 |
| Coastal Management Bill 2016.....  | 42 |
| Second Reading .....   | 42 |
| Third Reading .....  | 62 |
| Norfolk Island Administration Bill 2016 .....  | 62 |
| Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2016.....  | 62 |
| First Reading.....   | 62 |
| National Parks and Wildlife Amendment (Adjustment of Areas) Bill 2016.....                           | 62 |
| Second Reading .....   | 62 |
| Third Reading .....  | 73 |

## TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Water NSW Amendment (Staff Transfers) Bill 2016.....      | 73 |
| Second Reading .....                                      | 73 |
| Third Reading .....                                       | 77 |
| Budget Estimates .....                                    | 77 |
| Budget Estimates 2015-16 .....                            | 77 |
| Private Members' Statements.....                          | 78 |
| tribute to KATHY MARVELL, OAM .....                       | 78 |
| LAURIETON ROTARY CLUB fiftieth anniversary .....          | 78 |
| Cronulla Wastewater Treatment Plant .....                 | 79 |
| Local Government Amalgamations .....                      | 80 |
| SHORT-TERM accommodation LETTING.....                     | 81 |
| Bills .....   | 82 |
| Emergency Services Levy Insurance Monitor Bill 2016 ..... | 82 |
| Returned.....   | 82 |

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Tuesday, 31 May 2016**

**The SPEAKER (The Hon. Shelley Elizabeth Hancock)** took the chair at 12:00.

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

*Visitors*

### VISITORS

**The SPEAKER:** I welcome to the Speaker's gallery Mr Paul Middleton, President, Albion Park Chamber of Commerce, guest of the member for Kiama.

*Private Members' Statements*

### MOTOR VEHICLE REPAIR INDUSTRY

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill) (12:11):** I have spoken many times in this House of my long association with the motor vehicle repair industry. There are many motor vehicle repair businesses located within the Castle Hill electorate, all eagerly awaiting important amendments to legislation relating to this industry, which will be debated in this Chamber later this year. On Friday 13 May this year I had the great pleasure of attending the Future Skills Forum and Innovation Expo and the opening of 3M's Automotive Aftermarket training centre in Blacktown in Western Sydney in support of this industry. The expo was a joint effort to help jumpstart the automotive industry by stimulating industry growth and creating new job opportunities. The highlight of the day was the pledging of more than 100 jobs from businesses to encourage young people into the industry.

Greg Preston, Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Association of Progressive Repairers, who organised the event, summed up the industry's situation by saying, "Our industry is in a crisis, with a massive shortage of skilled tradespeople. The ageing workforce, their likely exit from the industry in the next five years and the lack of new blood entering is a reality the industry must come to grips with now and plan to overcome." The good news is there is no shortage of groups and organisations setting up and making a difference, many of whom were in attendance on the day.

The forum brought together key stakeholders from the automotive collision repair industry including automotive manufacturers, collision repair companies, insurance companies, suppliers, training and education organisations including TAFE NSW, custom-car builders and community groups. It was also a platform to showcase the latest innovations in auto repair capabilities. A list of keynote speakers from the industry included Matt Braid, the managing director of V8 Supercars, who spoke of broader career opportunities within the industry beyond the shop floor. Representatives from TAFE NSW and other training support organisations were there to outline what incentives and support are available to organisations that wish to commit to new training opportunities.

Community group Whitelion, who work with Dural Men's Shed, highlighted the support they provide through their membership on a wide range of skills and experience. A globally recognised innovation company, 3M, recently earmarked Sydney's west as the key location for its state-of-the-art training facility in Blacktown. Sydney's tradies are set to benefit from this world-class training centre as it will be available to tradies, students and apprentices from many industries including automotive collision repair, metals, construction and graphics application.

Legendary custom car designer and star of the popular automotive show *Overhaulin'* and 3M Global Brand Ambassador, Chip Foose, officially opened the automotive training centre on the day. Chip is an icon of the industry and gave an inspiring speech on his passion, commitment and dedication to the automotive industry and what it had given back to him through his life. I had the great opportunity to chat for a while with Chip about his career and how the industry has changed over the years. He noted that despite all the changes in technology, he is still able to draw a concept-car design faster than a computer can generate one. Chip is a great talent and a lovely guy; he is a great ambassador for this industry.

The world-class 3M training facility consists of practical and classroom-based elements, and is home to two fully operational workshops, each fitted with the latest equipment, which provide an opportunity for students to become familiar with productive techniques relevant to their chosen industry. The functioning panel shop comes complete with a commercial spray-painting booth with exhaust extraction and compressed air services and has the capacity to train students in sanding, welding, adhesives, painting and vehicle wrapping. There are also

multiple work spaces with two acoustically treated training rooms, enabling classes to be undertaken while the workshops are in use. The 3M training centre has been designed specifically to contribute to the students' skillsets by encouraging hands-on experience using cutting-edge 3M technology, which, in turn, significantly increases their job placement and career advancement prospects.

3M's \$2 million investment in this facility in Western Sydney addresses the demands of technology advances and will provide emerging trade professionals, graduates and industry partners with greater skills and knowledge to achieve productivity growth outcomes. The day was also a great opportunity to hear the amazing work done by Greg Preston and the AAPR. Greg is a passionate and articulate advocate for the industry, who recently teamed up with industry stakeholders to launch the *AutoSkills.org* website, which is a direct platform for employers, job seekers and apprentices to find and fill jobs in the industry. On the day of the expo Greg set a goal to have 100 jobs pledged, and the very next business day 141 jobs were pledged by businesses for new industry employees. Here we see tangible benefits of jobs growth—young kids being given a chance which is making a difference in their life.

Combined with this, we also heard from Adam Gibson, Whitelion's business development manager, who connects at-risk teenagers with positive mentors and employment opportunities. The message from Adam was simple: Many of these youths have the talent and the desire to be something more—they just need the right support, structure and opportunities. I had the great pleasure of speaking to the group about my experience in the industry and how it has evolved over the years. I thank all those involved on the day, including Greg Preston from AAPR and Andrew King from 3M, who are doing a marvellous job advocating on behalf of the motor repair industry.

### WALLSEND ELECTORATE COST OF LIVING

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (12:16):** Wallsend is a diverse electorate in the Hunter that has many wonderful suburbs, but there is one issue which weighs heavily on the minds of all residents all of the time: the cost of living. Cost-of-living pressures are always present and they cause financial and emotional stress for everyday families, especially in working-class suburbs in the electorate: Jesmond, Shortland and Beresfield. While the price of gas increased by 17.3 per cent over the past year, electricity distribution networks are being privatised—obviously to give the Government a quick kickback in the short term—inevitably resulting in higher electricity prices for locals.

As well, the Government is forcing our water distributor, Hunter Water, to charge more than it should be, causing great stress to many residents who have limited financial capabilities to pay for the increased cost of utilities. For older locals, successive Federal budgets have cut pensions, with the goal of increasing the age of retirement, and have cut billions in funding from our local hospitals, the John Hunter and Mater hospitals, all of which leads to greater pressures on the wallets of those who have worked hard their whole lives and causes them severe financial stress as they face retirement.

Thousands of older people are living week-to-week, in some instances without any heating in winter, and on a cold weekend such as last weekend they really struggle because they cannot afford to pay their gas or electricity bills. Our young people are in the same boat; they are finding it increasingly difficult to purchase a home or even to find somewhere to rent due to a waiting list of more than 10 years for rental accommodation in Wallsend. The rate of unemployment is too high in the Hunter; job creation is very low and statistics for 2014 show a lack of apprenticeships.

Although it is widely accepted that a decent education leads to decent jobs, the Premier has accepted the Prime Minister's cuts to education, which are worth billions of dollars. That decision affects the people of Wallsend. There must be a focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics to help boost the manufacturing industry and jobs in the Hunter. Instead, all we are given is a two-tiered system. Those who can afford to attend private schools receive a better education; those who attend public schools are lagging behind. Public schools also have infrastructure backlogs and high maintenance costs.

Many of our young people are not receiving the best education possible and are unable to prepare for the jobs of the future. As a result, their future money-making and job prospects are limited. That is not acceptable; it is not what Australia is about. The people of Wallsend want a fair health system, a decent education for their children, reasonable pensions and capped utility costs. Most of all, they want to be satisfied that their children and grandchildren will receive the best education and start in life that they deserve. I ask the Premier to stop playing games with the cost of utilities and to ensure that they are affordable for our community so that pensioners do not suffer in the cold weather.

### DUBBO ELECTORATE SOAP BOX CHALLENGE

**Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Deputy Premier, Minister for Justice and Police, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Racing) (12:21):** Today I wish to talk about the inaugural Dubbo electorate Soap Box Challenge. Public advocacy, political campaigns and representing the interests and concerns of our communities, particularly in the bush and regional New South Wales, have always been topics at the top of the soapbox list. I am the proud owner of a genuine soapbox, which was gifted to me by former Deputy Premier Ian Armstrong. The Nationals have a long history of using the soapbox, with megaphone in hand, to state our case and ask for support. Sir Charles Cutler also is famous for his use of the soapbox.

I used the premise of the soapbox to initiate a competition for young people in my electorate to talk about an important issue in our region. This competition is aimed at improving public speaking skills, which will assist young people in job interviews and carrying out leadership roles at school, in sports clubs and so on, and allow them to grow in confidence. It also provides young people with an opportunity to demonstrate pride in their local community. Four preliminary zone rounds were held across the Dubbo electorate in Mudgee, Wellington, Narromine and Dubbo. The competitions were held in town halls, at local schools, under a rotunda, and on the grounds of the Taronga Western Plains Zoo.

Each of the contestants spoke passionately on their topic. I was proud of their efforts and commend the help and support they received in preparing their speeches from their families, friends and school teachers. One boy and one girl were selected from each community to attend the final, which was held in Victoria Park, Dubbo. Upwards of 100 people from the community attended the event to listen to the eloquent contributions of the students. The local Men's Shed cooked a barbecue for the families and friends who attended. The topic of the inaugural Soap Box Challenge was "Why are country towns still important?" It is also an important topic in this House, and members who represent regional areas and country communities speak passionately about it.

It was pleasing to hear the level of understanding that students had about the value of country towns and, more importantly, the challenges faced and opportunities presented in regional areas. Local identities in each area assisted with judging the competition. Elizabeth Tickle, Editor of the *Central West Lifestyle Magazine*, was the chief adjudicator. Former member of the Legislative Council Lloyd Coleman and Mayor Des Kennedy assisted with judging in Mudgee. In Wellington, councillor David Grant—who is not related to me—and principal Don Harvey were adjudicators. In Narromine, deputy mayor Sue McCutcheon and Matthew Barrett were adjudicators, and deputy mayor Ben Shields and Mr Peter Bartley adjudicated in Dubbo.

Letitia Quince, who is also from Dubbo Youth Council, emceed the finals and did a wonderful job. The young people involved were competing for two trophies: the Hon. Gerald Beresford Ponsonby Peacocke Memorial Trophy for the boys and the Judy Jakins Perpetual Trophy for the girls. These trophies are in honour of two local identities who have done much for our State and region. The Gerry Peacocke memorial trophy was presented to James Barton from Macquarie Anglican Grammar School by Mr Peacocke's widow, Nancy Peacocke, and his son Sam. I appreciated their attendance and support for the event. The winner of the girl's competition was Maree Pobje from Dubbo College Delroy Campus, and I was very grateful that Judy Jakins was present to support the event and present the trophy.

The finalists included Manjot Kuar from Mudgee; Melanie Peschka and Thomas Hawke from Wellington; Ella Geyer, Daniel Flannery and Tom Donnelly from Narromine; Sarah Lydon and Laura Paxton from Dubbo; as well as the winners. The finalists proudly represented their communities and did a wonderful job. I am not sure that their families had been aware of their talent for public speaking. It was great to see the families and the broader community so engaged in this competition. I look forward to the continuation of this format, which gives young people in country towns an opportunity to have a voice.

### NARELLAN RURAL FIRE SERVICE

**Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (12:26):** Last week my colleague the Hon. David Elliott, Minister for Emergency Services, visited my electorate to present to the Narellan Rural Fire Service [RFS] brigade a grant of \$5,000 for state-of-the-art communications equipment. The brigade members were very happy to see the Minister, and equally happy to see the cheque—which will provide the brigade with a new computer and touch screen display. The new equipment means that our volunteer firefighters have access to the very latest technology, which assists crews to respond to emergencies, deliver training and participate in exercises. The Narellan RFS is the ninth busiest brigade in New South Wales.

All RFS volunteers in New South Wales undertake continued training so that they maintain the highest standard of professionalism and capability in order to provide our communities with the highest level of assistance and protection during times of emergency. The new technology will help RFS brigades and officers to share resources, facilities and information across the Macarthur area. In 1884 the Fire Brigades Act (No. 3) formalised



the State Government (NSW Fire Brigades), and 12 years later the first volunteer bushfire brigade was established in Berrigan. In 1901 the Careless Use of Fires Act was passed, and in 1906 local councils were given the authority to form brigades. By 1950 there were 1,378 bushfire brigades with over 26,000 personnel. In 1959 the first residential school for volunteer firefighters was established in Heathcote Scout Hall, costing approximately £250.

How things have changed over the years. The NSW Rural Fire Service is now a world-class organisation. With more than 2,065 brigades and over 70,000 volunteers, the organisation has grown from strength to strength. The NSW Rural Fire Service's expertise is sought by rural fire services throughout the world and our volunteers have travelled overseas to assist in devastating fires. The brigades are equipped with over 4,000 tankers, 72 catering vehicles, 55 bulk water carriers and 41 communication vehicles. With this new equipment, the Narellan RFS will now be at the cutting edge of communication. The Macarthur region RFS brigades are so much a part of our community. The volunteers who contribute to our local brigades are to be commended for their commitment and dedication.

Brigades in the Macarthur zone are Austral, Bringelly, Camden West, Casula, Catherine Field—the sixth busiest brigade in New South Wales—Cobbitty, Hoxton Park, Kemps Creek, Kentlyn, Leppington, Luddenham, Lynwood Park, Menangle Park, Minto Heights, Narellan, Varroville and Wedderburn. I make special mention of group officer Alf Raistrick. As a member of the RFS he has served the community for 64 years and he is still going strong. Alf joined the service when he was only 12 years old and he is still an active member. It is his intention to serve for another five years. I am sure the community also hopes to see him continue his service.

I also thank the members of the Narellan RFS: Captain Robert Pate, Senior Deputy Captain Daniel Perriman, Blake Foster, Glen Bannon, Lee Hoppitt, Marty Russell, Matthew Broadribb, Phil Brown, Aaron Lamont, Adam Felton, Andrew Hamilton, Andrew Heaney, Barry Jones, Anthony Voysey, Connor McDonald, Dale Overton, Daniel Crawford, Daniel Henkel, Darryl Colless, Drew Doty, Edward Storey, Lizzy McLoon, Jamie Atkinson, Jason Azzopardi, Luke Colless, Mick Jackson, Natalie Heaney, Pat O'Toole, Patrik Czimmernings, Sean O'Toole, Stephen Felton, Tom Kirk and Tim Russell. These selfless volunteers often work in dangerous and emotionally and physically challenging environments.

We cannot count the number of human lives, animal lives and the amount of property and infrastructure that have been saved as a result of their actions. I thank all the people at Narellan Rural Fire Brigade and all RFS brigades in the Macarthur area for their efforts in keeping our region safe. As the Minister for Police and Emergency Services said on Friday, if it were not for our volunteers a number of things would not occur. No government could afford to pay them and, if they did not do the work, either it would not get done or it would not get done to the current outstanding standard. So I thank every volunteer for their wonderful efforts.

### TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM CURREY, VC

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (12:31):** This afternoon I want to refer to an extraordinary Australian who served this country during World War I. He was awarded the Victoria Cross for gallantry on the Western Front and he served his community in this Chamber as the member for Kogarah. William Currey was born in Wallsend near Newcastle in 1895. He eventually moved to Sydney and took a job as a wire worker near Leichhardt. When war broke out Currey tried many times to enlist but was unsuccessful because he was underage. Eventually he was accepted into the army, having met the minimum age requirement, and he was posted to the Western Front. In late 1917 Currey fought in the battle of Polygon Wood with the Australian Imperial Force [AIF] but it was during the 100-day offensive at the battle of Mont Saint-Quentin that Currey entered the history books as the recipient of the Victoria Cross [VC]. The supplement to the *London Gazette*, which carried the field despatch of 14 December 1918, tells the story as follows:

Pte. William Matthew Currey, 53<sup>rd</sup> Bn., A.I.F. For most conspicuous bravery and daring in the attack on Peronne on the morning of 1<sup>st</sup> September, 1918. When the battalion was suffering heavy casualties from a 77 mm. field gun at very close range, Pte. Currey, without hesitation, rushed forward under intense machine-gun fire and succeeded in capturing the gun single-handed after killing the entire crew.

Later, when the advance of the left flank was checked by an enemy strong point, Pte. Currey crept around the flank and engaged the post with a Lewis gun. Finally, he rushed the post single-handed, causing many casualties. It was entirely owing to his gallant conduct that the situation was relieved and the advance enabled to continue.

It seems jarring to us today that, after such conspicuous bravery in an overseas war that is historically seen as hugely important to Australia's identity, Currey would return to Australia and not be able to find work. Yet, sadly, that is what William Currey faced upon his return. In his maiden speech in this place he said:

When I returned from the last war it was unpleasant to move about looking for a job. Finally I had to seek the assistance of the Colonial Secretary ... I once starved in the Country for a few weeks.

William Currey was awarded the VC for his country, yet he could not find employment upon his return to Australia. One gets a sense that it was this injustice for him and his comrades that drove his clear commitment to assisting Australian soldiers and fighting to redistribute wealth in Australia. In his maiden speech he said:

The Hon. Member for Mosman said that he was here to assist people who can help themselves. But my objective as a Labor Member will be to assist those who cannot help themselves.

I also want to see better social services for the people. I want to see something of the new order, and living conditions made better for the poorer members of the community and for our heroes fighting overseas.

It has been interesting to correspond with William Currey's Ancestor Betty Scott. Ms Scott reported to me that William re-entered the army at the outbreak of the Second World War as a warrant officer in the Australian Instructional Corps. She said family lore was that William would not wear a hat while working in that position because it was customary for men of all ranks to salute a Victoria Cross recipient and William did not want to draw attention to himself. Betty pointed out to me recently that the plaque dedicated to William and displayed in the Speaker's Square had become blackened and was unreadable. I reported this to the Speaker, and I am grateful that she arranged for the plaque to be restored to its pristine condition. William Currey was an extraordinary Australian. One of the first to attempt to enlist in the war, he was a decorated soldier who risked his life many times in the service of his comrades. William was a committed labourist who entered public life because he had lived the inequities of the unrestricted free market and believed it was his duty to do something about it.

### **PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADE**

#### **HASTINGS CO-OPERATIVE CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS**

**Ms MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley) (12:35):** Monday 16 May 2016 was a historic day for the mid North Coast and the Macleay Valley in particular. Federal member for Cowper Luke Hartsuyker, New South Wales Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight Duncan Gay, former members for Oxley Bruce Jeffery and Andrew Stoner and I welcomed the opening of the new \$614 million Frederickton to Eungai section of the Pacific Highway upgrade. It was a day full of meaning in the lives of so many people on the mid North Coast as we joined rescuers who had assisted after the 1989 Clybucca head-on bus crash to open the new four-lane carriageway. The Clybucca tragedy remains Australia's worst ever road accident. It was the catalyst for the upgrade and duplication of the Pacific Highway from Hexham to the Queensland border, following the recommendations of the then New South Wales Coroner, Derek Hand.

This upgrade will dramatically improve safety by removing the notorious Clybucca Flat stretch of road from the highway network and taking heavy vehicles off local roads. There are emergency service workers, support workers, doctors, nurses, counsellors and neighbours who lived near the crash site who will never forget that event. Some probably still think of it every day. The new, modern dual carriageway will improve road safety by providing a wide median to significantly reduce the likelihood of further head-on collisions. The number of head-on crashes has so far been reduced by more than 60 per cent, from more than 100 to fewer than 40 a year. That saving of lives means that an extraordinary number of people will not have to experience the suffering that so many others have in years gone by. The opening of the Frederickton to Eungai section of the highway upgrade means that two-thirds of the duplicated highway is now open to traffic. The section of road is also testament to the ability of our engineers, project managers, civil contractors and construction firms to deliver a major piece of high-quality infrastructure under budget and within the estimated time.

Later this year, hopefully in two or three months, the 22-kilometre Nambucca Heads to Urunga upgrade will also open. By the end of the year motorists will save more than 90 minutes in travel time between Hexham and the Queensland border. The number of lives lost continues to decline with each new milestone reached. Since the upgrade began, the number of lives lost on the Pacific Highway has halved. It is great news that the Federal and New South Wales Liberal-Nationals governments have been able to work together constructively to deliver this road upgrade early and under budget, overturning the 2011 Federal Labor decision to abandon the 80:20 funding split. Under Labor this highway upgrade could have taken another decade to complete. I acknowledge in particular the work of former Deputy Premier Andrew Stoner in ensuring the continuation of funding at a time when the New South Wales budget faced huge constraints.

Last week I had the pleasure of attending the 100th birthday celebration of five magnificent ladies, residents of Bundaleer Gardens in Wauchope. It was a true celebration and was held as part of the Hastings Co-operative centenary celebrations. With a large number of friends and families in attendance—not to mention the sensational morning tea—the event was a warm and wonderful occasion. It was inspiring. The ladies at the centre of all the attention were Dulcie Debreceeny—born on the Comboyne mountain, she lived a tough life that we could not even imagine—Edith Jackett, Adrena Elm, Val Foster, and Olive Roberts. Adding to the atmosphere was the display of a collection of interesting memorabilia and antiques. Family members gave speeches reflecting

on some of the changes that our communities have seen in the past 100 years. Congratulations to the organisers for a terrific event and to the ladies for reaching 100 years young.

### CLIMATE CHANGE

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (12:39):** Today I put on the record the demand of my community—our food growers and farmers, our working families, retirees, the young and the vulnerable of my electorate—that the Baird Government stare down the inaction and lack of courage of its Federal counterparts and insist that strong action on climate change be taken, and that the Baird Government commit to taking strong action in this State. At this point in time global warming is beyond dispute—even for most of the flat-earthers, climate deniers and sceptics, who still populate the Coalition Government in this State and federally. We are in a climate emergency as the world heats at the swifter end of climate scientists' predictions.

At the Climate Code Red website, David Spratt reports satellite data from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration [NASA] agency on the February 2016 mind-blowing temperature spike. The average global temperature in February hit 1.35 degrees Celsius above the global norm for the past 50 years and close to 2 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial benchmark of the mid-eighteenth century. The further north on the planet, the greater is the increase from the norm with February in Alaska, Scandinavia and much of Russia being above monthly averages and a massive 6 degrees above average in areas that lie north of 75 degrees latitude. Melting resulted in the lowest extent of Arctic Sea ice ever recorded for February.

Global average temperatures were smashed in March and in April 2016. On those figures, the goal of the Paris Agreement to keep the increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius is already a pipedream. I will not list the devastating impacts of global warming that already are having an immediate effect; but, in particular, affecting our region are the more frequent droughts in the Mekong delta and the severe impact that that has had on rice growing. Besides suffering from drought that had been brought on by the seasonal decrease in rainfall due to climate change, many provinces in the Mekong delta will be flooded by the year 2030. That region alone has a population of 20 million people and provides food for tens of millions of others across Asia.

In our Pacific region this year we saw the devastating impact on Fiji of category 5 Cyclone Winston. Severe weather events in the Pacific are predicted to multiply. How we support our Pacific neighbours will be very real for us now—not in some distant future. I note that our dear twin members of Parliament friends from Bougainville are in the New South Wales Parliament currently. I was with them at the Pacific Women's Parliamentary Partnerships Forum earlier this year. Madam Acting Speaker, you will not be surprised to hear that all of the 50-plus delegates at that conference spoke only about climate change.

Here, close to home, the coral bleaching of the barrier reef is an outrage. We knew it was coming. In April this year we discovered that 93 per cent of the Great Barrier Reef basically is bleached. Lo and behold, what in 1999 Professor Ove Hoegh-Guldberg told us exactly would happen, now has happened. We not only have had to stand by and watch inaction from successive governments in Queensland but also have had to watch Abbott Point, which is one of the largest coalmines in the world, dredge and deposit 1.1 million cubic metres of spoil onto the Great Barrier Reef.

In case members think that only left-wing Greenies care about climate change; all of the major banks in this country have released policies on climate risk in their business lending, especially to large fossil-fuel projects. Bank mortgage portfolios—which make up nearly two-thirds of the big four banks' total loans—will be exposed to risks because of hazards made worse by climate change. There is no coherent framework in New South Wales for ensuring the Government delivers an adequate and coordinated response to climate change. Since the New South Wales Greenhouse Gas Reduction Scheme was scrapped in 2012 following the introduction of the Federal carbon price, the responsibility for reducing greenhouse gas emissions largely has been left to the Commonwealth.

At the same time there has been a winding back of adaptation frameworks, such as the current Government's withdrawal of the NSW Sea Level Rise Policy Statement that formerly informed planning decisions. Jurisdictions throughout the world as well as the Australian Capital Territory have enacted legislative frameworks. We know it can be done. The Greens have a Climate Change Bill that will require current and future New South Wales Governments, across all departments and in coordination with local councils, to plan for and deliver effective action for climate change mitigation and adaptation. I will borrow Judith Brett's poignant observation in the *Nation Reviewed*: If we had enough time, the incremental politics of "slow boring of hard boards" would no doubt eventually reduce the world's carbon emissions to safe levels. But we do not have enough time.

**Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Trade, Tourism and Major Events, and Minister for Sport) (12:44):** I thank the member for Ballina for her private member's statement. I inform the House of the

New South Wales Government's Renewable Energy Action Plan, which was instituted in 2013 and has an arrangement to report annually against performance targets set out in the action plan. We have been able to attract more than \$582 million of funds from the Australian Renewable Energy Agency [ARENA] for renewable energy action in this State. Some 14 per cent of the energy used in New South Wales now comes from renewables. The action plan sets out a target of 20 per cent by 2020. We recently opened the new 100-megawatt Nyngan solar power plant, showcasing around the globe that New South Wales is a fantastic location to continue to invest in renewables. Just this morning I met with a European Union [EU] delegation visiting the New South Wales Parliament as part of EU Green Week and informed them of a \$10 billion pipeline of future Renewable Energy Action Plan projects.

### **ALBURY BRAVE HEARTS ON THE MURRAY DRAGON BOAT CLUB**

**Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (12:45):** The Club Crew World Championships of dragon boat racing were held from 1 to 7 April at the A. M. Ramsay Regatta Course in Adelaide. Without fanfare, it seems Australia has embraced this emerging sport. What is remarkable is that one of the crews representing our nation at the world championships has a minimum age of 50 and comes from Albury and the border area. Dragon boat racing is a fast-growing sport, with some 3,200 club members in New South Wales alone from about 60 clubs. Crews comprise 10 or 20 paddlers, with a drummer to beat the time and a sweep to steer from the rear of the boat.

The crew from Albury Brave Hearts on the Murray dragon boat club became the fifth fastest in the world over 500 metres, and the seventh fastest crew over 200 metres, in the 10s, mixed, senior B category, where the minimum age is 50. The Brave Hearts club sent 18 members to the Australian championships, and 16 of these members also competed in the world club titles, which were held at the same venue over the following week. Some other clubs brought teams of up to 100 members to Adelaide. Brave Hearts was one of the smallest clubs competing.

Brave Hearts raced against other clubs in the same categories from around the world, including Germany, Canada, Singapore, Dubai and New Zealand. It was a huge achievement for the Brave Hearts even to get to compete in the world club championships. What they noticed at the event was that in many cases the margins between crews came down to a single second. The titles were that close, and the Albury and border team found they were highly competitive. The Brave Hearts crew could see its times improving throughout the regatta. Founded as an activity for cancer survivors and supporters, the Brave Hearts dragon boat club has grown now to include people who simply love the sport. This April marked 10 years since the club members built, over a nine-month period, and launched their first boat—a 12-metre craft named simply *Brave Hearts*. As expected, it features the head and tail of a dragon.

Team manager, Leanne Pigram, reflecting on the national titles, said that, towards the end of the last day, the crew had to get off the water and come around to the marshalling area to race one more time. Clearly they were exhausted and should have simply finished there and then. But there were two paddlers who had not yet been out on the water that day. On seeing their two friends, the crew made the decision not to pack it in but to head out for one last race, despite flagging physical strength. They did this for each other. As Leanne said, "Everyone was exhausted, but we were there for each other. It was so heartwarming, and this is what the Brave Hearts are all about." Cancer survivors and their supporters remain an important part of the club. Some time ago, Jodie Hart, a paddler herself, wrote an inspirational piece, which the club continues to use, called "Sink or Swim". This highlights the moment when a person with a cancer diagnosis has to make a decision about their future and about the treatments on offer. She wrote:

Am I going to sink or swim? A lot of us want the doctors to answer this for us, but ultimately we have to make the decision and somehow become comfortable with it. The treatments are often harsh. If we decide to swim it's not going to be in some nice clean swimming pool! The waters can be rough and dirty and dangerous. Unfortunately the only way is through, but at the other end is hope and often cure.

And some people simply can't swim. For those people we now offer a boat. Not just any boat, but the meanest, fiercest Dragon Boat you will ever see! You no longer have to visualise yourself swimming through huge waves with no idea how to swim in the first place! Just let us know if you feel you're drowning and we'll swing on by in our twelve metre boat and lift you gently in. We'll keep you afloat. And when you're feeling stronger we'll have a paddle waiting for you and we'll teach you to paddle. Together we can propel that dragon through.

I thank all members of the Brave Hearts Dragon Boat Club for their involvement in, and enthusiasm for, their sport. They are a great example of people who support each other through the ups and downs of everything life throws at them. They show a lot of heart. In particular, I would like to acknowledge and thank their coach, Michael Beazley, who did a stellar job to get the club to the national and world titles; assistant coach Nerida Millward; crew captain Greg Reif; club coordinator Pauline Harbick; and team manager Leanne Pigram. Finally, the national championships are coming to Albury. We expect to welcome dragon boat teams from across Australia next Autumn for a week of dragon boat racing on the border. The encounter promises to be fiery.

## NEWCASTLE COURT HOUSE

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (12:50):** Earlier this year I was pleased to attend the opening of the Newcastle Court House, years after the former Labor Government initiated its construction. In June 2010 the then-member for Newcastle, Jodi McKay, announced a \$94 million "justice precinct". This would be the biggest court complex outside Sydney and would replace the outdated courthouse in Church Street. I am pleased the current Government continued Labor's vision for the new precinct. I use this occasion to call on the Premier to ensure that this time, if the Government insists on selling the courthouse, the funds from the sale of this city landmark, the old Church Street courthouse, are invested back into Newcastle. We were told that the decision on the future of the former Newcastle Court House would be made within the first quarter of 2016. In February this year, nearing the deadline, we received a letter from the Minister for Justice and Police, following a constituent inquiry on the future of the Church Street building. The constituent was concerned about the state of the building and the disrepair it was falling into. Minister Grant assured the resident, in a letter, that:

... the grounds at the front of the courthouse were landscaped recently, in preparation for the sale of the building.

He also said that:

... the sale of the Newcastle Courthouse will be timed to coincide with the opening of the Newcastle Justice Precinct, which is currently expected to open in February 2016.

It is now 31 May 2016, nearly June. The former courthouse sits dormant in Church Street and constituents have contacted me again with the same query: Why are they letting it sit there and rot? I can understand the concerns. Just down the road, the old Newcastle Post Office sits. This building, once stately and beautiful, is now boarded up and is routinely reported on in the local media. The post office has been infested with pigeons and rats; it is extensively storm and water damaged; and it was housing squatters. The Newcastle Post Office, like the historic Newcastle Court House, is heritage listed—they are part of Newcastle's original settlement, a precinct where Government House and other administrative infrastructure were situated in 1804. It is a landmark building, situated within an historic area of Australia's second-oldest city. This precinct is an area that is larger than The Rocks in Sydney. So why is it that its future is such a mystery?

This question is not a new one. In January 2014 the then-Liberal State member for Newcastle had announced that the Newcastle Court House would "go on the market in a few weeks". On Australia Day that same year, Ann Hardy from the Hunter Region Committee of the National Trust wrote an opinion piece in the *Newcastle Herald*. Ms Hardy was concerned that discussions had already taken place with developers. However, the wider community and heritage authorities had not been consulted. On this point, we have a plan that was being formed in 2014 on alleged discussions with developers and no consultation with our community. This sounds like the same style of government we are dealing with today in Newcastle—no consultation with the community, no actual plan for the Newcastle Court House, alleged discussions with developers.

While I am not advocating for a knee-jerk reaction on this landmark, I believe that the community should be informed on what is planned for the former Newcastle Court House. We are now officially three months overdue for the opening of the justice precinct, if you were listening to Minister Grant. But considering the former member for Newcastle was talking about this issue in 2014, we on this side of the Chamber are definitely ready for a decision now. We need to apply the lessons that have been learned from the Newcastle Post Office that this Government has left to rot for years and years. Let us not let this landmark building slide into disrepair; let it live on. I urge the Government to tell the people of Newcastle the plan for the former Newcastle Court House.

**Mr DARYL MAGUIRE (Wagga Wagga) (12:54):** I thank the member for Newcastle for bringing these matters to the attention of the House. I am very pleased to be part of a government that has delivered the long-awaited courthouse that was announced under Labor but never delivered. Like a lot of projects around this State, Labor made announcements in the lead-up to elections but never put a dollar to support them. If the member for Newcastle had supported some of the initiatives put before this Parliament by the Government he would see a lot more improvements. Opposition members are the recipients of initiatives of this Government which they voted against. They voted against more jobs in their regions and the renewal of infrastructure. They should get on board and support the Government and then they will see a lot more in Newcastle.

## NARRANDERA CORRECTIONAL FACILITY PROPOSAL

**Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Cootamundra) (12:55):** I refer to Narrandera, one of the wonderful towns in my electorate. At the junction of the Sturt and Newell highways and perched beside the Murrumbidgee River, the New South Wales township of Narrandera blends elegance, environment and history, bringing an oasis of tree-lined streets, shady parks and gardens. The population of Narrandera is approximately 4,000, of which 11 or 12 per cent are Indigenous. Recently I received a letter from Judy Charlton, Chief Executive Officer, Narrandera Shire Council in relation to its interest in a correctional facility in Narrandera. Ms Charlton outlined the reliance on agriculture in Narrandera. She said that it accounts for about 20 per cent of employment and is

obviously a very strong contributor to economic and social benefits of the Narrandera Shire. She went on to say that there are potential impacts of climate change on the agriculture industry and the council wants to make sure that it is exploring and facilitating diversification of the local economy through the attraction of new business investment and development. Ms Charlton stated:

The council is very keen to support and be proactive in the attraction and development of new industry, business and development. This potentially could include the development of a correctional facility in Narrandera shire that would support economic growth of the Shire. Such a facility would also strengthen and enhance the existing economic base through the creation of new jobs. Narrandera Shire is also well placed due to its proximity to two major highways to support the transfer of offenders from Sydney or other Regional locations.

Ms Charlton continued:

I understand that such a development would require a more detailed study of the suitability of our Shire and we are more than happy to work with Correctional Services in engaging with the community and consider, within planning guidelines, development approval of such a facility.

Development of a correctional facility would also address the most common rural threat in a rural community, reliance on a few main industries to support the local economy.

I have quoted this letter in the interests of making sure that Narrandera is considered in the mix in relation to the decision to locate or create a new correctional facility. I think that Narrandera would be a terrific location for a correctional facility.

**Mr John Robertson:** A member of the former Government used to live in Narrandera.

**Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON:** Indeed, a member of the former Government lived in Narrandera and she is very proud of that too. Narrandera is a great location. A correctional facility would bring great incomes to families in the area and job security. Recently I inspected the very well-run Junee correctional facility, which is in my electorate. It brings great job security and income into that part of New South Wales. The proposal by Narrandera Shire Council should not be overlooked. There are many wonderful facilities in Narrandera, such as Lake Talbot Swimming Complex and the major fisheries centre of the Department of Primary Industries. It is only about 341 kilometres from Canberra, 420 kilometres from Melbourne, 550 kilometres from Sydney and 850-odd kilometres from Adelaide. It is a centrally located area. I commend to the House the letter from Narrandera Shire Council indicating its strong interest in any proposed correctional facility, which I will send to the Minister for Corrections.

**Mr DARYL MAGUIRE (Wagga Wagga) (12:59):** As Parliamentary Secretary for Corrections, I thank the member for Cootamundra for bringing this matter before the House and I will ensure that the correspondence reaches the Minister for his due consideration. The member is correct that centres such as this have an economic benefit for communities. I commend Narrandera Shire Council for taking the initiative and having the foresight to seek, along with other communities, the benefit of such a facility.

#### **LIFESTART TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy) (13:00):** Today I inform the House of the invaluable contribution of Lifestart, an intervention support program for young children with disabilities based in Putney in my electorate of Lane Cove. Lifestart is a non-government organisation assisting children and young people, their families and carers through early intervention, support and specialised therapy programs. Lifestart's vision is that all children and young people aged up to 24 years are able to participate inclusively and meaningfully in their community. Lifestart celebrates its twentieth anniversary this year. It has grown from early beginnings in the North Sydney region with eight families in a single classroom to being a leading provider of support services across New South Wales. Lifestart values a highly collaborative approach so that in addition to supporting a child and their family it works closely with other service providers and mainstream services so that families' needs are seen as the major focus by all service providers.

Lifestart is working closely with the New South Wales Government and the National Disability Insurance Agency [NDIA] to ensure that people's transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme [NDIS] will lead to improved outcomes for them, their families and carers. It has been my privilege to announce that Lifestart has recently been successful in obtaining funding to the sum of \$538,157 from the Department of Early Education under the Intervention Support Program. The Intervention Support Program is designed to improve learning and educational outcomes for those children who are below school age and prepare them for inclusion in early childhood education programs and school. It achieves this by improving their educational opportunities, learning outcomes and personal development. This support is delivered by way of individual education programs at home, in early childhood intervention centres, child care, family day care and occasional care centres.

Lifestart uses a family-centred model of practice and an individual plan is developed with each family. The transition to school begins by providing families and caregivers with information about the transition process,

and by giving families full information about the school options available to them. Families are supported in the choice they make and Lifestart actively promotes communication between the school and the family in the months prior to school. From 1 July the National Disability Insurance Scheme will be rolled out and people with disability and their families in Lane Cove will be able to access the NDIS. The National Disability Insurance Scheme has partnered with Lifestart to deliver local area coordination in year one districts. Lifestart is working on the transition of all people currently receiving disability funding and support in New South Wales and preparing them for the NDIS.

The NDIS means that more people with disability will get better support and access to jobs and funding. Having the NDIS in our neighbourhood will create close to 300 new jobs and boost funding to more than \$200 million a year by 2019. On behalf of the New South Wales Government and our community, I thank and congratulate Lifestart's chief executive officer, Suzanne Becker, and her staff for their commitment and all the invaluable work they do with and for our young people in the community. I acknowledge and pay tribute to the inspiring individuals who started this work for their vision and foresight. I look forward to working closely with Lifestart into the future.

### UNIVERSITY CAMPUS CULTURE

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (13:03):** Sexual assault anywhere, any time and committed by anybody is an unforgivable act. Sexual assault on university campuses must no longer be ignored. Along with many of my constituents I welcomed the University of Sydney's announcement last week that it has improved its reporting mechanisms. The university's decision to engage respected former Sex Discrimination Commissioner Elizabeth Broderick to address the concerning culture in campus colleges shows leadership and real action.

What is clear is that this is a pervasive problem affecting campuses across the State, a problem that requires leadership and action from government. To this end, the question must be asked: After two years, why has the Minister for Education still not acted on requests from St John's College to restructure its council following the near death of a student in a botched initiation ritual in 2012? Given the recent reporting of sexualised and inappropriate behaviour at university colleges, I would think this would be a high priority for the Minister. But it is clear that when it comes to cleaning up campus culture this Government is content to leave fixing the problem to others.

I do not think that is good enough, and neither do my constituents. The University of Sydney recently released the results of a September 2015 survey showing that an alarming 25 per cent of students had experienced sexual harassment or assault, unwelcome sexual behaviour, stalking or, indeed, rape. The report by the National Union of Students entitled "Let's Talk About It" puts the national figure at closer to 75 per cent. We have heard revelations that female students' names and their supposed sexual relationships are published in part of a Wesley College journal called the "Rackweb". Wesley students were made to apologise after visiting the Kings Court Massage Parlour as part of an initiation prank and threatening to expose the identities of sex workers. Earlier this year University of New South Wales college students were caught singing a misogynistic chant that glorified rape, sparking student protests.

These problems are not new and they will not go away by themselves. In 2012 a young woman almost died at St John's College at the University of Sydney after drinking a deadly concoction of alcohol, shampoo, dog food, Tabasco sauce and rancid milk. The St John's College Act gives the New South Wales Government responsibility for the make-up of the college's governing council. Following the incident, the college requested that the Minister clean up the college. It has been two years and the college is still waiting. I am deeply concerned about what message that sends to students. We need concrete action to remove sexual assault and harassment from the university experience, and we are not getting it from this Government. The recent response from the University of Sydney shows leadership, but it represents action on just one campus. The problem is not limited to colleges; we need to alter campus culture fundamentally if we are to eliminate sexual assault.

That is why last month I gave notice of a motion calling on the Government to investigate introducing mandatory consent training on our university campuses. Teaching active consent ensures there is a broad understanding that someone who is silent, incapacitated or not resisting sex is clearly not giving consent. It ensures that consent is understood as an ongoing process so that saying yes to one thing does not immediately give permission for everything. It means students understand that consent must be continually sought and given, and it redefines the responsibilities students have to one another. There are precedents around the world for this approach. California became the first State in the United States to define consent along these lines and to force colleges to scrupulously investigate allegations of sexual assault. Cambridge and Oxford universities in the United Kingdom are now enforcing compulsory consent workshops for all college residents.

I gave notice of my motion because we owe it to the young victims—the vast majority of whom are women—to do something about this problem. The shadow Minister for Education, Jihad Dib, and I have written

to the Minister demanding prompt action at St John's College and all university colleges across the State. The reason we have written to the Minister and why I am speaking up is that we know we must act to clean up campus culture and stop sexual assault and harassment. We owe it to the universities that are stepping up to the challenge but want to be backed by the Government. We owe it to those who have bravely spoken out for justice and who refuse to stay silent any longer. We owe it to the young people who will fall victim to the same crimes unless we do something about the problem now. Silence and inaction are not good enough. It is time to act.

### **NATIONAL SCHIZOPHRENIA AWARENESS WEEK**

**Mr DARYL MAGUIRE (Wagga Wagga) (13:08):** From 14 May to 2 June activities are being run to recognise National Schizophrenia Awareness Week. Schizophrenia Fellowship of NSW Chief Executive Officer Mr Rob Ramjan, AM, wrote to me recently and said, "What we know is that we are not hearing enough about schizophrenia and it is undoubtedly Australia's last big taboo. It's a hidden illness and it's time this changed." He also provided me with some key points. He said that schizophrenia is a common illness, with between 1 per cent and 3 per cent of the population affected. Up to four people close to those people are also impacted, with well in excess of one million Australians impacted directly. Mr Ramjan said it is most likely that one of my political associates or I will have a close relative with schizophrenia.

We believe it is the most stigmatised condition in Australia. Many people in the community believe schizophrenia is scary, hopeless, violent and untreatable. That is inaccurate. People with schizophrenia have one personality like everyone else, and they are suffering with a health condition. The community does not realise that schizophrenia is a common and treatable condition. Obviously it is concerning that it is estimated that only half of the people affected by schizophrenia have access to clinical assistance and that there is a great deal of ignorance about the topic. Research indicates that 30 per cent of carers avoid telling people outside their immediate circles about their situation because of feelings of guilt. In addition, 60 per cent of people in this situation have been subjected to negative and offensive attitudes. Mr Ramjan says that he wants people to be aware of the free service that can support and guide them towards local support groups that may help them. The initiative is called MiNetworks and it can be accessed by calling 1800 985 944. Mr Ramjan concludes his letter by stating that "schizophrenia is a common illness that is largely treatable, with recovery of a good quality of life possible for most people".

Mr Ramjan has been involved in the Schizophrenia Fellowship for a long time. Through his work and that of the fellowship, we have been able to establish Sunflower House in Wagga Wagga, which assists people suffering from schizophrenia. I acknowledge the important work done by Dr Ray King, the chairman of the Schizophrenia Fellowship, which is located at Sunflower House. Governor Bashir opened the facility and I am its patron, and since it was opened it has gone from strength to strength. I have noted a change in the way that people in my electorate deal with those suffering mental illnesses. That is thanks to the help provided by Sunflower House to people affected by mental illness, who can regain their health with the right support.

I commend the staff, who have worked tirelessly and who continue to help people suffering with a mental illness. On Friday night I attended a function at Sunflower House to recognise the contribution made by Koorindal Rotary, which received a \$50,000 Community Building Partnership Grant and which raised an extra \$70,000 to extend Sunflower House to provide new kitchens and catering facilities. Those facilities will enable people to learn how to cook and to regain skills they have lost because they have a mental illness, and will improve the general amenity of Sunflower House. The building was destined to be disposed of by the State Labor Government. The site included a derelict Roads and Maritime Services building and Sunflower House, which was occupied by squatters.

As a result of the work done by our community and with the support of many organisations in the region, we managed to secure the heritage building from the Government, to refurbish it and to rebuild it, and we now have these wonderful extensions. We also managed to obtain extra land from neighbouring entities and Sunflower House will now be able to provide a premier service, using the clubhouse model, for people suffering from a mental illness. I acknowledge the sponsors who gave money and the people who donated products and services to the builders. I thank everyone who has been involved in ensuring that Sunflower House has better facilities. I also commend the work of the board, which is under the guidance of Dr Ray King and others and which had the foresight to establish Sunflower House in 1999. It is a great credit to the entire region, to the people who support it, and to Dr King and others.

### **CAMPBELLTOWN COMMUNITY BUILDING PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM GRANTS**

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (13:13):** I congratulate the 14 community groups, organisations and sporting clubs that were awarded grants under the Community Building Partnership program in Campbelltown. As my colleague just stated, the Community Building Partnership program, which was established in 2009 by the Labor Government, benefits many organisations in our community. The program provides cash



grants for the improvement of the facilities used by charities, religious groups, sporting clubs and other community groups and organisations.

Macarthur Diversity Services Initiative was the biggest beneficiary from this program in Campbelltown. It was awarded a grant of \$45,000 to perform vital repair work on its historic, heritage-listed building so it can continue to provide diverse services to many in my electorate. Kentlyn Scouts were awarded a grant of more than \$9,000. In 2010, almost six years ago, they conducted a safety audit of their hall and, among other issues, substantial termite damage was found. They did not have the money to pay for those repairs so they applied for grants over and over again. It is simply fantastic that they have finally received this much-needed money, which will be used to help keep the boys and girls safe when attending Kentlyn Scouts. Leumeah Scouts also benefited from the program. Their grant of \$28,000 will be used for kitchen renovations and, importantly, the installation of a security system. For many years they have been the victim of numerous break-ins and constant vandalism but with a new security system they will be able to focus on what they do best—helping kids involved in Scouts to have a good time whilst learning new skills.

Sunnyfield Disability Services also received a grant to improve its outdoor facilities and playground. Sunnyfield has been operating in Campbelltown for more than 40 years. It currently services more than 80 clients in the Macarthur region and the overwhelming majority are children, teenagers and young adults with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities. Last month, with the Federal Member for Werriwa, Laurie Ferguson, I attended the official opening of Sunnyfield's new headquarters at Campbelltown. It is great to see more than \$11,000 from the Community Building Partnership program being used to support this wonderful organisation. Local sporting clubs have also done very well. Indeed, 30 per cent of the grants awarded under this program went to sporting clubs, including rugby union, soccer, athletics and baseball clubs.

Campbelltown Collegians Athletics Club will use its \$10,000 grant to purchase an electric cart to help the mums and dads who volunteer every Friday night to both set up and pack up the equipment the kids use. The mighty Bradbury-Ambarvale Bears Soccer Club received more than \$33,000 for an awning extension and retaining wall, which it has desperately needed for many years. Harlequins Rugby Club will spend its \$20,000 on upgrading the clubhouse canteen and kitchen. The Ghosts Baseball Club will use its \$10,000, together with a contribution from Campbelltown City Council, to construct dugouts for its batting team.

Off the field there are plenty of other projects worthy of a quick mention. Civic Disability Services will use its \$10,000 to upgrade the bathroom at its group disability home in Blair Athol. Hume Scouts received \$15,000, which will be used to resurface the car park at the Dumaresq Street hall. Thanks to a grant of almost \$42,000, the Australian Foundation for Disability [AFFORD] will now be able to renovate its centre on Allman Street, including the installation of air conditioning. And Kentlyn Rural Fire Service will continue to keep our residents safe. It received a grant of \$29,000, which will go towards the purchase and installation of a back-up diesel generator. This is hugely important because bushfires often result in power outages.

For those keeping tally, in one year that is \$300,000 in grants to groups and organisations in Campbelltown. All the recipients are deserving of the grants they have received and are an invaluable part of the fabric of the Campbelltown community. I again congratulate them and I am looking forward to addressing this House again next year on another round of successful grant recipients. In closing, I acknowledge my friend Warren Browning, Senior Vice President of the NSW Naval Association, President of the Naval Association of Australia Campbelltown Sub-Branch, and Vice President of the Campbelltown RSL Sub-Branch, who is seated in the Speaker's gallery.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Melanie Gibbons):** I welcome Mr Browning to the Parliament of New South Wales.

### **WOLLONDILLY POULTRY INDUSTRY**

**Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (13:18):** I join the member for Campbelltown in welcoming Warren Browning to this House. Today I will discuss the importance of the poultry industry in Wollondilly; it is an integral component of the Wollondilly economy and job growth. Members must not forget the impact of agriculture and livestock on our State. In New South Wales the poultry industry has a gross value of \$722 million and a retail value of approximately \$2.4 billion.

In this process, poultry directly provides 6,000 jobs with a flow-on benefit of some 39,000 jobs across the State. All of this accumulates to a roughly \$1.6 billion input to our State. The data illustrates that this sum is expected to grow by 3 to 4 per cent a year and shows that this is a growing industry that, for the sake of the New South Wales economy, cannot be neglected. Given this is our fifth largest agricultural commodity, it is of extreme importance that members of this House have a fundamental understanding of the poultry industry so that we may work together to foster its growth as well as the growth of the agricultural industry across the board.

The poultry industry is of paramount importance to the community of Wollondilly. The Wollondilly shire contains 28 poultry farms, which represent roughly 12 per cent of all poultry farms in New South Wales. Of the companies that process poultry in New South Wales, four out of five are located in the Wollondilly shire. The shire has 14 per cent of treating facilities in New South Wales, four hatcheries, five breeder farms and 129 sheds, constituting 32 per cent of sheds located within the Sydney Basin. Within the Sydney Basin alone, the poultry industry is currently valued at more than \$190 million, to which Wollondilly shire contributes \$50 million to \$60 million.

The poultry industry in New South Wales has proven itself to be adaptive and capable of meeting new, dynamic industry requirements. One example of this is the desire of consumers to move to free-range poultry and eggs. The RSPCA has introduced new standards, such as the Approved Farming Scheme which has three levels of operation. The first level is the introduction of animal welfare requirements which exceed the minimum agricultural necessities; the second is that the Approved Farming Scheme offers distinct product approvals; and the third stage allows customers to identify ethical and sustainable poultry goods.

The Approved Farming Scheme not only provides a huge benefit to the animals in the poultry industry through a higher standard of care but also allows consumers to identify ethically sourced meats and eggs and rewards the agents in the industry who run their sheds ethically. However, due to these high industry standards and as consumers move towards free-range eggs, the poultry industry must utilise more efficient harvesting practices on greater land area. Currently, the poultry industry is inhibited by both area and size restrictions, and this is exacerbated by the limitation in area growth resulting from noise and smell restrictions. As a result, the poultry industry in New South Wales is experiencing difficulties in meeting the ever complex desires of the consumer.

The Government must fight to ensure that the agricultural sector is well equipped to meet the needs of a growing population and can continue to provide massive benefits to our economy. One method that we should look at is allowing the expansion of growth of existing poultry sheds. New South Wales is currently experiencing a glut in the poultry industry. Many poultry processors are contemplating moving to other States where council regulations are more flexible. By allowing the expansion of existing sheds, we will enable producers to increase production and harvests. This undoubtedly will have the further benefit of jobs creation within New South Wales and kickstart renewal within our growing agricultural sector.

A second way the Government can help is to revisit the operating hours of poultry farmers. In my electorate, 73 per cent of poultry farmers are bound by noise restrictions imposed by local councils which do not allow for harvesting between 10.00 p.m. and 7.00 a.m. By permitting rural producers to harvest or collect birds during night-time hours, poultry farmers will be able to increase output and have more revenue to meet the ethical standards outlined by the Approved Farming Scheme. Harvesting during night-time hours is integral to the welfare of the animals as they tend to experience lower stress levels during the night and are less exposed to extreme heat.

Last week, when speaking to many poultry farmers in the Wollondilly electorate, I learnt of the importance of the work of poultry farmers not just for the industry but for the local economy. Without a change in local council restrictions, many of these farmers will not have their contracts renewed by processing plants, and this will mean job losses in the many hundreds. Wollondilly Shire Council is looking at this issue, and just this week I raised the plight of the farmers with the mayor and general manager. We are working on this issue together. My strong sense is that by working together—the industry, the council, the community, and me—we can save this industry. I want to make it very clear to the farmers in the Wollondilly electorate that I will stand side by side with them and work through these issues to ensure that they can continue to farm. I commend them for their efforts and for what they do for our local economy.

### MULGOA ELECTORATE AWARD RECIPIENTS

**Ms TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (13:23):** Today I commend individuals from the Mulgoa community and Nepean region whose efforts and noteworthy contributions have stood out and are worthy of recognition in this place. First and foremost, I extend my congratulations to Mrs Sharon Chamberlin on being named the 2016 Mulgoa Woman of the Year in recognition of her selflessness in all of the work and service she dedicates to the community.

As members are aware, the Local Woman of the Year award acknowledges women who have made notable and outstanding contributions to their communities and have accomplished positive outcomes for the local area. Sharon Chamberlin has been recognised for her role as the coordinator of Junior Jivers, a musical activity playgroup run by Glenmore Park Anglican Church that is aimed at supporting mothers with young children by accessing reliable day care and activities. Sharon voluntarily devotes her time to working with the mothers and children who participate in the Junior Jivers program. She often dedicates more than 30 hours per week to ensure that all feel welcomed and included, which illustrates her caring and friendly disposition.

Unsurprisingly to anyone who knows Sharon, she is not one to draw focus upon herself. As a result, the presentation of her award took place at Glenmore Park Anglican Church whilst she was involved in Junior Jivers activities. Sharon is a mother of four children. For this young woman to give so much of her personal time to members of the Glenmore Park community and to other young mothers is truly an outstanding achievement. We all greatly value and appreciate her efforts and her love for her community. I am always struck by the fortitude and strength of the women who are nominated for a Local Woman of the Year award. Without a shadow of a doubt, Sharon Chamberlin is no exception to that view.

Further, I acknowledge and congratulate Mr Scott Wheeler on receiving the 2016 Mulgoa Senior Achievement Award. Scott was presented with this honour for his ongoing community service work as a volunteer with and now chairman of Nepean Food Services. Mr Wheeler is a worthy recipient, having dedicated many hours to help those who are vulnerable and require assistance in the Mulgoa community and beyond, especially elderly residents who wish to remain independent in their homes. Initially, Scott was a volunteer for Nepean Food Services before taking on the role of chairman of the organisation in 2012.

Nepean Food Services has been operating in the Penrith local government area for nearly 25 years as a not-for-profit incorporated organisation, providing services for elderly and frail residents as well as for those living with a disability and their carers. It stands out as an exemplary organisation in advancing the needs of others. As members in this place are aware, the 2016 NSW Seniors Local Achievement Awards celebrate seniors' achievements in a range of categories, including business, environment, science, agriculture, health and wellbeing, learning, and community service. Our seniors play a crucial role in the direction of our State, and individuals like Scott exemplify their selfless and sacrificial service. Such service is emblematic of the character of the seniors of Mulgoa and New South Wales, whose life experience provides them with the ability to empathise with others.

Few professions require a higher level of courage, dedication and commitment than that of policing. We are incredibly blessed to have so many men and women heed the call of service and join the ranks of the NSW Police Force to undertake the vital work that is necessary to maintain order and decent societal living standards. Their work is often fraught with violence and danger. All members should pause for a moment to reflect on the way in which each of our local area commands serves our institutions, such as this Parliament, and our constituents. Undoubtedly, the people of Mulgoa hold our police men and women in high esteem and great respect.

I would like to mention Leading Senior Constable Troy Bulpett, who was named Police Officer of the Year in the St Marys Local Area Command at a ceremony held last month. A review of Troy's work shows that police men and women across our great State share our view of his character and abilities. Troy is well respected and incredibly admired by his colleagues. On behalf of the people of Mulgoa I extend my sincere, deep and lasting gratitude to Troy Bulpett and to all men and women who have put on the blue uniform. In concluding my remarks, I reiterate how grateful I am to serve a community as unbounded and blessed, as self-assured and driven, and as future orientated and community focused as that of Mulgoa. It is for this reason I continue to strive to serve this wonderful community with great enthusiasm and passion each and every day.

**The TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Melanie Gibbons):** Private members' statements having concluded, I shall now leave the chair until 2.15 p.m.

#### *Distinguished Visitors*

### **DISTINGUISHED VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr Kazi Imtiaz Hossain, High Commissioner of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, and Ms Wahida Ahmed, Counsellor and Head of Chancery.

#### *Visitors*

### **VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I also welcome Jacinta Allan, from Pymble, guest of the Attorney General and member for Vacluse. I welcome Barbara and Doug Tozer, guests of the Parliamentary Secretary for Southern New South Wales and member for Cootamundra. I welcome 18 members of the Sydney University Parliamentary Networking Program, guests of the member for Seven Hills. I welcome Judy Hunt and Tony Buckton, guests of the member for Keira. I welcome students from the Belmont High School, guests of the member for Swansea.

#### *Announcements*

### **CENTENARY OF FIRST WORLD WAR**

**The SPEAKER (14:18):** The Centenary of the Battle of Jutland, which took place from 31 May to 1 June 1916, allows a brief reflection on the role of the Royal Australian Navy [RAN] during the Great War. At

the outbreak of war, the Royal Australian Navy was, by proclamation of the Governor-General, transferred to the control of the Royal Navy. Our fleet consisted of 16 ships and two submarines with a total of 3,800 personnel. Those two submarines, *AE1* and *AE2*, had notable roles in the war. *AE1* was lost off Rabaul as part of Australia's first engagement of the war. The hunt for it remains to this day. *AE2* played a vital and indeed perhaps pivotal role in the Gallipoli campaign. She too was lost. Indeed, the two submarines were the only capital losses of the fleet.

HMAS *Sydney* achieved fame as the destroyer of the notable German raider, the *Emden*, in the great battle of Cocos and was present at the surrender of the German High Seas Fleet in 1918. HMAS *Pioneer* played a significant role in one of the lesser known theatres of war against the German Empire in East Africa. By the end of the war our fleet had grown to a complement of 37, with 5,000 personnel. The fleet saw action in the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian oceans. There were only 108 deaths among naval personnel. Twice as many were from the Spanish flu of 1918 as from enemy action. There was no Australian involvement in the Battle of Jutland, which was the greatest naval engagement of the entire war and the only clash of full battleships.

Over two days of intense fighting, both sides withdrew from what proved to be an indecisive conflict. Nevertheless casualties were great. The British fleet lost 14 vessels of the 151 involved and 6,784 lives, while the Germans lost 11 of 99 ships and suffered 3,039 casualties. Four Victoria Crosses were awarded following this mighty engagement. Although indecisive in outcome, the failure of the Germans to break the stranglehold of the British naval blockade of the Baltic and North Atlantic, in which many Australian ships participated, was a major factor in leading to the eventual defeat of the German Empire. Interestingly, the most decorated unit of the RAN was the RAN Bridging Team, a land-based unit mainly of reservists who were responsible for the ship-to-shore transfer of men and materiel and distinguished themselves at Suvla Bay. They were the last unit evacuated from Gallipoli. Lest we forget.

#### *Members*

### **OPPOSITION WHIPS**

#### **Appointment**

**Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:21):** I inform the House of the election, on 26 May 2016, of Nickola Lalich as Opposition Whip and, on 31 May 2016, of Gregory Charles Warren as Deputy Opposition Whip.

#### *Members*

### **ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF ORANGE**

#### **Resignation**

**The SPEAKER (14:22):** I advise the House that, on 30 May 2016, I received a letter from Andrew Robert Gee, resigning his seat as member for the electoral district of Orange.

#### **Vacant Seat**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy) (14:22):**  
I move:

That in accordance with section 70 of the Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act 1912, the seat of the member for Orange be declared vacant by reason of the resignation of Andrew Robert Gee.

**Motion agreed to.**

#### *Bills*

### **TERRORISM (POLICE POWERS) AMENDMENT (INVESTIGATIVE DETENTION) BILL 2016**

### **PUBLIC LOTTERIES AMENDMENT (KENO LICENSING) BILL 2016**

### **SUPERANNUATION ADMINISTRATION CORPORATION (PILLAR) (AUTHORISED TRANSACTION) BILL 2016**

#### **Assent**

**The SPEAKER:** I report the receipt of messages from the Governor notifying His Excellency's assent to the abovementioned bills.

*Question Time***AUBURN CITY COUNCIL AND MR RONNEY OUEIK**

**Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:25):** My question is directed to the Premier. Given that counsel assisting the Auburn City Council inquiry has revealed that Ronney Oueik gifted the council's head of planning thousands of dollars worth of kitchen renovations, what will it take for the Premier to suspend his Auburn candidate, Mr Oueik, from the Liberal Party?

**Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) (14:25):** As the member knows, that is a matter for the Liberal Party. I wonder where the member for Wollongong is. Is she still a member of the parliamentary party? I make a couple of points to the Leader of the Opposition on this matter. We have an inquiry into Auburn City Council that was instigated by the Government, by the Minister, to look at any irregularities. That is what this process is about. If there are irregularities they will come to light and there will be consequences. That is what the Government has done in relation to that process. It is not going to surprise anyone who has been in this House for the past few months or even years that the Leader of the Opposition's go-to lever is smear. He loves it; he pulls it. It does not matter that this is the week before the budget. I know that the shadow Treasurer has not told the Leader of the Opposition that the budget is coming up. I hear somebody interjecting that he does not know either, but he does.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Government members will come to order. The member for Kiama is not helping.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** It is the last parliamentary week before the budget.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Keira will come to order. I call the member for Keira to order for the first time.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** I am trying to help the Opposition because those on this side of the Chamber had a lot of practice in opposition.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** When members on this side of the Chamber were in opposition we knew that the last parliamentary week before the budget is a good time to try to pretend to be interested in the budget. It would be helpful if the Opposition did that. Members of the Opposition could ask any questions about health, education or infrastructure. I can see the member opposite who was a good former shadow Treasurer.

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

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order: The Premier should pretend that he is interested in propriety issues in relation to Ronney Oueik.

**The SPEAKER:** Does the member have a point of order?

**Mr Michael Daley:** I do.

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

**Mr Michael Daley:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The Premier was asked what it will take for him to kick this character out of the Liberal Party.

**The SPEAKER:** The Premier has answered the question and remains relevant. There is no point of order.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** I have answered the question. Obviously there is an inquiry underway. Whatever the revelations, there will be consequences for the party. Let them be made. Talking about party matters, there were some interesting developments over the last couple of weeks on the other side of the Chamber. It was quite spectacular. One afternoon last week I had an opportunity for a live broadcast when I saw a caucus meeting going on over on the other side of the Chamber. It was spectacular. All of a sudden there was a discussion about a parliamentary position. I congratulate the member for Cabramatta, the new Whip.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129.

**The SPEAKER:** The Premier answered the question and remains relevant to the question. There is no point of order.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** I do not want to go into all the details but it was very clear. The member for Strathfield, to her credit, got up and made some strong statements against the member for Wollongong. The Hon. Greg Donnelly made comments, then the member for Bankstown got up.

**Mr Luke Foley:** Point of order: This is coming from the bloke who appointed Andrew Cornwall and his brown paper bag.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Auburn does not have a point of order; he simply wants to have a go. He will resume his seat. I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the first time.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** Quite frankly, I do not care what happens on the other side of the Chamber. Those members focus on themselves. There was chaos and carnage. Everyone in the Opposition was against each other. Then, all of a sudden, someone put up his hand and said, "We need to come together." Who was it? Who was the leader-in-waiting? It was the member for Maroubra. He came to the fore, like a hero. It was a date with destiny. It was the moment we have been waiting for. He brought everyone together, and gave them a hug at every turn. While those on the other side of the Chamber may continue to focus on themselves, members of the Government will continue to focus on the people of this State and on delivering more services, more infrastructure and getting the economy back to number one.

**The SPEAKER:** I welcome to the gallery this afternoon the former member for Strathfield, Mr Charles Casuscelli.

### REGIONAL GROWTH AND INVESTMENT

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (14:30):** My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier. How are The Nationals and the Liberals ensuring regional New South Wales remains at the heart of this Government? Will he provide recent examples?

**Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Deputy Premier, Minister for Justice and Police, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Racing) (14:31):** I thank the member for Tweed for his question. He is a wonderful member representing a beautiful part of this State. I thank him for his hospitality when The Nationals conference was held in his electorate over the weekend. Hundreds gathered there to talk about the issues and challenges facing the regions and also to talk about the wonderful successes that are being achieved by this Government and the previous Government.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Maitland and the Leader of the Opposition will come to order.

**Mr TROY GRANT:** This is showing the contempt with which the Opposition usually treats regional New South Wales. When we came to Government we were faced with a geographical discrimination in funding, service delivery and investment in regional New South Wales.

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

**Mr TROY GRANT:** The Government has embarked on a process of recovery for the regions—putting in money for the vital roads, infrastructure and services. The Coalition is back in government and we are now in a phase of rebuilding New South Wales regionally and across the State. Now we are about to enter a period of renaissance for the regions. Growth and opportunities for investment and prosperity are returning to the regions on the back of the hard work, dedication and focus of the people on this side of the Chamber. That hard work is being carried out across a number of fields. With respect to jobs, we hear the Treasurer talk day in and day out, week after week, about the exceptional jobs growth in New South Wales.

The exceptional jobs growth is built on many things—economic levers, conditions and the environment et cetera—but it ultimately depends on confidence. The Opposition drained the confidence out of regional New South Wales, and with the confidence went jobs and investment. The Government has returned confidence to the regions. There have been more jobs created in regional New South Wales than in the entire State of Queensland. Jobs creation in regional New South Wales is growing faster even than in Western Sydney. When those opposite were in government, jobs growth ground to a halt and they left this State with a disgraceful legacy. As the leader of The Nationals, I know that my party often gets stereotyped by the hypocrites opposite—

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

**Mr TROY GRANT:** Members on the opposite side of the Chamber throw out words and try to criticise us. They make out that we are enemies of the environment but we are the greatest custodians of the environment because we live in the environment. In regional New South Wales we work alongside the environment and rely on the environment. Despite the rhetoric, our environmental record stands in stark contrast to the compliance and the accomplishments of those opposite. I can give a number of examples. One is the long-term support of my party for the container deposit scheme, cash for cans. That has been on The Nationals party conference agenda for over a decade. It was delivered by this Government, not by Opposition members.

Let me speak about biodiversity and undoing the horrible and discriminatory Labor legislation that treated farmers and landholders differently from every other landholder in the State. That has been rectified to

achieve better biodiversity outcomes and is yet another example of this Government delivering an outcome through consultation. Add to that this Government's efforts to address coastal corrosion. This Government has allocated almost \$85 million—the largest government allocation in 40 years—to address coastal erosion and look after people who live along our beautiful eastern seaboard. When it comes to the environment, there is no starker example that contrasts Labor members to Government members of this House than coal seam gas [CSG].

A previous Labor Government carpeted the State with licences and covered areas that included the pristine environments of the North Coast. It took this Government, and leadership of the Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy, with support from The Nationals, to make the northern rivers CSG free, and in order to properly manage that issue, to implement strategic rigour and accountability behind any future exploration. That is an example of administration by this Government, which lies in complete contrast to that of Labor governments. Despite this Government's many contributions to conserving the environment, Labor members would have people believe that the Government's involvement in environmental issues is a "Dracula at the blood bank" scenario. The real results and outcomes that protect the environment are being delivered by this Government, and The Nationals very proudly take credit for being big contributors to that success. *[Extension of time]*

When the discussion turns to investing in the regions, it is important to understand what drives regional economies: jobs, growth and industries. In the context of this Government's focus on the environment as it relates to industry, I cite the example of commercial fishing. This Government recognises how precious our marine environment is. The Nationals are very proud to partner with their Liberal colleagues to deliver wonderful outcomes to combine growth in commercial fishing enterprises with environmental outcomes in marine estates. That also is an example of this Government taking action and delivering policy outcomes, whereas Labor members only talk about that. Labor members have been misleading the New South Wales community for 16 years and have neglected to address Labor's geographical discrimination. Upgrades to the Pacific Highway represent the greatest investment occurring in this State to ensure the State has safe roads so that mums and dads can travel without fearing loss of life.

The week beginning 16 May 2016 at Clybucca, near Kempsey—the scene of a bus crash that was the State's greatest fatality—was when that stretch of road was fixed by this Government. More about that will be said later by the member for Clarence. The jobs growth resulting in the upgrade of the Pacific Highway corridor has been extraordinary, but the biggest issue and topic of discussion in relation to regional New South Wales is the lack of equity. People who live in regional areas do not ask to be treated specially or differently; we just want to be treated with equity and fairness. Those who rely on gas for cooking and heating in regional communities and who are not already hooked up to a mains gas line, which is not readily available in the regions, often have had the extra expense involved in relying on liquefied petroleum gas [LPG] and have missed out on a rebate. Under the Government's plan, which is supported by the Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy, that has changed. Pensioners and vulnerable people in regional areas of New South Wales now will be treated equitably in line with their metropolitan counterparts—and that is the way it will stay.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMALGAMATIONS

**Ms JODI MCKAY (Strathfield) (14:38):** My question is directed to the Premier. Has his Government abandoned his forced merger of Strathfield, Burwood and Canada Bay councils?

**Mr Paul Toole:** Never!

**Ms Jodi McKay:** I do not think the Minister has been informed about what is happening.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Strathfield will resume her seat and will refrain from shouting and pointing.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) (14:38):** No, no and no. Undoubtedly, the project involves a court process and the Government will comply with that process. What this Government will do first and foremost, which Labor members do not do, is look after ratepayers in this State.

**The SPEAKER:** I previously warned the member for Keira about interjecting. I call the member for Keira to order for the third time. The next time he interjects, he will be removed from the House.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** While the members attend internal caucus meetings, members of the Government are looking after ratepayers and commuters who are stuck in traffic congestion, building public transport, and providing jobs across the State, having already got the economy moving, and that is what we will continue to do. The member for Strathfield asks that question yet she is happy to abandon the people who live in her electorate.

**Mr John Sidoti:** I'll look after them for you.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** The member for Drummoyne interjects. What a great member! He takes all the queries.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order: I ask the Premier to withdraw that remark because I am not abandoning people in my electorate. The Premier is misleading the House.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Strathfield will resume her seat. There is no point of order. The Premier may or may not withdraw any comment he made. That is up to him.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** All I am saying is that the shadow roads Minister is yet to put a position on where she stands in relation to WestConnex. She is yet to state her position on that.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Drummoyne will cease interjecting and will come to order.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** I would have thought that a shadow roads Minister might be interested in anyone who is travelling from Liverpool having a 30-minute cut in travel time. I would have thought that Labor members would be interested in that.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Bankstown will refrain from shouting.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** I would have thought that someone coming from Parramatta to the airport having a 40-minute saving in travel time would interest Labor members and that they would be backing that.

**Mr Jihad Dib:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The question was about councils, not WestConnex.

**The SPEAKER:** The Premier's answer to the question remains relevant. There is no point of order. The Premier has the call.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** As the member for Strathfield knows, this Government will continue to comply with whatever processes are involved, but what this Government wants to do is look after ratepayers in this State. I encourage Opposition members to try to do that too. If Labor members are interested in supporting ratepayers across the State, they should get on board because this Government is determined to do everything it possibly can. As councils come together, that will result in benefits for local communities in the form of either additional and a broader range of services—child care, additional facilities such as local sporting fields and libraries, more infrastructure or downward pressure on rates—or a combination of all those benefits. Members on the Government side of the House are very proud to be fighting for those benefits and we will continue to fight for them every step of the way. While Labor members continue to ignore traffic congestion in the city and continue to ignore ratepayers, Government members are standing up for the people of New South Wales and we are very proud to do so.

## STATE INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (14:41):** My question is addressed to the Premier. How is this Government delivering projects across our State that make a real difference in people's lives?

**Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) (14:42):** I thank the member for Kiama for his question. It was great to visit his electorate recently and it was great to be visiting the coast with the Prime Minister and local members. The Minister for Transport and Infrastructure and member for Bega is like Bruce Springsteen on the South Coast—the people love him. He is an absolute rock star. Everywhere I went on the South Coast, people wanted to hug the member for Bega and thank him for his service. They wanted him to sing. He is totally appreciated on the South Coast.

During my visit it was very obvious that communities on the South Coast are very pleased with the progress of providing infrastructure. Madam Speaker, you would be aware of the important upgrades and development on the Princes Highway. I will deal with that in more detail later. Among important announcements that we made was one in relation to Merimbula airport and significantly increasing that airport's capacity. It will enable the airport to double the number of passenger jets currently arriving and accommodate larger jets, which will bring more tourists to the South Coast. More tourist income means more jobs, a stronger local economy and more growth—and that is great. It also means more investment in the region and more opportunity for people to see what I believe is one of the most beautiful parts of the world.

I am proud to support the Prime Minister and local members in relation to that airport upgrade. However, the good news does not stop there. Everywhere we turn, there is good news being delivered by this Government. I also visited the port of Eden where an announcement was made relating to the expansion of that port. That expansion will allow the largest cruise ships to dock in Eden, which also will generate more tourism dollars



flowing into the local economy, more jobs, more growth and more opportunities for local businesses. This Government is very proud to be doing that.

Indeed, the New South Wales Government proudly contributed \$32 million. As I am sure you are aware, Madam Speaker, we have just become the largest cruise market in the world. Why would cruise passengers not want to drop in on the South Coast on their way from Sydney to Melbourne? I have no idea why cruise passengers go to Melbourne. Why do people want to go to Melbourne? They might as well go to the South Coast and back up to Sydney. That is what I would be doing and that is what they should be doing. They can stop in at the South Coast on their way, which is great. I also had an opportunity to drop in on the electorate of Kiama to see some good work being done on the Foxground and Berry bypass. Labor spoke about this bypass for a long time—in fact, in every budget it put in a little planning money, but nothing ever came of it.

The great news is that the project is now well underway and is actually being delivered. We went up the highway from the sod turning and now we can see kilometres of highway finally being delivered under this Government. We are very proud to be doing it. The project has created many jobs, and close to 20,000 motorists are saving travel time on a daily basis. There is now access to historic towns such as Berry; it is a great initiative. After the visit we were on the highway and we went past Wollongong, but I did not see the local member. I was reminded, as we went down the Princes Highway, that all the good news for the area has not stopped.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** We are continuing to deliver projects for the region, and those opposite know there is only one group of people—this great Government—that has delivered the Albion Park Rail bypass. Those opposite came into this Chamber and voted against the bypass. Every Opposition member, even the member for Keira, did not want the Albion Park Rail bypass. We are very proud to be delivering it and we know it will make a difference to that community. Everywhere across this State we are delivering infrastructure, as we should. We are determined to deliver infrastructure because we know the difference it makes to people's lives. Whether on the South Coast, the North Coast or out west, we continue at every opportunity to deliver infrastructure that those opposite spoke about and promised but never delivered. The good news is that this Government is delivering it all.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMALGAMATIONS

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (14:47):** My question is directed to the Premier. Given the Government's decision today to withdraw from and pay costs in respect of court action with Strathfield, Burwood and Canada Bay councils, why does the Government not just do the decent thing and drop all forced mergers across the State, not just the ones in marginal Federal Coalition seats?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There are too many interjections and too much shouting. My comments are directed at the member for Keira.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) (14:47):** Just because a member's voice goes up does not make what he is saying true. All of a sudden it must be true! It is not true. The member for Maroubra actually showed some leadership at the caucus meeting last week that I spoke about. He stood up and took control of events. He showed those opposite what leadership is all about. I remind the right wing of those opposite that if they are not happy with their leader, as is the case now, they have the numbers. Have they added up the numbers?

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order: This morning the Government's lawyers waved the white flag and the Government is going to pay millions of dollars in costs.

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

**Mr Michael Daley:** I want to know why the Government does not do so all over the State.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Maroubra will desist from wagging his finger at the Premier. He has raised a point of order, and I accept the point of order. I am sure the Premier will return to the leave of the question.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** I am trying to help those opposite. They are not happy with their leader and the right-wing members have got together, but they have never bothered to add up their numbers in caucus and do not realise that if they came together they could vote in a new leader. The leader is right there; look at him.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order: Madam Speaker, you have just ruled that the Premier was being irrelevant and he is continuing to be irrelevant. I ask you to call him back to the leave of the question.

**The SPEAKER:** I have done that. I again ask the Premier to return to the leave of the question.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** We will continue through the process of council amalgamations. What is our motivation? It is to do the right thing by ratepayers and to deliver more services and infrastructure, and, unlike those opposite when they were in power, we have undertaken the Boundaries Commission process to engage and consult with the community. We will continue to do that. We will take every action to ensure that we are looking after ratepayers in this State. If we are required to amend reports or redo sections, we will do that. I can tell members what we will not do: we will not back away from looking after New South Wales ratepayers.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** For a long time the people in this State have wanted the reforms that we are undertaking. This Government is proud of these reforms and we will continue to undertake reforms because we are motivated by the people of New South Wales.

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

### REGIONAL SCHOOLS INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr THOMAS GEORGE (Lismore) (14:50):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Education. How is the Government investing in school infrastructure for regional New South Wales?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Port Stephens to order for the second time for interjecting even before the Minister has started his answer.

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI (Murray—Minister for Education) (14:50):** I thank the member for his question. This answer needs a big screen behind you, Madam Speaker, projecting a virtual tour of regional New South Wales and all the redevelopments of schools, none of which happened when those opposite were in government.

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

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI:** Perhaps we should do a deal with Samsung or Apple for every member to get a set of 3D goggles so that they can go on a virtual tour of regional New South Wales. I am sure the Minister for Health could do with such screens when she talks about regional hospitals. We could do a virtual tour of New South Wales to show the great work that this Government is doing not just in cities but throughout regional New South Wales. The Government has invested \$3.5 million into rebuilding the Parry School in Tamworth. We have invested about \$9 million into the Dubbo Networked Specialist School. Lake Cathie Public School was first promised by former Premier Bob Carr, but never delivered by Labor when it was in government. Lake Cathie Public School is being delivered by the member for Port Macquarie, Leslie Williams, as part of this Government's school infrastructure projects. The complete rebuilding of Ballina High School has cost about \$40 million. The Yeoval Central School upgrade has cost almost \$2 million. This school was in the electorate of Dubbo and is now in the electorate of Orange.

Last week I was in Wilton, with the member for Wollondilly, where about \$5 million has been spent on the fantastic Wilton Public School. This school has received not just 10 new classrooms but also the most modern structure for those classrooms. The school has open-plan style classrooms with breakout areas and great furniture. I commend the department and the futures unit for their work. We have invested a couple of million dollars on the Narrabri Public School. Three schools in the Hunter deserve special mention because they were identified as having maintenance backlogs. Those opposite may not be aware of these schools because they do not do their homework. Those opposite are a bit lazy. No, I take that back; they are very lazy. Rutherford High School is one of these schools—the member for Maitland should think about this maintenance backlog. This Government has spent \$20 million on virtually rebuilding that school. The second is Hunter Sports High School. For those who live in the Hunter, how many years ago was the earthquake? Was it 1998? If so, it was nearly 20 years ago.

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

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI:** It was 1998, which is nearly 20 years ago. Bracing had to be put in to make sure the school buildings did not fall down. Those opposite said the bracing would be temporary until they worked out what to do. It took this Government to fix this school, which was damaged during the Newcastle earthquake. The Hon. Mick Veitch from the upper House was traipsing around regional New South Wales. He got out his map and saw Moree East Public School on the map. I think he did not actually travel there; he saw it on the map. He was outraged about the maintenance backlog, but he did not realise this Government has invested \$15 million for the complete rebuild of that school. Those opposite talk about the blowout of maintenance to \$750 million—it has "blown out" from \$1 billion to \$750 million.

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

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI:** The Opposition looked at the data the Government provided and saw \$750 million, but its members did not research the data when it was in government and discover it was \$1 billion when they were in office.

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

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI:** I know there is a debate about homework for children, but those opposite should do their homework. A Sydney Basin school, Hurlstone Agricultural High School, is relevant to the regions and important to agricultural education. I am looking forward to a question from the member for Macquarie Fields. The member loves social media, but he is not game to ask a question in the House because he will be given facts about what the Opposition was planning to do while in government. The Labor Party was planning to sell the property to developers and spend that money on nurses and teachers. The money would have disappeared quickly. This Government is selling the school and will use the funds to build a brand new agricultural high school, which will be one of the best in the country and one of the best in the world.

#### **POLITICAL DONATIONS AND SPENDING CAPS**

**Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:55):** My question is directed to the Premier. Will the Government legislate prior to the winter recess to introduce caps on political donations and spending so that they will be in place for council elections that will take place this year?

**Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) (14:56):** Yes.

#### **REGIONAL HOSPITALS REDEVELOPMENT**

**Ms MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley) (14:56):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Health. How is government investment in regional hospitals having a positive impact on patient outcomes?

**Ms JILLIAN SKINNER (North Shore—Minister for Health) (14:56):** What an outstanding member for Oxley. It was a pleasure to accompany her to open the Kempsey Hospital, one of the many hospitals opened through investment in redevelopment. Over two terms of government we have invested \$10 billion to rebuild neglected hospitals across the State, and \$3.5 billion of that is in country New South Wales. I am not talking about the regions but country only. I have spoken regularly of hospitals such as Kempsey, Tamworth, Parkes, Forbes, Dubbo, Bega, Wagga Wagga, Port Macquarie, and recently Byron Bay. These are marvellous hospitals that have made a huge difference to the lives of those who live in country New South Wales. The next stage of development has begun in Dubbo, Armidale, Maxville, Lismore and Manning.

Maitland will begin during this term. Muswellbrook, Tweed and Wagga Wagga will soon begin the next stage of development. How does this affect local communities? I just mentioned Wagga Wagga hospital and in particular the redevelopment of the acute building where the delivery of emergency care has been changed. Instead of a large room with people waiting for long periods, the size has been reduced and senior medical clinicians have been brought to the front of the process. They are now able to diagnose the condition and accurately triage and send patients in the direction they need to go, whether that is the wards, operating theatres or a discharge more quickly than previously. It is better for those patients. For example, the new model of care in terms of emergency departments and the whole of hospital care that follows—

**Ms Jodi McKay:** John wants to know about Concord Hospital.

**Ms JILLIAN SKINNER:** Would the member care to listen to the answer?

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

**Ms JILLIAN SKINNER:** There are senior doctors, nurses and allied health professionals throughout the hospital working to improve the flow of patients through the hospitals. We are working to ensure that people spend no longer than four hours in an emergency department from arrival, through diagnosis and the identification of a treatment pathway. Let us look at the rural districts. When Labor was in office in the 2010 October to December quarter, adherence to the four-hour rule was 73 per cent in the Hunter-New England area. In the same quarter last year independent reports show that figure to be 79 per cent, a 6 per cent improvement. In northern New South Wales it has moved from 65 per cent to 80 per cent; in western New South Wales it has moved from 64 per cent to 79 per cent; the Mid North Coast, 62 per cent to 80 per cent; the Illawarra, 59 per cent to 69 per cent; Murrumbidgee, 63 per cent to 86 per cent; and southern New South Wales has a lesser improvement of 81 per cent to 82 per cent.

In every district, whether country or city, regional or rural, every hospital has improved. I congratulate the dedicated staff working in our hospitals. When dealing with elective surgery the same improvement applies. In northern New South Wales the percentage of patients being treated within clinically appropriate times has improved from 92 per cent to 95 per cent. The clinically appropriate time is determined by doctors according to the urgency of the condition. It is not determined by politicians, the media or anyone else. It is determined by doctors who know the individual patients and determine the urgency of the treatment required in order to allocate time accordingly. The target is 97 per cent. In western New South Wales it has moved from 94 per cent to 99 per cent; Mid North Coast, 89 per cent to 98 per cent; the Illawarra, 91 to 97 per cent; Murrumbidgee, 81 to 89 per cent; southern New South Wales, 94 to 98 per cent; and the Hunter-New England, 90 per cent to 97 per cent. This is due to the marvellous work of those staffing our hospitals. If I had more time I would inform the House of the work being done in integrated care, which is about working to keep people out of hospitals. [*Extension of time*]

That was not a hint, but now that I have the time I will inform the House that in smaller communities where we have HealthOne medical centres there is a brand new integrated care service. Places such as Gulgong, Molong, Cowra and Blayney have benefitted from this model. Yesterday I was at Blayney with the member for Bathurst to inspect the medical centre. There are now general practitioners working with local health districts, nurses, occupational therapists, physiotherapists and speech therapists to manage people with chronic disease. They no longer have to go to hospital for care; the care is provided in the community. Dr Ros works in Cowra as a general practitioner. When I visited Molong last year Dr Ros presented me with some jam, which was made from fruit provided by a patient of hers.

Each year that patient had to spend Christmas in hospital due to his chronic disease. Since the introduction of this program, patients are engaged in monitoring and caring for their own health needs. For the first time this man was able to spend Christmas at home and pick plums from his tree. He gave those plums to Dr Ros, who made it into jam and then gave it to me. I call it the integrated care plum jam. Yesterday she gave me eggs supplied by the same patient. By using this model of health care he is still able to manage his illness. That is what this Government is doing for people in country New South Wales.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Strathfield should have listened to that story.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (15:03:3):** I direct a question to the Premier. Will the Premier reverse the decision to have his hand-picked administrators in place until September 2017 and bring forward the local government elections so that the communities are not deprived of democratic representation?

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Rockdale has had his opportunity to speak. The member for Oatley will come to order.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) (15:04):** The member for Rockdale asked a reasonable question. The only concern I have is that it was written for him by the brains trust and when they do that there are problems.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Maroubra will come to order.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** Isn't the member for Maroubra looking good, despite the week he just had? His destiny is before us. I am assuming that the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Maroubra—the next leader—the shadow Treasurer, and other members opposite understand that bringing bodies together involves a lot of work. Members opposite would understand that it also involves dealing with different IT systems and that that does not happen overnight.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** Each individual council will have different contracts with different suppliers, whether they be lighting, roads or parks contractors. Bringing them together will produce economies of scale that will deliver benefits to local communities. Councils also have different planning and events departments, and there will be different senior management structures.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** We must work out a way to bring everyone together, and that is exactly what the Government is doing. I know that members opposite do not understand the hard work involved in ensuring that the systems, the people, the processes, the structures and the strategies are right so that we can hand over new councils that will deliver benefits to ratepayers. I know members opposite do not understand that, but it is what needs to be done.

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

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** If members opposite took the time to do some research they would find out that when Victoria went through this process, the period before elections were held ranged from 16 months to 28 months. This Government wants this process to happen as quickly as possible, and that is why we have said that elections will be held in 16 months. That is the shortest time in which we can complete the work that will ensure the best possible outcomes to enable councils to deliver benefits to their communities. It is no wonder that the Opposition is in such disarray. The Leader of the Opposition, who is overseeing this issue, has me concerned. Not only does he not understand the work required to amalgamate these bodies so that they can deliver benefits, but he also put out a spectacular video on his Facebook page in which he speaks about the new Bennelong Bridge over Homebush Bay.

**Ms Kate Washington:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, relevance. I do not see the relevance of this.

**The SPEAKER:** I do. There is no point of order.

**Ms Kate Washington:** They have no democratic—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Port Stephens will resume her seat. This is not an argument. Members take points of order and I rule on them. I have ruled that the Premier is being relevant.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** The Leader of the Opposition does not understand the work required to enable these councils to participate in the elections to which we are rushing. We are doing this as quickly as we can. The Leader of the Opposition is complaining about this new bridge, which is operating wonderfully. He asked why the State Government has not contributed to the project. The bridge is already built, but he wants the State Government to provide funding.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** I have already ruled on relevance. There is no point of order.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** I am trying to work out what the Leader of the Opposition wants the State Government to build. He wants this Government to build every piece of infrastructure across the State; he does not want the private sector involved. Does he want me to cut funding for health services and to direct it to a bridge that the private sector has already built? That is the Leader of the Opposition at his best. Members opposite do not understand the private sector and delivering efficiencies. This Government understands what is in the interests of this State.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There are too many arguments, interjections, and conversations across the Chamber. I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the second time. I have asked members to come to order. I call the member for Strathfield to order for the first time. I have now asked members to come to order three times. I call the member for Bankstown to order for the first time. I call the member for Bankstown to order for the second time. I am still waiting for members to come to order.

### REGIONAL JOBS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

**Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Cootamundra) (15:05:2):** I address my question to the Minister for Regional Development. How is the Government giving regional New South Wales a fair go?

**Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (15:05):** I thank the great member for Cootamundra for her question. She understands regional New South Wales. In fact, she was in my electorate—

**The SPEAKER:** Members will cease interjecting. If they do not they will be removed from the Chamber for the rest of the day.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** Parliamentary Secretary Hodgkinson was in my electorate last week at the launch of the South East and Tablelands Regional Plan 2016, which is a blueprint for success, growth, jobs and housing in regional New South Wales. That plan demonstrates this Government's commitment to and understanding of regional New South Wales and its communities. Our regional communities are diverse and resilient. For a long time they have got on with the job of ensuring that they are strong. Unlike members opposite, who neglected regional areas for 16 years, this Government is proud of country New South Wales. Since 2011 this Government has focused strongly on regional areas, and that investment and focus is paying dividends. Members opposite think that regional New South Wales has only weeds and windmills. The member for Wyong released a photo of himself in front of some sheds and silos with all his mates—there are not many; in fact, he has none.

The regional New South Wales that I know is innovative. It has some of the best industries, mines, and businesses in this State, and they are creating jobs. Members on this side of the House are committed to ensuring that regional New South Wales continues to be the engine room of this State's economy. Statistics released recently show that jobs creation in regional New South Wales is growing at twice the rate of other regional areas in this country. Jobs creation in country New South Wales is also growing more quickly than in Western Sydney. That is happening across the State: the Richmond-Tweed area has seen 10,800 new jobs created; the Greater Illawarra, 14,800; the Hunter Valley, 16,700; the Central West, 3,800; Coffs Harbour-Grafton, 5,200; and the Riverina, 3,300. The Capital region, which covers my electorate, has seen the creation of just over 7,000 new jobs because of this Government's investment in regional New South Wales.

This Government supports the private sector, business, and industry. It builds roads, bridges, schools and hospitals, and that stimulates the economy. This Government is investing in infrastructure that will encourage industry to grow. That commitment has been replicated by the private sector with its investments in industry and business, which of course result in jobs growth. This Government believes that the infrastructure boom we are now experiencing will deliver prosperity over the next four to 10 years. This Government is proud of that infrastructure boom. This is the first New South Wales Government to invest in greater connectivity with its Mobile Phone Black Spot Program, which has seen investment of \$92 million by the Federal Government, the State Government and the telcos. That funding will be spent addressing 795 black spot areas in regional New South Wales. Mobile phone towers have already been commissioned at Deniliquin and Drake, and 10 more will be commissioned before 30 June.

This is the first New South Wales Government to deliver on Resources for Regions, which has seen an investment of more than \$230 million in communities impacted by mining. We are investing in the infrastructure that will ensure growth. The Hon. Mick Veitch, a Labor member of the other place, said, "I wish the Labor Party had a Resources for Regions program." There is no greater endorsement than a Labor member saying that it is a fantastic program for regional New South Wales. This is the first New South Wales Government to deliver infrastructure for regional airports. That has seen the delivery of 17 airports and 17 projects at a cost of \$35 million at places like Narrandera, Merimbula, Mudgee, Wagga Wagga, Ballina, Orange, Armidale and Tamworth.

Those communities are benefiting from this Government's investment in regional airports. Members on this side of the House know that connectivity is the key to progress and that it will ensure that regional New South Wales continues to experience growth and prosperity. We have heard the Leader of The Nationals, and the Deputy Premier of New South Wales, the Hon. Troy Grant, talk about The Nationals conference and the endorsement that we have received in relation to the investment in regional New South Wales to make sure that our communities are front and centre. *[Extension of time]*

This Government also supports small business, and we are the first government to introduce a small business employment initiative to support those mum-and-dad small businesses that are the backbone and the engine room of local economies—a \$2,000 grant for every new employee they take on. I can update the House that we have had already 1,845 grant applications since July 2015. That means small business is investing and employing, which is good news for the regional communities that I and other members of this House represent. We are the first government to make sure that we are investing in a vocational education and training system that is flexible, meets the needs of students and of industry, delivers choice and opportunity, and provides funding and subsidies that will deliver job training, create jobs and partner with industry.

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

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** Unlike those opposite—such as, unfortunately, the member for Londonderry, who was in the press recently in Tamworth doing what the previous shadow Minister did: telling fibs—in Tamworth, New England, the Illawarra and right across the State we are supporting students with disabilities within TAFE, as we have always done. Our investment is a commitment. I advise the House that in Tamworth the same number of workers are supporting students with disabilities, and that will continue in the future. We are doing things differently. It was an absolute disgrace to see the shadow Minister playing political football with the most vulnerable in our community and trying to score political points.

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

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** I am proud of the investment that this Government has made in vocational education and training in regional New South Wales.

**The SPEAKER:** The time for questions has expired.

*Documents***NSW OMBUDSMAN****Reports**

**The SPEAKER:** I table, in accordance with section 31AA of the Ombudsman Act 1974, the report of the NSW Ombudsman entitled "Fostering economic development for Aboriginal people in NSW", dated May 2016. I order that the report be printed.

**Report printed.**

**AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT**

**The CLERK:** I announce the receipt, in accordance with section 63C of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, of the Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled "Early childhood education: Department of Education", dated May 2016, received out of session on 26 May 2016 and authorised to be printed.

**Report printed.**

*Committees***LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE****Reports**

**Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (15:18):** As Chair: I table report No. 19 of the Legislation Review committee entitled "Legislation Review Digest No. 19/56", dated 31 May 2016. I move:

That the report be printed.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN:** I also table the minutes of the committee meeting regarding Legislation Review Digest No. 18/56, dated 10 May 2016.

*Petitions***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**.

**Pet Shops**

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

**Biodiversity Conservation**

Petition requesting that New South Wales natural heritage be safeguarded by a biodiversity conservation bill and associated measures, received from **Mr Mark Speakman**.

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

**Parramatta War Memorial Swimming Pool**

Petition requesting that the Government act to prevent the planned demolition of Parramatta War Memorial Swimming Pool and to allow the coexistence of Parramatta Stadium and Parramatta War Memorial Swimming Pool, received from **Dr Geoff Lee**.

*Business of the House*

**BUSINESS LAPSED**

**The SPEAKER:** I advise the House that, in accordance with Standing Order 105 (3), General Business Notice of Motion (for Bills) No. 1 [Passenger Transport Amendment (Ride-sharing Services) Bill 2016]; General Business Order of the Day (for Bills) No. 5 [Technical and Further Education Commission Amendment (TAFE Funding Guarantee) Bill 2016]; and General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) Nos 637 to 685 and 687 to 702 have lapsed.

I further advise the House that, in view of the resignation of the member for Orange and in accordance with past practice, I order the removal from the *Business Paper* of General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) Nos 780, 788 and 790 standing in the former member's name.

*Motions Accorded Priority*

**PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADE**

**Consideration**

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (15:20):** My motion states:

That this House:

- (1) Welcomes the record funding the New South Wales and Federal governments have contributed to the Pacific Highway upgrade.
- (2) Notes the Federal Government restored the 80:20 split in 2013 after being abandoned by Labor.
- (3) Welcomes the fast-tracking of upgrades by the New South Wales and Federal governments, with 66 per cent of the highway upgrade now open to traffic and the full duplication to be opened by 2020.

This motion deserves to be accorded priority because there is going to be a Federal election on 2 July. We know that if Labor wins there is no guarantee that the 80:20 split will be maintained or what Labor will do with this major regional project. We have heard that Albo the Great will can WestConnex, so the Pacific Highway remains vulnerable and there is no guarantee that the Pacific Highway project will go ahead. This is about safety. We know that on average 28 people lose their lives on the Pacific Highway every year.

*[Interruption]*

Please listen to this; it is about saving lives. You may not care about regional people or regional communities, but we on this side of the House do.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will come to order. I remind the member for Cessnock that he is on three calls to order.

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS:** We know that the Pacific Highway is a death trap; the statistics show that. On 20 October 1989 the Cowper bus crash near Grafton claimed the lives of 21 people and another 41 were injured. Only a few months later there was a more severe bus crash at Clybucca Flat—this time 35 people were killed and a further 41 injured. It is a death trap. That is why the Liberal-Nationals governments, both State and Federal, are committed to completing the upgrade as a matter of priority. Delaying the highway will put more lives at risk. The upgrade has been achieved through the significant contribution of the Federal Coalition, which restored the 80:20 funding split, making this possible after those opposite opposed the 80 per cent funding from the Federal Government. They wanted it down to 50 per cent. Labor members do not care about regional people; they do not care about communities along the North Coast corridor. Opposition members fought to reduce spending on the highway upgrade.

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

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS:** They fought tooth and nail to reduce the Federal Government's contribution to 20 per cent. This would delay the upgrade from anywhere between seven and 10 years, putting hundreds more lives at risk. Those opposite totally disregarded the impact that this would have on the safety of communities along the highway. They treated the travelling public with absolute contempt. The New South Wales Coalition Government is committed to the upgrade of the Pacific Highway. It is one of the largest infrastructure projects in regional Australia. Sixty-six per cent of the highway is currently upgraded and, under the current arrangement, it is due to be completed by 2020.



## LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMALGAMATIONS

### Consideration

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (15:23):** The people of New South Wales are not happy. In fact, they are downright angry. They are angry because this Government has forcibly merged their councils and trashed their democratic rights with the stroke of a pen. They are angry because the councillors and mayors they voted for have been sacked and unceremoniously walked out. They were afforded no dignity, no respect and certainly no "thank you for your service to our community".

The Government has thrown democracy out the window. The wishes of communities have been completely ignored. For 16 months unelected administrators have been the final decision-makers on issues that have enormous impacts on communities. This Government has gone too far. The Premier has abused the trust placed in him by the people who once supported him. Let us get real about this. Forced council amalgamations are not about reform or efficiencies; this is cold, hard politics. There is no clearer evidence of the politics at play than the mess that is the state of limbo inflicted on Port Stephens, Newcastle, Dungog and Maitland. The Port Stephens merger as well as the Walcha-Tamworth merger and the Kiama-Shellharbour merger have been delayed or rejected, not due to an accountable process but because those council areas cover the Federal seats of Paterson, New England and Gilmore, which are marginal Federal seats.

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

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON:** This is not a coincidence.

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

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON:** This is not about efficiencies. This is not about communities.

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

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON:** This is all about politics and creating boundaries that are favourable to a Liberal-Nationals alliance.

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

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON:** This alliance is looking unholy by the hour, given the masses of National Party supporters who have been let down by this Government. What started as a complete dog's breakfast is now a political farce. The Government is not interested in democratic representations. It will allow the administrators, the Premier's puppets, to stay in their role until September next year. To ensure that democracy is returned, the Government should allow all councils to have their elections in September this year. It is outrageous that for another 16 months administrators will make decisions about areas they have no connection with on behalf of people who do not know them. The Government cannot be taken seriously on local government reform unless it ensures that local government elections proceed fairly. The Premier must restore democracy in New South Wales by instructing all councils to hold their elections this September. The Premier conceded today that caps on political donations are required.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Deputy Premier will come to order.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON:** The Premier should rid our councils of the corrupting influence of property developers, restoring confidence to decision-making and safeguarding planning decisions. There is nothing more important in this place than the principle of democracy, and this motion should be accorded priority today.

**The SPEAKER:** The question is that the motion of the member for Clarence be accorded priority.

**House divided.**

Ayes .....50  
Noes .....34  
Majority.....16

AYES

Dr Lee  
Mr Ayres  
Mr Bromhead (teller)  
Mr Coure  
Mr Elliott

Mr Anderson  
Mr Baird  
Mr Connolly  
Mr Crouch  
Mr Evans

Mr Aplin  
Mr Barilaro  
Mr Constance  
Mr Dominello  
Mr Fraser

## AYES

|                 |                |                       |
|-----------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| Mr Grant        | Mr Gulaptis    | Mr Hazzard            |
| Mr Henskens     | Mr Humphries   | Mr Johnsen            |
| Mr Kean         | Mr Maguire     | Mr Marshall           |
| 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 Robertson   | Mr Warren (teller) |
| Mr Zangari         | Ms Aitchison   | Ms Car             |
| Ms Catley          | Ms Doyle       | Ms Finn            |
| Ms Harrison        | Ms Haylen      | Ms Hornery         |
| Ms McKay           | Ms Mihailuk    | Ms T. F. Smith     |
| Ms Washington      |                |                    |

## PAIRS

|            |             |
|------------|-------------|
| Ms Hancock | Ms K. Smith |
|------------|-------------|

**Motion agreed to.****PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADE****Priority**

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (15:33):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Welcomes the record funding the New South Wales and Federal governments have contributed to the Pacific Highway upgrade.
- (2) Notes the Federal Government restored the 80:20 funding split in 2013 after being abandoned by Labor.
- (3) Welcomes the fast-tracking of upgrades by the New South Wales and Federal governments—with 66 per cent of the highway upgrade now open to traffic and the full duplication to be open by 2020.

This is one of the biggest infrastructure projects in the Southern Hemisphere. Since 2013 the Australian Coalition Government has committed more than \$5.6 billion to this project. Roads funding in this Federal budget is very strong, with the Federal Government investing \$1.37 billion in 2016-17 to help fast-track the duplication of the Pacific Highway. With the historic State and Federal funding for roads in recent years, I suspect that people are starting to become lulled by the sheer magnitude of our investments. It is important to note the Federal Government's total contribution or funding commitment to upgrading this highway has not changed—funding allocations vary year by year.

Labor left in its wake a litany of broken promises. The promise to upgrade the Pacific Highway—an upgrade that should have happened more than a decade ago—was one of them. In 1996 New South Wales Labor promised to upgrade the entire length of the Pacific Highway to dual carriageway by 2006. In 1998 New South Wales Labor revised the duplication end date to 2012. In 2008 then New South Wales Labor Treasurer Eric

Roosendaal, in his infamous November 2008 mini-budget, stripped \$300 million from future highway upgrades. And then in 2011 Federal Labor abandoned an 80:20 funding split ratio between the Australian and New South Wales governments. Labor ruined any chance of completing the full duplication of the highway by the end of 2016. It was the Abbot-Truss Government that restored the traditional 80:20 funding split ratio between the Australian and New South Wales governments, allowing the duplication to be completed by the end of the decade, in 2019-20.

This project will save lives. It is not right for the Labor Party to play political football with this upgrade, risking more people's lives. On average, 28 people lose their lives on the Pacific Highway each year. This is why upgrading this highway is so important to communities up and down the North Coast. When completed, the project will reduce the overall length from 180 kilometres to 167 kilometres, saving about 13 kilometres in travel distance. It will allow for a higher posted speed limit of up to 110 kilometres per hour. It will reduce travel time from 130 minutes to about 105 minutes, saving 25 minutes, and reduce crash rates by an expected 27 per cent due to divided carriageways. It will improve travel reliability through better flood immunity, fewer incidents and more readily available alternative routes.

Today 66 per cent of the Pacific Highway has been upgraded to a four-lane divided road—in other words, two-thirds has been completed. Milestones are rolling in thick and fast, with upgrades being fast-tracked across the entire length of the upgrade, and major works starting last year on the final 155 kilometre section between Woolgoolga and Ballina. In the past six months the Federal and New South Wales Coalition governments have opened two major projects, totalling more than 43.5 kilometres of highway and significantly reducing travel time for motorists, with the 26.5 kilometre Frederickton to Eungai upgrade opening earlier this month. Later this year the 22 kilometre Nambucca Heads to Urunga upgrade will open.

Since 2011, the New South Wales and Australian governments have opened a number of other key upgrades, including the \$862 million Tintenbar to Ewingsdale upgrade in December 2015 and the \$820 million Sapphire to Woolgoolga Pacific Highway upgrade in July 2014. By the end of the year motorists will save more than 90 minutes in travel time between Hexham and the Queensland border. Since the project began, the number of lives lost on the Pacific Highway has halved and that number continues to decline. One has only to drive from Nambucca to Coffs Harbour and then on to Ballina to see the sheer magnitude of work happening, and the large and dedicated workforce behind it. Today, almost 3,500 people are working directly on upgrades, and this does not include all the employees who benefit indirectly by supplying items and services—such as tools, clothing, machinery and accommodation—to the project. At peak construction in 2017, the total number of people employed directly on the project will increase to 4,000, with 12,000 people working indirectly on upgrades.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (15:39):** Once again, the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government is trying to rewrite history and change the facts. The Government is trying to say that during 16 years in government Labor did nothing. That patently is not true. New South Wales Labor has always had a strong commitment to upgrading the highway. It takes time to plan, buy land, make sure of the correct route and hold public consultations. We have not seen public consultations with respect to WestConnex, but Labor was into public consultation and had to change the route several times because communities put up arguments against the plans advanced by the Roads and Traffic Authority at the time.

Even way back in 2006, New South Wales Labor committed \$20 million to the Ballina bypass, \$75 million to the Bonville bypass, \$40 million for Karuah to Bulahdelah and a further \$60 million to accelerate other projects along the Pacific Highway. In the 2007-08, 2008-09 and 2010-11 budgets more than \$3 billion was committed to those projects. The Liberal Party and The Nationals can try to rewrite history but the Coalition has cashed in on Labor's good work and Labor's good planning. All the Government had to do was cut the ribbon. With a Federal election coming up, there is no better time than now to look at the deceitful Abbott and Turnbull governments and the way they treated the Pacific Highway.

In the most recent budget the Turnbull Government—the Liberal-Nationals Government in Canberra—cut \$351 million from Pacific Highway funding. That is a fact. It took a Federal Labor Government with a State Labor Government to plan, fund and commence the duplication of the notorious 26.5 kilometres Frederickton to Eungai section of the Pacific Highway. In December 2012 Federal Labor announced the selection of contractors, and in 2013 Federal Labor was responsible for the first sod being turned on the construction of that section of the road. Those on the other side of the Chamber like to deny that. Buried in the recent Federal budget was a \$351 million cut to investment in the Pacific Highway compared with the 2015 Federal Government commitment in the national partnership agreement with New South Wales. Are Government members crying and screaming about that \$351 million cut? No, they have not said a word. They have been absolutely silent about the fact that the Turnbull Government is cutting money to the Pacific Highway.

Government members crow about their arguments but they do not say a word about the \$351 million cut. That cut followed a \$130 million cut to the Pacific Highway project in the 2015 budget. That was another cut but

there was not a word from Government members. Federal Labor invested \$7.9 billion in the Pacific Highway upgrade project in six years. The Turnbull Government, by contrast, has been great at making reannouncements rather than delivering projects that Australia and New South Wales need. Let me say it again, Labor allocated \$7.6 billion for the Pacific Highway in the six years from 2007 to 2013, whereas the Howard Government before it allocated only \$1 billion over 12 years. The Abbott and Turnbull governments have desperately tried to hide their failures by reannouncing old projects funded by the former Labor Government and pretending they are new projects. Let us have a bit of honesty in this debate and acknowledge that State and Federal Labor funded large sections of the Pacific Highway. Let us not just brush that aside. Let us make sure that the Government is honest and acknowledges that both political parties contributed to the upgrade of the Pacific Highway.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Before I call the member for Oxley, I remind members that a number of them already are on three calls to order. The member for Keira is at the top of the list.

**Ms MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley) (15:45):** It is with great pride and honour that I contribute to debate on the motion, which does three important things. It recognises and welcomes the record funding from the Federal Coalition to the Pacific Highway upgrade. It notes that the Abbott-Truss Government restored the 80:20 funding split in 2013, after it had been abandoned by Labor and the relevant Minister at the time, Anthony Albanese. It also welcomes the fast-tracking of upgrades by two Coalition governments, with 66 per cent of the highway upgrade now open to traffic and full duplication by 2020. People who live on the North Coast are sick of politics on this matter. The shadow Minister for Regional Development must accept that the three points I have made are fact.

**Mr David Harris:** So Labor did none of it?

**Ms MELINDA PAVEY:** Work was done by previous Labor administrations, but if this Coalition Government had weighted funding to the ratio proposed by Anthony Albanese the Pacific Highway would not be finished until probably 2030 and during that extra time up to 300 more people would have died. Labor members should not come into this House and play politics on this issue. The fact is that the Federal Coalition Government restored the 80:20 funding split and that additional funding will ensure that the road is finished by 2020. Last Monday, 16 May, I visited the area where the Clybucca bus crash occurred in December 1989. It was a horrendous accident in which 35 people died. If Anthony Albanese had his way, that Clybucca section of roadway would not have been finished for another couple of years. That is the point of this motion.

The member for Wyong, David Harris, was not a member of this House for four important years and is not aware of the facts. The facts are that Anthony Albanese wanted to take the funding arrangement back to a 50:50 State-Federal funding split, which would have destroyed the possibility of opening the Clybucca section of roadway a week ago. Let us not play politics on this very important project and just state the facts. Labor contributed funding and there was planning. But if the Coalition Government had not restored the funding arrangement to that created by the Abbott-Truss Government, with the support of Barry O'Farrell and Andrew Stoner at the time, it would be another decade or more before the Pacific Highway upgrade was completed. Members should acknowledge that. When two very good governments work together, we can achieve outcomes for regional New South Wales.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (15:48):** Members on both sides of this House agree that funding for the Pacific Highway upgrade is important, but it also is important to properly record the history of funding of the Pacific Highway along the length and breadth of the State, particularly on the North Coast and the Central Coast. The motion refers to record funding. It certainly is a record—but only when compared to the period of the Howard Government. For many reasons that period was dark, but it was particularly dark in relation to funding for the Pacific Highway upgrade, and especially for the North Coast part of the highway and areas represented by the member for Oxley and the member for Clarence.

In 12 years of the Howard Government, just \$1.3 billion was allocated to the Pacific Highway upgrade in the electorates of Oxley and Clarence, and we did not hear a peep out of the members who represented those electorates. Following that, Federal Labor, albeit over a shorter period, provided funding of six times the Howard Government's amount—\$7.9 billion. That represented a huge boost in funding and that is why the State has been able to make progress with the upgrade. Both sides of politics welcome that progress, which made the Pacific Highway a safer travel option for the people of New South Wales.

The public record is absolutely clear. The Australian Bureau of Statistics shows quite clearly that the Abbott-Truss Government and the Turnbull-Joyce Government, from the September quarter 2013 to the September quarter 2015, oversaw a 20 per cent decline in total public sector infrastructure funding across the nation. That begins at the Federal Government level and works its way down. That period coincides with the New South Wales Coalition in government. It is the Federal Coalition Government that Government members should be hammering, not members on the this side of the House.

The current funding that Government members refer to is \$350 million less than was promised. The 2015 Pacific Highway partnership between the New South Wales State Government and the Federal Government promised \$1.7 billion in funding for the Pacific Highway upgrade, but the current Federal Government's budget has allocated only \$1.4 billion for the project. Government members should be addressing the shortfall of \$351 million with their Federal counterparts and should be asking the Federal Government to deliver that money back to this State to get the project moving as fast as it can be delivered.

Members referred to the project being 66 per cent complete. My question is, Which 66 per cent? It certainly does not refer to the Central Coast. As a matter of record, Labor completed stages one and two of the Pacific Highway upgrade at Ourimbah in 2009. Labor completed the Tuggerah Straight upgrade in 2010. Stage three of the Ourimbah upgrade has only just commenced, and what has been allocated by the Government? It is a mere 10 per cent of the money over 12 months that is required to complete the project. Last year the roads Minister, Mr Duncan Gay, visited the Central Coast to tell people that the Pacific Highway was shovel ready and all they had to do was tick a box for the Liberal-Nationals. He did not say that it would be more than 12 months before the work commenced. Government members do not have their facts right. [*Time expired.*]

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (15:51):** In reply: I thank the member for Oxley, the member for Wyong and the member for The Entrance for their contributions to debate on the motion. According to Labor members, Labor has done it all. They say, "Check the facts". I remind the member for Wyong that the route of the Pacific Highway was still being finalised in the last term of the Liberal-Nationals Government. That shows how far the project had progressed when Labor was in government—the route had not even been determined. In contrast, this Government has put its money where its mouth is. Alongside the 80:20 funding ratio between the State and the Federal Coalition governments, terrific milestones have been achieved. That is why the Pacific Highway upgrade will be finished by 2020. Labor members repeatedly claim that the Federal Coalition has cut \$351 million.

I would like them to refer me to which section of the Pacific Highway will not be upgraded because of the \$351 million cut. Or is it the fact that the Government has actually made savings? The highway will be completed by 2020 and the \$351 million that will be saved will be applied to other services to meet community and taxpayer needs. This Government does not waste money like Labor does. Labor's infrastructure projects are a disgrace. Labor has never delivered infrastructure projects on time or on budget, and some projects are not delivered at all. Labor is all about promises but nothing about delivery. When was the last time the member for The Entrance and the member for Wyong travelled the entire route of the Pacific Highway?

**Mr David Harris:** Six months ago.

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS:** How often did that occur—just once? I can inform Labor members that the North Coast Nationals, my constituents and other members of the community who live on the North Coast travel along that highway every single day.

**Mr David Mehan:** I see the member for Wyong more often than I see you.

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS:** Every single day I travel along that highway. My office is in Grafton. I travel from Maclean to Grafton every single day.

**Mr David Harris:** My office is on the Pacific Highway.

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS:** The member for Wyong has a divided highway whereas the Clarence electorate does not. As I said earlier, at the peak of construction in 2017 the total number of direct employees will increase to 4,000, with 12,000 people working indirectly on upgrades. Whether you are a truckie, a resident, a farmer, a traveller or a business owner, you are benefiting from these upgrades and will continue to do so into the future as more sections open progressively. New South Wales has gone from having one of the weakest economies in the country, under Labor—which is why those opposite are in opposition—to having the strongest economy in the Federation. As a stark comparison, in 2010-11, when Federal Labor was in power and New South Wales Labor was chaotically destroying the economic foundations of the State, the proportion of investment was almost one-third less. [*Time expired.*]

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** The question is that the motion be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....51

Noes .....30

Majority.....21

## 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 Greenwich         | Mr Gulaptis    | Mr Hazzard            |
| Mr Henskens          | Mr Humphries   | Mr Johnsen            |
| Mr Maguire           | Mr Marshall    | Mr Notley-Smith       |
| Mr O'Dea             | Mr Parker      | 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 T. F. Smith       | Ms Upton       | Ms Williams           |

## NOES

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

## PAIRS

|             |            |           |
|-------------|------------|-----------|
| Mr Grant    | Ms Hay     | Mr Kean   |
| Ms K. Smith | Ms Hancock | Ms Watson |

**Motion agreed to.**

*Distinguished Visitors*

**DISTINGUISHED VISITORS**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** I welcome to the Speaker's gallery the family of the late Tom Lewis: his wife, Utta, his son, Phillip Lewis, and the immediate family, Emma, Amelia and April Lewis, Michelle and Ian Carter, and Lucy Deverell. I also welcome Ms Peta Seaton, a former member for Southern Highlands.

*Condolences*

**DEATH OF THE HON. THOMAS LANCELOT LEWIS, A FORMER PREMIER AND FORMER MEMBER FOR WOLLONDILLY**

**Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) (16:02):** I move:

That this House extends to the family the deep sympathy of members of the Legislative Assembly in the loss sustained by the death, on 25 April 2016, of the Honourable Thomas Lancelot Lewis, a former Premier of this State.

I wish to acknowledge the family members in the gallery today. Tom Lewis was a member of what has been called, in an American context, "the greatest generation"—those who witnessed the ravages of the Great Depression and who fought for freedom in World War II and then returned home to build the prosperous and free societies in which we and our parents thrived in the second half of the last century. Thomas Lancelot Lewis was

born in Adelaide on 23 January 1922 into a noted South Australian family. His father, Lancelot, was managing director of the pastoral giant Goldsbrough Mort, and his uncle was Essington Lewis, the head of BHP, who became Director-General of the Department of Munitions during World War II. Lance Lewis died when Tom was just 14, and the boy's upbringing was taken over by Essington Lewis. Essington was described as a hard but fair mentor who instilled qualities of hard work, attention to detail and absolute punctuality. The motto was: "You're on time all the time".

As a young man, Tom spent school holidays as a jackeroo on remote stations. Throughout his life, Tom spoke with genuine passion and respect for the Indigenous people and others he lived and worked with in this period of his life. These experiences stayed with him during his political career. In 1940, when he was just 18, Tom enlisted in the Army. He rose to lieutenant in the 2nd Commando Squadron and saw active service in Indonesia and Borneo. During this time he met and married his first wife, Stephanie, an American Red Cross nurse, and a journalist in civilian life. After the war, following a few years in Washington, the couple settled back in outer north-west Sydney, where Tom set up a large chicken farm on a model he had seen in the United States.

The Liberal Party soon came knocking. After securing the seat of Wollondilly at a by-election in 1957, Tom bought Redbraes, his beautiful house and farm in Moss Vale, for about £40. He lived there until his final illness. When the Coalition came to power in 1965, the new Premier, Bob Askin, appointed Tom Lewis to the Lands and Mines portfolios. He ranked only 10 out of 15 in Cabinet, yet it was over the next few years that he was to make his greatest contributions to public policy in New South Wales. When Tom worked in the United States of America after the war, he saw firsthand the work of the National Park Service in American conservation parks, such as the world-famous Yellowstone National Park. He was struck by the passion of the park rangers, their pride in their role and their uniforms.

Tom saw these uniforms as a symbol of quality, a brand that children, families, and visitors respected and recognised when they visited these precious natural assets. Tom wanted people to visit and get to know these places in New South Wales too because he knew that when people visited and loved a national park they were more likely to look after it and to develop a love for caring for their environment. So it was Tom Lewis, when presented with the opportunity as a junior Minister, who created our New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service, and its smartly uniformed and very recognisable parks officers. He forever remained a great advocate for our environment. As his stepson, Phillip Lewis, said eloquently at the State funeral last week, "Tom was not what most would call an environmentalist, but he loved and cared for the bush".

Tom had immense belief in the long-term value of conservation. He also was determined that our national parks system should represent a wide variety of our New South Wales ecosystems, not just the glamorous show stoppers like our coastal areas and the Blue Mountains. His time in remote South Australia and far western New South Wales had given him a deep love and knowledge of the terrain, vegetation and animal life of these environments. Tom believed they were no less important to our heritage and our scientific knowledge than the picture postcard parks. He exercised courageous and far-sighted leadership to guarantee some of our Western Division landscape was included under the national parks system.

Tom also was instrumental in establishing the Western Plains Zoo, in the Deputy Premier's beautiful electorate of Dubbo. I do not downplay the contribution of those on the Labor side to our magnificent network of national parks, not for a minute. But, too often, the vital contribution of the Coalition to that network and to conservation in New South Wales generally is overlooked. Tom Lewis's career stands as a powerful corrective. Tom brought the discipline and ethos of hard work he had learned as a boy to his political career; he had a bed installed in his Lands department office so that he could work late at night. I should say that I do not like that particular initiative.

When Askin resigned at the end of 1974, Tom was the likely choice to succeed him, as he was judged to be not just a diligent worker but, according to those who knew, a superior public performer to Eric Willis. One significant achievement of his year as Premier was the first comprehensive overhaul of the New South Wales public sector in 60 years. He also established new avenues for our ethnic communities to access government and the bureaucracy. However, the political clouds darkened quickly for the Coalition in 1975. As Norman Abjorensen writes in his chapter on Lewis, in the volume *Premiers of NSW*:

By late 1975...there was even unrest in [Lewis's] safe Liberal seat of Wollondilly, over a range of local issues including railway closures, dairy farmers' displeasure over milk marketing arrangements [and] proposed municipal amalgamations.

Today we find it almost incredible that a Premier could become less popular in his own electorate as a result of municipal amalgamations, but there you are. The end was accelerated famously when Gough Whitlam appointed his Attorney-General, Lionel Murphy, to the High Court and Lewis declined to appoint a replacement from the same party, instead appointing 72-year-old mayor of Albury Cleaver Bunton. We will not and cannot re-prosecute

those ancient fights today. I suggest we file them under the general turmoil of the era. Tom resigned from Parliament in 1978. When a knighthood was floated, Neville Wran was reputed to have said:

I'd hardly be Sir Galahad if I blocked Sir Lancelot.

But he did anyway. "Retirement" is the wrong word for the post-political phase of Tom's life. As Phillip remarked last week, "He did not go off the radar, he simply went out of range". He resumed a business career in the agriculture and resources sector and he devoted his time to a range of voluntary organisations, including Legacy and the Royal Flying Doctor Service. We all know the good those organisations do today. After his political career, Tom remained a strong member of the Liberal Party branch at Moss Vale. He was a great supporter of the Liberal members who followed him in the seat of Wollondilly, including my friend Peta Seaton, to whom I owe a number of the anecdotes within this speech.

His was a big life. As Phillip encouraged us to do last Thursday, just reel off the titles of this incredible Australian: captain of the rowing eights, jackeroo, commando, chicken farmer, Minister, Treasurer, Premier, marina builder, Mongolian wool trader, international oil broker and, above all, of course, loving husband, father and grandfather. It would be remiss of me not to mention that at the funeral last week the photos of Tom with his grandchildren showed through the gleam in his eye the particular love he had for his family. It was there for all to see. Fittingly for an old digger, Tom Lewis died peacefully on Anzac Day, surrounded by those who loved him.

Once again, on behalf of the Government and the people of New South Wales, I offer my deepest condolences to Tom's wife, Yutta, to his children, Mark and Jon, and his stepchildren, Phillip and Michelle, and to his grandchildren, Tom, Amelia, April, Holly, Lucy, Molly and Annie. You can be proud of Tom. His time as Premier was relatively brief, but through his public life—indeed, his entire life—he made a real difference. It is a difference that every family in New South Wales, even if they have not heard of Tom Lewis, will experience when they walk, picnic, swim or camp in one of our national parks. It is a magnificent legacy.

**Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (16:11:2):** I join the Premier in paying tribute to the life and public service of the late Tom Lewis. The members of the Lewis family dynasty have been great servants of this nation. They have provided leadership as captains of industry and in the political sphere, they have helped open up our country by way of exploration and they have served this country in war. Tom Lewis's great-grandfather was part of Sturt's legendary 1844 expedition to open up central Australia, and his grandfather served in the South Australian Legislative Council and his grandfather's brother in the Western Australian Legislative Council. This is a family steeped in public service.

As the Premier said, Tom Lewis' father died when Tom was young and he was raised by that legendary Australian Essington Lewis, chairman of BHP and the man who directed the munitions effort during World War II. As a teenager, Tom Lewis followed in the family tradition of service to the nation. He enlisted and served his country in Java and Borneo. Following the war, Tom served in the Australian embassy in the United States of America with his American bride. When he returned to Australia five years later he came to Sydney and set up a chicken farm near Penrith. In 1957 he was elected to this place as the member for Wollondilly.

Tom was close to Premier Askin; perhaps there was no-one closer. When the sun set on that long-term 24-year Labor Government in 1965, Lewis was appointed by Premier Askin to his Cabinet. Tom was the Minister for Lands and the Minister for Mines until the Lands portfolio became all consuming. Tom Lewis' name will be forever associated with our national parks network. I believe we have the finest network of national parks anywhere in the world, and that is in no small part due to the efforts of Tom Lewis. Bob Debus, whom I consider to be the finest environment Minister in this State's history, has spoken to me about Tom Lewis. He told me that Lewis would regularly ring him, when he was environment Minister, to lecture him on the fencing of the Sturt National Park in the far north-west corner of New South Wales.

As an old man, Tom Lewis was still taking a passionate interest in the Sturt National Park, which he established in 1972 as Minister for Lands. Bob Debus told me that Lewis would sometimes instruct him to take certain actions in respect of the management of the Sturt National Park. He undertook a study tour to America as Minister for Lands, and on his return recommended the establishment of an open-range zoo. He had seen them in America and he was most impressed. The Western Plains Zoo at Dubbo is his achievement; he is responsible for its creation. As the Premier said, it was a surprise to many observers of New South Wales politics when Tom Lewis was elected to succeed Askin in December 1974.

I am reminded of the story told by Eric Webster, Askin's successor in the electorate of Pittwater. He recounted that he asked Bob Askin in the toilets at Parliament House who should succeed him. He said that Askin kicked in every dunny door to ensure no-one was there before he answered, "Look, I promised my vote to Eric, but I reckon the bloke who looks good on television is the right bloke." He was recommending Tom Lewis. I think Michelle, his daughter, is in the gallery today. I was reading the 4 December 1974 edition of the *Australian Women's Weekly*—I never miss an edition—which contains an article about Tom Lewis and his family. It states:



WHEN the new Premier-elect of New South Wales, Mr Tom Lewis, told his family he was seriously going to run for the post, ten-year-old Michelle cried.

"I didn't want Daddy to be Premier," she told me the day Mr Lewis won the appointment.

"We hardly see him now and I knew if he was Premier we wouldn't see him at all, and we wouldn't see much of Mummy either. They would be too busy.

"But now I don't mind too much. It's very exciting."

Those words from a 10-year-old girl sum up what we put our families through. They feel pride in what we do, but they also miss us and want more of us. Tom Lewis' time as Premier was tumultuous and controversial. It was 1975, and members know what was happening in Australian politics then. Those of us in the Labor Party could not forgive Tom Lewis for appointing Cleaver Bunton to Lionel Murphy's Senate vacancy. However, as the Premier said, we should concentrate today on Tom Lewis' achievements, not on the tumult of 1975. Tom Lewis retired in 1978, and in many ways that was the end of an era. Jack Renshaw, the Labor Premier whom Askin defeated in 1965, hung around through all the opposition years to help the Labor Party to recover, and served as Neville Wran's first Treasurer.

Along with Tom Lewis, Jack Renshaw retired at the 1978 election. They were two former premiers, one Labor and one Liberal. I think all of us, whatever our party politics, can salute anyone who has served the people of this State as its Premier. Becoming Premier of New South Wales is a remarkable achievement. All of us on this side of the House join our Liberal-Nationals colleagues in paying tribute to Tom Lewis for establishing the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Western Plains Zoo. I thank Phillip for his remarkable speech at the State funeral last week honouring his stepfather, Tom Lewis. To his widow, Utta, his children, and grandchildren, thank you for giving us this fine public servant. He is one in a long line of servants of our State and nation from the great Lewis family. May he rest in peace.

**Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Deputy Premier, Minister for Justice and Police, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Racing) (16:19):** As the Deputy Premier, Leader of The Nationals, and the member for Dubbo I will make a brief contribution endorsing the Premier's words. In reading about the remarkable contribution Tom Lewis made to our State one can draw a number of parallels with the contribution made by Teddy Roosevelt to the United States. Both were soldiers, both came from families that gave significant service, both passionately pursued conservation, and both were responsible for outstanding contributions that led to the establishment of national parks. Tom Lewis learnt lessons from the legacy of Teddy Roosevelt, and made a visionary and significant contribution to this State that still benefits us today.

While his career as Premier was short, Tom Lewis served with then Deputy Premier Sir Charles Cutler and Leon Punch. We as parliamentarians can learn much from the example they set in respect of the extent of their service and, as the Leader of the Opposition said, the sacrifices their families made. They are the same sacrifices that our families make today. They were statesmen who worked with others for the greater good of the community. That is certainly Tom Lewis's example and record.

The Premier and the Leader of the Opposition mentioned the Taronga Western Plains Zoo at Dubbo, which is another of Tom Lewis' significant legacies. Local legend in our area explains how that happened. I was not there, so I cannot confirm whether it is true. It is said that at one stage the proposal was that the zoo be located at Wellington. Dubbo was not the large regional city it is now; it was similar in size to nearby Parkes and Wellington. Tom Lewis believed that it would make more sense to have it at Dubbo because, unlike the other locations, it was at the junction of two highways. A coin was tossed, heads won, and the zoo was established at Dubbo. How fortunate it is for Dubbo that the coin fell as it did.

The Premier also mentioned another important institution that Tom Lewis supported—the Royal Flying Doctor Service, which has its south-eastern base at Dubbo. The Premier recently announced this Government's commitment to funding that base as part of an \$18 million enhancement project that will include the provision of clinical aeromedical training and a simulator. I can imagine what Tom Lewis would have thought of that and wonder whether he ever would have thought that that organisation would still be as important, relevant and significant as it is today to this State. Given that he lives in the far west of New South Wales and represents the people of the west, the member for Barwon can attest to the impact that Tom Lewis' contribution has had on life in the most isolated and far-flung parts of our State.

Much of what those communities enjoy today is a result of the good work of Tom Lewis. Tom Lewis was a man of integrity. Members should not be surprised to hear that; he was that good because he came from the bush. He was a country bloke who followed in his family's footsteps by serving and making sacrifices for his community. His family should be very proud of his legacy. The people of Dubbo, whom I represent, and everyone in regional New South Wales will be eternally grateful for his service. I extend our very best wishes to his family. May he rest in peace.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Heritage, and Assistant Minister for Planning) (16:24):** Today we remember the former New South Wales Premier, Minister and member for Wollondilly, the Hon. Tom Lewis, AO—a man who was instrumental in establishing the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife. Here in New South Wales contributions to our environmental legacy are many and varied, but the Coalition parties have not sufficiently asserted their legacy on the environment. It was the New South Wales Coalition that established two of the key pillars of environmental protection in New South Wales: the independent Environment Protection Authority, established under the Greiner Government, and re-established and restored to its powers as an independent body under Barry O'Farrell; and the National Parks and Wildlife Service, established under Tom Lewis.

Thomas Lancelot Lewis was born in Adelaide in 1922. He served in the Australian Imperial Force from 1940 to 1946. From 1946 to 1951 he worked in the Australian embassy in the United States of America. He was elected as the member for Wollondilly in 1957 and went on to represent the Liberal Party for more than 20 years. From early in his career Mr Lewis established himself as an advocate for the protection of land, flora and fauna. Indicative of this passion were his roles as chairman of the trusts for Morton National Park and Kosciuszko National Park.

In 1960 Tom Lewis introduced a private member's bill into Parliament that would establish a Fish and Wildlife Authority. The bill proposed a single government authority charged with the management of State-controlled parks and reserves. In 1965 he was appointed to the portfolios of lands and mines. He held the position of Minister for Lands until 1972, when tourism was added to his portfolio. He continued in this dual portfolio until becoming Premier in 1975. As Minister for Lands, Tom Lewis created the parks and reserves branch of the Lands Department, where management functions relating to national and State parks and historic sites came under a separate entity reporting directly to the Minister.

In August 1966 as Minister for Lands Tom Lewis introduced a National Parks and Wildlife Bill into Parliament. A refreshed bill, incorporating the National Parks and Wildlife Advisory Council, was introduced into Parliament in August 1967 and passed. The bill became law as the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1967. The Act reserved 25 areas as national parks, State parks and historic sites, to be administered by the National Parks and Wildlife Service. The National Parks and Wildlife Service amalgamated the Fauna Protection Panel and the parks and reserves branch of the Lands Department. In 1969 an amendment to the Act brought protection of Aboriginal relics and sites under the management of the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

In 1970, to assist with the finances required to purchase land for protection, Tom Lewis set up the National Parks and Wildlife Foundation. The foundation was an independent, not-for-profit organisation established to seek the support of the private sector and individuals to help the parks service develop existing parks and sites and to acquire additional areas for the reserve system beyond the funds available through Treasury. Through the foundation the National Parks and Wildlife Service gained broader community understanding and a growth in the number of volunteers committed to the cause of conservation. Community support for the foundation has provided funds to purchase important lands across the State to be reserved for the people of New South Wales. Since its inception the foundation has acquired by gift or purchase around 500,000 hectares of habitat for protection in national parks and reserves. Support from the foundation has enabled the National Parks and Wildlife Service to purchase a number of key land areas and undertake important conservation projects that would otherwise not have been possible.

It was also under Tom Lewis' administration that the National Parks and Wildlife Bill 1974 was debated in Parliament. This legislation consolidated the provisions of the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1967, the Fauna Protection Act 1948 and the Wildflowers and Native Plants Protection Act 1927. The bill also introduced amendments to strengthen the preservation and protection of Aboriginal heritage. The National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 came into force on 1 January 1975. On 3 January 1975, Tom Lewis became Premier and Treasurer of New South Wales—a position he would hold for just over a year. During his time as Minister for Lands, 1,704,384 hectares were reserved in the parks system. A further 70,000 hectares were added in the year that he was Premier. This was an outstanding achievement and a clear indication of the importance that Tom Lewis vested in protecting special places for future generations.

Tom Lewis understood the opportunity for nature to drive tourism, human recreation and health. The pivotal role of tourism for our national parks in their regional communities is proof of concept, and the environmental image of New South Wales to visitors is an important branding for us. He also was instrumental in establishing the Western Plains Zoo at Dubbo—Australia's first drive-through zoo—which opened in 1977. He was impressed by the United States national parks and nature tourism sector, experience of which he gained while working at the Australian embassy in the United States of America. Australia and the United States were both national park pioneers, whether starting with the Royal National Park or Yellowstone. Tom Lewis' time in the United States gave him a sense of the potential for national parks in New South Wales.

Thomas Lancelot Lewis will be remembered as a great Australian, a well-loved local member and a leader who rose to the challenge of creating a system for the establishment and ongoing protection of natural areas. The legacy established by Tom Lewis has resulted in a parks system that now protects more than 7.1 million hectares in more than 870 parks and reserves. The parks service now manages close to 9 per cent of the land area of the State, protecting on behalf of the people of New South Wales the natural and cultural heritage of the State and providing ample opportunities for everyone to enjoy our parks and reserves.

I understand that in addition to the crucial role he played in progressing these matters in Parliament, Tom Lewis took a great personal interest in the environment, spending any available opportunity he had visiting national parks. He recognised the importance of people enjoying parks and reserves to obtain firsthand experience and a greater appreciation of the importance of national parks. I encourage everyone in this place to think of the legacy they will leave and, in such a generationally significant question as conservation, how Tom Lewis shows the impact that each of us can have. To his family, we thank you for his service to New South Wales. I encourage everyone in this Chamber and throughout New South Wales to get out and enjoy their local parks and reserves as Tom Lewis did and, while they are there, to thank him for it.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations) (16:33):** It is with a deep sense of pride that I make a contribution to this very significant motion today. Tom Lancelot Lewis, AO, served this place with distinction for 23 years. Today we mark the contribution he made not just to public life but also through the many other activities he conducted throughout his life and, of course, his most significant role as a wonderful family man. When people who knew Mr Lewis well talk about him there are two characteristics they mention most often. One is his extreme charisma and the other is his attitude to public life and politics: he was "an impatient go-ahead type who wanted everything done yesterday". That means he did everything to the nth degree. We know that from the roles he had in public life.

He was not just the Minister for Lands; he established national parks. He was not just a Minister in the Cabinet; he made as great a contribution as he could in those positions. Whether it was in his role as a lieutenant in the Australian Imperial Force, working in the Australian embassy in Washington, as a businessperson or as someone who loved the bush, Mr Lewis was someone who lived life to the fullest. A number of speakers, including the Premier, have noted the outstanding eulogy presented by his stepson last week from which we got a glimpse of the man outside his public persona. Public life was an important part of his life and he made an incredible contribution to the State in this place, but we also learnt so much more of the man.

Words cannot express the sense of loss that his family must be feeling at this time. Please know that many of us will remember Mr Lewis' contribution to this State and our country, because he was Premier during a tumultuous time in national politics. He was Premier during a time that some would describe as one of the most difficult periods in our State's history. Nevertheless, he worked with distinction, integrity, and patience, which is a virtue for those of us in public life who want to make a difference. Mr Lewis' legacy will benefit successive generations. He left an indelible mark on the history of the Liberal Party. He was staunch not only in his values and beliefs but also put them into action by making this State a better place for the citizens of New South Wales.

We come together today in a bipartisan way not only to recognise the enormous contribution made by him in this place for 23 years, but also, more importantly, to recognise the difference he made to everything he did in life. He put a million per cent into everything and achieved so much, not only in public life but also in life generally. For that we are deeply grateful. The words we have expressed do not reflect the sense of loss that his family is experiencing at this time. We hope to ease their loss by acknowledging his enormous legacy to the people of New South Wales and also for ensuring that his legacy is always remembered and respected.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (16:36):** I also pass on my deep sympathies and condolences to Tom Lewis' family. It is a real privilege to stand before the House as a country member to speak about him. I did not know Tom, but I know he affected the lives of many people across this great State in ways that many others in the community do not realise or appreciate. I am glad that Peta Seaton, one of my dearest friends, is in the gallery. In this condolence motion she wanted me to convey her memory of Tom Lewis, given that Tom was her local constituent. Being a local member, I cannot imagine having a former Premier as a local constituent. Regular advice was received on the best way to handle matters.

It is fair to say that the former member for Southern Highlands described Tom Lewis in an honest and open way. She said he was authentic, honest and uninterested in being anything other than himself—brave, charming, unstoppable, generous, warm, educated and inquiring, adventurous, freedom-loving, so proud of all of his children and family, articulate, fun and—I love the last words—fiercely Australian. Being a Premier of New South Wales, one could not be anything other than fiercely Australian. As Premier Baird said, Tom was one of the extraordinary generation of men and women who left independent private lives to fight tyranny and oppression in World War II and brought with their sacrifice a quality of life that we all take for granted too often, but that we must never forget.

It is fair to say that last week at the memorial service Phillip articulated magnificently Tom's achievements in his childhood, his war service, and his public service. He was described as a man who was at ease with his own convictions and loyal in his longstanding friendships. He was determined that people should be able to secure their own destiny through hard work and enterprise. Peta Seaton told me that Tom would quite often ring the electorate office, which she said was always a mixed blessing. I am sure the local member at the time had a charming and witty experience. Much advice, counsel, mentoring and support was given about the ways in which the incumbent could administer her role. Peta indicated that each phone call was followed up with a beautifully handwritten note, which is testament to the type of person that Tom was. I note from the obituary in the *Sydney Morning Herald* that Tom's decision to enter politics in December 1974 came about because somebody at a farmer's protest meeting said to him, "Instead of bitching about things, why don't you go into politics and do something about it?" In many ways I wish more farmers would do so.

The member for Wollondilly is in the Chamber. At the time that Tom was the local member for Wollondilly it was a different electorate to what it is now, given the growth we have experienced in metropolitan Sydney. During that period of history the Liberal Government at that time established the National Parks and Wildlife Service. In 1971 the Liberal Party ensured that Australia had its first Minister for the Environment. It is truly remarkable that that happened in the 1970s, given the nature of our country. A number of members of Government at the time gave incredible service during those years, all of whom went on to make a contribution beyond parliamentary life, which is something Tom Lewis had also done.

Tom Lewis also had a real focus on his local community. I know another Premier who is passionate about his local community. Fighting for the small things can make an enormous difference to a local community, which is indicative of Tom Lewis' contribution. As Peta Seaton said to me, one thing he achieved in Moss Vale was to have the Anzac Day march proceed up the main street to the Services Club. It was at a time when public liability insurance left councils reconsidering Anzac Day marches. He was going to ensure that the march took place, no matter what. He was able to circumvent the legal red tape to enable the march to go ahead, as it should have. His achievement was fitting, given the time he spent serving our nation.

It is also important to note that beyond the words of the environment Minister this afternoon, Tom Lewis was also an advocate for more women entering Parliament. I need only reflect on the outstanding women of that region of New South Wales who contributed to all levels of government. Peta Seaton is one of them, but I also mention Marise Payne and Liz Kernohan. I know that Peta and Marise enjoyed Tom's mentoring. On one occasion during a fundraiser they cooked in his kitchen. Tom inspired them. He inspired more women to enter this place as well as Federal Parliament and to get involved in local government.

Tom Lewis did not seek the high-profile public life post politics, but he remained a dedicated and committed worker for many people, particularly veterans and their families through Legacy. He was still seeking to provide advice to secretaries of departments throughout his eighties, particularly on behalf of the local farming community, which pleased me no end. No doubt we have lost a great Australian—someone who has contributed an incredible amount to our State. He must never be forgotten. During this difficult time for his family we express our deepest sympathies. It has been worth reflecting, during today's condolence debate, upon the true man—Tom Lewis.

**Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (16:45):** Where else but Wollondilly and who else but Tom Lewis? On 15 April this year, with the death of Tom Lewis, AO, Wollondilly lost one of its most successful members of Parliament. To Mr Lewis' wife, Utta, to his children, Mark, Jon, Phillip and Michelle, and to his grandchildren, Tom, Amelia, April, Holly, Lucy, Molly and Annie, I pass on my heartfelt condolences from the people of this Parliament and from the people of the Wollondilly community. As has been well publicised since his passing, Mr Lewis was Premier of New South Wales from 1975 to 1976. Wollondilly is one of three electorates in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly to have been held by two or more Premiers of New South Wales—being Premiers Tom Lewis, Sir George Fuller and John Fahey. The other two electorates are Ku-ring-gai and Maroubra.

During his time as Premier, Tom served concurrently as Treasurer. How he did that, I will never know. He served as Minister for Lands for seven years, between 1965 and 1972. He held many positions during his time in political life and outside it, as we have heard—including at the embassy in Washington. I am told that he was a keen skier and flyer when he was not in Parliament and that he loved to farm. Something that has not been mentioned today, and is little known, is that he gave permission to film *Skippy the Bush Kangaroo* at what was known as Waratah National Park.

I would like to touch on Mr Lewis's contribution to the Wollondilly community, this State and the country. Tom was the member for Wollondilly for more than 20 years. During this time the electorate of Wollondilly covered a lot of the Southern Highlands—I note that Peta Seaton, the former member for Southern Highlands, is in the public gallery—and stretched out to Kiama. The member for Kiama is in the Chamber. When we first got elected the member for Kiama and I argued about which seat the Premier belonged to. I think today

the member for Kiama wins. Like many of his generation, Mr Lewis served this country in the Australian Imperial Force from 1940 to 1946. He held the position of lieutenant and served in the 1st Armoured Division and the 2/3rd Commando Squadron. To be a serving member of the military and also reach the highest office in this State is a feat that should not be understated.

As a farmer Mr Lewis was very much a rural politician. He was a man of his convictions. He was a member of the Grazier's Association of New South Wales and the Friesian Cattle Club of Australia, president of the Australian Broiler Growers' Association and councillor of the Royal Agricultural Society. With parts of the Wollondilly electorate still very dependent on the farming and agricultural sectors, much of his involvement in rural affairs is evident today. However, Tom's involvement in the community was not limited to his farming endeavours. Mr Lewis was also president of the Berrima Village Trust, chairman of the Morton National Park Trust, member of the Royal Flying Doctor Service Council and trustee of the Sydney Cricket Ground Trust in 1977. As was noted by journalist Troy Bramston, writing in the *Australian* newspaper on 30 April this year, Mr Lewis was also instrumental in establishing the Western Plains Zoo in Dubbo in 1977. As the article pointed out, it was the first drive-through zoo in Australia. This zoo is now one of New South Wales' primary tourist attractions, and it continues to drive economic growth in rural areas of the State.

Most notably, like me, Mr Lewis was a fiercely strong advocate for the protection of the environment. Tom was responsible for setting up the National Parks and Wildlife Service of New South Wales in 1967, before establishing the Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife in 1970. In my inaugural speech I referred to protecting our unique environment. Since the 2011 election we have protected Wollondilly water catchments and agricultural lands. We have ensured that there has been no coal seam gas mining near our dams, established the Dharawal National Park and proclaimed 11,000 hectares of land as wilderness in the area. We have launched an inquiry into dropping water levels at Thirlmere Lakes and secured funding to conduct baseline studies with the aim of saving those lakes.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service now works very closely with Landcare Australia helping maintain investment in national parks across the State. It is a vital organisation for the continued preservation of the many national parks within the electorate, including the Nattai National Park, Burragorang Conservation Area, Thirlmere Lakes National Park, Blue Mountains National Park and, the latest, Dharawal National Park. People in the Wollondilly and Wingecarribee shires would not have had the opportunity to appreciate the beauty of much of the landscape and natural wonders—which are now world famous—but for the work, vision and dedication of Tom Lewis. The continued existence of much of this natural habitat can be attributed to his advocacy.

We had something in common other than our passion for the environment. It was known by his staff that Tom wanted everything done yesterday. In my office I have a slogan about delivering for our community: Just make it happen. On behalf of the Wollondilly community I extend our gratitude to the family of Tom, not only for the lifetime of service that he provided to the State but also for the service he gave to the region of Wollondilly. For that we say thank you. I know the former member for the Southern Highlands, who is present today, will agree with me. When the people of Wollondilly and the Southern Highlands communities are conversing they often mention Tom Lewis' name and recognise his achievements. In the history books he may not be one of the longest-serving Premiers of this State, but I can say with confidence and gratitude that while I am the member for Wollondilly his service will always be remembered. By the time I leave this place if I have achieved half of what Tom did our region will be the better for it.

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (16:51):** Today I commemorate the life of the Hon. Thomas Lancelot Lewis, AO, a former Premier of New South Wales, who passed away recently on 25 April. Mr Lewis was honoured with a State funeral last Thursday at Saint Stephen's Uniting Church in Macquarie Street. Tom Lewis was born in Adelaide on 23 January 1922. He was educated at St Peter's College, Adelaide, the college attended by former South Australian Labor Premier Don Dunstan. In 1940 Mr Lewis was 18 when World War II broke out. He joined the army and trained with the Armoured Division. He served as a lieutenant in the 2nd Australian Imperial Force 1st Armoured Division and later the commandos, and served in the Pacific as a lieutenant in the Commando Squadron until the war ended in 1946.

After World War II he served as a diplomat at the Australian Embassy in Washington for five years, from 1946 to 1951, before coming home to be a farmer near Moss Vale in his beloved Southern Highlands. As has been said before during this condolence debate, it was reported in the *Australian Women's Weekly* edition of 4 December 1974 that Mr Lewis was always a farming man at heart. He bought a property on the Nepean River and raised chickens. At a farmers' protest meeting, someone said to him, "Instead of bitching about things, why don't you go into politics and do something about it?" It would appear this sentiment stayed with him, as in 1957 Mr Lewis was preselected by the Liberal Party for the seat of Wollondilly and was elected to the New South Wales Legislative Assembly in October 1957.

Mr Lewis had a long career in the New South Wales Government, retiring in 1978. He was Minister for Lands in 1965 when the Askin Government came to power. He was also Minister for Mines until 1967, when the pressure of work during the mining boom made it difficult to do the work of both portfolios. Mr Lewis held senior positions during his 21 years in Parliament, including being Minister for Lands from 1965 to 1972 and Minister for Lands and Tourism from 1972 to 1975. On 3 January 1975 Mr Lewis was sworn in as the New South Wales Premier after the retirement of Sir Robert Askin. In 2000 Mr Lewis was awarded an Order of Australia for service to the Parliament, to the community and to the environment as founder of the National Parks and Wildlife Service of New South Wales. In this place we honour many people but today the hearts of his family, which are filled with sorrow, should also be filled with pride. Your beloved Tom Lewis did more for this State than can be relayed in these few moments today. I thank the family for giving him up for the many years during which he served the people of New South Wales and Australia. Vale Thomas Lancelot Lewis.

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (16:54):** Today this House has the opportunity to pay tribute to the life of Thomas Lancelot Lewis—a Premier, a local member of Parliament, a jackeroo, a conservationist, a father, a husband and a great man. He was born in Adelaide, the son of Lancelot Ashley and Gretta Lewis, and was educated at St Peter's College, Adelaide, from 1931 to 1940. Subsequently, he managed the property of his uncle, Essington Lewis, who was, as the Premier mentioned, the managing director of BHP and Director-General of Munitions during World War II. He was a member of the Australian Imperial Force from 1940 to 1946 and served in Indonesia and Borneo as a lieutenant. He was on the staff of the Embassy of Australia in Washington, D.C., from 1946 to 1951.

Lewis was elected as the member for Wollondilly in 1957—which, at that point covered most of my Kiama electorate, where he is still considered to have been an outstanding member of Parliament. The Premier referred to tumult in his electorate over amalgamations and I wonder what his view would be of the current situation. But I do know that he is incredibly well regarded as someone who served our community with great distinction. I acknowledge that the member for Wollondilly referred to Tom Lewis' work during his time as a local member. When the Askin Government came to power in 1965 after 24 years in the wilderness, Lewis was given relatively junior portfolios of Lands and Mines. As the lands Minister, he was responsible for setting up the National Parks and Wildlife Service in 1967. In 1970 he set up the Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife as an independent not-for-profit organisation to be the fundraising arm of the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Those facts reflect the great environmental record of the Liberal Party. As the Minister for the Environment mentioned, it was the Liberal Party that established the Environment Protection Authority [EPA]. It was the Liberal Party that established the Uluru and Kakadu national parks and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. And of course it was the Liberal Party and Tom Lewis that established national parks in this State. I am proud of a man who was not a protectionist but rather a conservationist. It was Tom Lewis' view that to be able to understand the importance of our environment, people must be involved in it. The legacy that he leaves is one that will involve not just his generation but future generations in the preservation of those things that are truly important.

In 1972 Tom Lewis was appointed as the tourism Minister, which was added to his ministerial responsibilities when Eric Willis moved to Education. Late in 1974 Askin announced his resignation and Lewis was chosen as leader over Willis and the Justice Minister, John Maddison. He was sworn in as Premier on 3 January 1975. He was elected during an uneasy time for the Liberal Government, which was engaged in almost daily warfare with the Whitlam Labor Government in Canberra—most notably over the Medibank healthcare scheme, to which New South Wales was the very last State to sign up. As we heard earlier, Lewis was also instrumental in establishing the Western Plains Zoo at Dubbo—Australia's first drive-through zoo, which opened in 1977.

As I mentioned earlier, when Askin resigned, Lewis defeated Eric Willis and John Maddison to become the Liberal Party's second New South Wales Premier. Lewis served as Premier and Treasurer for one year and 21 days—the only Liberal Premier in this State to enter the role and leave it without facing a general election. Upon his defeat, Lewis served as Willis' Minister for Local Government until May 1976, when the Liberal Government was narrowly defeated by the Australian Labor Party. In opposition, Lewis did not hold any position within the shadow Cabinet and later resigned from Parliament on 7 September 1978. The vacancy became one of the justifications for calling the election on 7 October 1978. At the election his seat fell to a Labor candidate, Bill Knott, under different boundaries.

Upon his departure from Parliament he was permitted by Queen Elizabeth II, on the Governor's recommendation, to continue to use the title "The Honourable". He was made an Officer of the Order of Australia on 26 January 2000 "for service to the Parliament of New South Wales, to the environment as the founder of the National Parks and Wildlife Service of New South Wales, and to the community". On 1 January 2001 he was awarded the Centenary Medal. Fittingly, as a former digger, Lewis died on 25 April 2016.

One of the things for which I credit the Labor Party is that Labor members remember their great heroes and are great lauders of their history. I commend them for doing so. It is important that generations understand the legacy that all of us in politics and in Parliament leave. To my political party's great shame, we have not, as best we could, remembered our heroes and remembered those great contributors. I am so proud that our Premier is in the Chamber and is listening to this debate, having taken part in it to remember one of his predecessors. I say to members of Parliament that we can be proud that among our number we had such a man as Tom Lewis serving in this place—someone who made an enormous contribution and who used his time to make a real difference to people's lives. Vale Tom Lewis—a man who made a lasting contribution to our State and whose legacy will live on.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** The question is that the motion be agreed to. I ask members to carry the motion by standing in their places.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Members and Officers of the House stood in their places as a mark of respect.*

*Bills*

**COASTAL MANAGEMENT BILL 2016**

**Second Reading**

**Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning) (17:02):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

It is fitting that the Coastal Management Bill 2016, which is one of the most innovative pieces of coastal planning legislation in the world, is before the House this evening, given that earlier this afternoon members passed a motion of condolence for a former Premier, Tom Lewis. Premier Lewis presided over the early years of what was arguably the most progressive decade of coastal management in the State's history—until now. In 1974 intense storms caused some of the greatest damage to the New South Wales coast in living memory. Many beaches in greater metropolitan Sydney were severely eroded and stripped of sand, including the iconic tourist destinations of Bondi and Manly. So severe was the damage to South Cronulla, it was reduced to a rock shelf. Many houses and surf clubs were also threatened. In my electorate a block of apartments in Narrabeen required emergency action to save them. My local beach of Newport was also reduced to a rock shelf, with many trees left balancing precariously, along with the surf club, on the remaining berm of sand.

In 1975, which is the year following the storms, then Premier Tom Lewis announced an initial \$5 million—which was a large sum at the time—to restore and improve the beaches in Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong that had been ravaged by the storms. This initial grant was a catalyst for the Beach Improvement Program, which was initiated several years later and which was responsible for restoring and improving many of Sydney's iconic beaches as well as for ensuring that the natural beauty of our coastal landscapes was retained for our own generation to enjoy. I acknowledge the presence of Angus Gordon in the gallery this evening. While shortly I will speak further about his contribution to the reforms that are the subject of this bill, I make special mention that it was Angus who was appointed to set up and run the pioneering Beach Improvement Program.

Former Premier Lewis' vision was that our public beaches be improved in line with the international standards that existed at that time. This bill builds on Tom Lewis's legacy of coastal management, using the advances in knowledge, science and evidence we have gained in the 40 years since his premiership. The bill is an innovative and world-leading piece of coastal planning legislation that will become increasingly important as our State's population continues to live in coastal areas, which will likely be affected by an increase in severe weather events and greater variability of coastal processes. Nearly six million people—equivalent to 85 per cent of the New South Wales population—now live within 50 kilometres of the New South Wales coastline. Those people rely on the coast for lifestyle, employment and much that contributes to their lives. The number of New South Wales residents living in close proximity to our coastal areas is set to increase.

The existing Coastal Protection Act 1979 was prompted by the severe storms in the 1970s. The reaction of government and communities at the time was understandable: they sought to develop legislation that protected the coast and existing settlement patterns. We now know about the existence of natural systems—such as bodies of submarine sand termed "sediment compartments"—that are not uniform. Like our coastal settlements, these sediment compartments are unique. The bill is world leading in that it enshrines our scientific understanding of the natural systems that maintain beaches. These reforms will help us to continue to resolve legacy issues of the past, but also ensure we do not miss the opportunities to manage the unique environmental, social and economic values of the coast in a planned and strategic way. They encourage a proactive management approach to our coastline.

The reforms have been, and will continue to be, co-created between State government, local government, coastal experts and communities. I hope that the House will support them. When it comes to planning, meaningful, long-lasting reforms require collaboration. The bill is an important part of the New South Wales Government's coastal management reforms. The much-needed and long-awaited coastal management reforms establish the legislative and policy settings and the practical tools that resilient coastal communities need to protect and enhance the natural values of the coast; to ensure ongoing public access, use and enjoyment of our beaches and foreshores; and to prepare for and respond to existing and emerging coastal hazards and threats.

The New South Wales Government is funding these reforms properly. I was delighted to make the first announcement of the 2016 State budget recently, in which the New South Wales Government committed \$83.6 million to the management of our coastline over the next five years to support local councils and increase the resilience of our coastal communities. This is the biggest funding boost to coastal management since the 1970s and recognises the importance of New South Wales's coastal economy, environment and community cohesion.

Consultation has been a core part of this reform over the past two years. The bill is the result of extensive consultation and collaboration between the State Government and local councils up and down the coast, as well as coastal experts and coastal communities. In November 2014 I announced a comprehensive reform agenda for coastal management at the NSW Coastal Conference in Ulladulla. Twelve months later in Forster, again at the NSW Coastal Conference, I released a draft bill for public consultation alongside key elements of a coastal manual and an explanation of the intended effect of a new Coastal Management State Environmental Planning Policy.

Around 450 submissions were received that expressed a range of views, voiced concerns, raised issues and proposed suggestions. The bill that I put before the House today has been shaped and improved because of the extremely valuable input from councils, community members and experts. In response to submissions during this process, the bill I will outline today places a greater emphasis on public safety and ecologically sustainable development in the coastal zone than was evident in the public exhibition bill. The bill also recognises the importance of dunes and now explicitly requires consideration of the surf zone.

The bill is the first legislation in Australia to specifically recognise the use of the surf zone in a land-use planning context. The surf zone is not only a place of recreation for surfers, beach fishers and swimmers but also a stunning part of the scenic values of the coast and a major element of attraction for our tourism industry. Daniel Reineman's study on the utility of surfers' wave knowledge for coastal management demonstrated how significant the surfers were in contributing to our understanding of coastal resources. The inclusion of the "surf zone" in the bill was made after a compelling submission by the Surfrider Foundation Australia, and its advocacy has improved the legislation. In addition, the important concept of a "beach fluctuation zone", which recognises the range of natural locations a beach profile occupies, has been clarified and improved.

Other representations by community groups and coastal landowners led to the retention of an existing object in the Coastal Protection Act pertaining to land identification and acquisition. It also led to the expansion of the potential fields of expertise for the membership of the NSW Coastal Council, to include experts in property law and dispute resolution. Last week I met with the Collingwood Beach Preservation Group to discuss these and other issues. Amendments moved in the other place further expanded the potential fields of expertise for the membership of the NSW Coastal Council to include traditional and contemporary Aboriginal use and management of the coastal zone. An additional amendment also requires the tabling of performance audit reports that may be undertaken by the new NSW Coastal Council. I thank all the stakeholders and members of Parliament who contributed to this process for their time and attention and their passion for our coast, particularly during the exhibition period. The Submissions Analysis Report is available on the Office of Environment and Heritage website, along with all submissions.

There is a strong rationale for the coastal management reforms of which this bill is the centrepiece. The New South Wales Government recognises the importance of our State's saltwater economy and we want to see thriving, resilient communities living, working and playing on a healthy coast now and into the future. The reason we need this reform is to make the system simpler by replacing and improving on the outdated and complex web of laws managing our coast. We also need to make the system more strategic to enable us to resolve the issues arising from past settlement patterns and to manage the unique environmental, social and economic values of the coast in a planned, coordinated and strategic way. The reforms will also provide better support for local councils as the custodians of our coast in partnership with the communities they represent.

The new legislation, the Coastal Management Bill 2016, is easier to navigate and more helpful in managing our coast. The bill provides the architecture for strategic management of our coastal areas. I turn now to the specific provisions of the bill. The bill includes a new definition of "coastal zone". Unlike earlier coastal legislation, the bill recognises that the coast is not one uniform strip of land next to the sea. Rather, the bill reflects the reality that the New South Wales coast is a unique and interrelated treasure trove of scenic landscapes, sensitive



environmental processes and important public places. Those environments are linked to diverse cultural, economic and social values.

In total, it is proposed that the coastal zone be a combination of four coastal management areas: a coastal wetlands and littoral rainforests area; a coastal vulnerability area, being an area subject to coastal hazards such as beach erosion, shoreline recession and tidal inundation; a coastal environment area, which contains coastal features including coastal waters, estuaries, coastal lakes, coastal lagoons, headlands and rock platforms; and a coastal use area, being an area of land adjacent to coastal waters, estuaries, coastal lakes and lagoons where development is present or may be carried out in the future. These four areas are defined in the bill and will be mapped as part of a consolidated Coastal Management State Environmental Planning Policy.

Management objectives for the coastal zone are set out in the bill. The legislation establishes clear, outcome-oriented management objectives for each area to ensure that councils apply the best management tools and development controls. As the most sensitive area of the coastal zone, coastal wetlands and littoral rainforests are to be protected in their natural state, including their biological diversity and ecosystem integrity. The management objectives for the coastal vulnerability area are focused on ensuring public safety and preventing risks to human life. Coastal managers are to manage these areas so as to mitigate current and future risk from coastal hazards by taking into account the effects of coastal processes, including climate change.

Importantly, public access, amenity and use of beaches and foreshores is to be maintained. The bill recognises that a fundamental understanding of being Australian is free access to our precious beaches. This is a uniquely Australian characteristic of our coastal zones. Many other jurisdictions do not have free access to beaches—an important element we seek to enshrine in this bill. The bill prioritises natural defences, including coastal dunes, vegetation and wetlands, and recognises that if these are not sufficient to reduce exposure to coastal hazards then other actions should be taken to reduce exposure. Actions that reduce exposure to coastal hazards must avoid significant degradation of or disruption to natural environmental processes as well as beach and foreshore amenity. The management objectives for the coastal environment area are to protect and enhance the coastal environmental values and natural processes of the area and to enhance natural character, scenic value, biological diversity and ecosystem integrity.

The final coastal management area is the coastal use area. The management objectives for this area are focused on protecting and enhancing the scenic, social and cultural values of the coast by ensuring that the type, bulk, scale and size of development are appropriate for the location and natural scenic quality of the coast that this bill seeks to defend. Where these management areas overlap the management objectives will be combined and the bill provides a hierarchy in case there are any inconsistencies.

The forthcoming Coastal Management State Environmental Planning Policy will set the land use planning framework for coastal management. It will support implementation of the management objectives for each of the areas that I have outlined. The Coastal Management Bill establishes requirements for the preparation of coastal management programs [CMP]. Over time, coastal management programs will replace coastal zone management plans [CZMP] prepared by local councils. The purpose of a coastal management program is to set the long-term strategy for the coordinated management of land within the coastal zone.

Under the bill, a local council may, and must if directed to do so by the Minister, prepare a coastal management program in accordance with the legislation. A council's coastal management program will need to consider and promote the objects of the Act and give effect to the management objectives for the coastal management areas. Councils will be required to consider a range of options and will need to work closely with their communities to decide the best option for a particular area.

The bill establishes the key requirements that a coastal management program must meet. These are to identify the coastal management issues affecting the areas to which the program is to apply; to identify the actions required to address those coastal management issues in an integrated and strategic manner; to identify how and when those actions are to be implemented; to identify the costs of those actions and proposed cost-sharing arrangements and other viable funding mechanisms for those actions; and, if needed, to include a coastal zone emergency action sub-plan that outlines the roles and responsibilities of all public authorities in response to coastal zone emergencies, such as beach erosion. In developing a coastal management program, a council must consult with the community and relevant public authorities.

Importantly, the bill recognises that natural processes occur on a scale larger than local government areas and requires consultation between councils that share sediment compartments and also where an estuary spans two or more local government areas. The new coastal management programs will have a strong emphasis on implementation. The bill does this by requiring local councils to give effect to their coastal management programs, including through plans, strategies, programs and reports developed under their main reporting framework, that is, the integrated planning and reporting framework [IPR] under local government legislation. This means that

coastal management programs and identified coastal management activities will need to be aligned with broader community strategic plans, reflect community priorities, and be feasible and financially viable.

The bill provides the Minister with the authority to certify or refuse to certify that a council's coastal management program has been prepared in accordance with the legislation's requirements, which is primarily the proposed coastal management manual. The NSW Coastal Council will be an advisory body under the bill. The bill recreates the NSW Coastal Council, which I have already referred to, and it will be a new statutory advisory body to replace the NSW Coastal Panel. The Minister may seek advice from the NSW Coastal Council, which will be made up of people with expertise in areas relevant to coastal management, such as coastal land use planning, coastal physical sciences, economics and social science.

The NSW Coastal Council will be allocated functions, including the provision of strategic advice to the Minister on the operation of the Act and other technical matters of State significance and in council preparation and development of coastal management programs. The Coastal Council may also be tasked by the Minister to audit the performance of a local council's implementation of its coastal management program. This will enable the Minister to determine whether coastal management programs are being implemented effectively, which is one of the key criticisms raised in consultation in relation to the existing legislative framework.

I thank those who have been integral in the drafting of the bill, that is, Darryl Low Choy, Kevin Schreiber and Kristin Stubbins. They have provided support in the preparation, reflection and peer review of the bill. I reserve special acknowledgement to two coastal experts: leading geomorphologist and member of the Wentworth Group of Concerned Scientists, Professor Bruce Thom, and Mr Angus Gordon. They are in a real sense old men of the sea. They are New South Wales treasures who have brought a lifetime of knowledge, experience and understanding to this area.

Both of them have a wide local, regional, national and global perspective on the challenges faced by coastal communities and the important intersection of engineering, ecosystem services, geomorphology and other related disciplines that need to be considered to engage in proper integrated coastal plan management, which is what this bill is fundamentally about. I cannot understate the gratitude that the New South Wales Government and members of this Parliament owe to Angus and Bruce for the work they have done to ensure the bill incorporates the best of current scientific understanding of coastal processes and reflects the desires and aspirations of coastal communities along the New South Wales coast. The bill has had to respond to the expectations of a diverse range of coastal communities, and the wisdom and expertise of Angus and Bruce has been invaluable.

Finally, I echo the calls for a national approach, national funding and national leadership on coastal management, as were made by academics Nick Harvey, Beverley Clarke and Melissa Nursery-Bray in the *Journal of Environmental Science* 2012. While it is important that States provide for integrated coastal zone management, as we do in this bill, we recognise that the challenges faced by coastal communities are real. We have an ambulatory and dynamic coastline. Our existing legal processes have not been sufficient to deal with some of the engineering, social and environmental challenges. It is important that each State reflects carefully on its coastal management legislative and policy frameworks and on the need for national consistency in approaches around coastal planning.

The issues faced by coastal communities are very real. In the last couple of weeks we have seen the first of the winter storms hit the coastline. We have a duty to the citizens of New South Wales, each and every one of whom has free access to the coast. We know how important our beaches are to every Australian. It is incumbent on all of us to use our best efforts to ensure that our laws are modern and consistent and protect the interests of current and future generations. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (17:23):** I lead for the Opposition in respect to the Coastal Management Bill 2016. I note that this bill was introduced in the other place and many of the significant considerations in respect of this bill, both for and against, have been ventilated in the other place. My colleague the Hon. Penny Sharpe, who led for the Opposition in the other place, did a good job expressing the Opposition's view on the bill. I acknowledge the significant effort the Minister, his staff and department have put into the formulation and promulgation of this policy. The Opposition acknowledges that a great many provisions in this bill are innovative and supported. However, there are items and information still missing, such as the draft State environmental planning policy not having been formulated or released for public exhibition and a lack of mapping details. A great many stakeholder groups have requested that the bill not proceed until such information is available and there is further consultation. We took the view that it was better to be cautious and to oppose the bill.

The Opposition sought to refer the bill to a committee to have those issues ventilated, but the motion failed. The Hon. Penny Sharpe also moved several amendments in the other place that were designed to improve the bill, but they also were unsuccessful. We will be consistent in our approach and oppose the bill in this place.

Without being disrespectful to the Minister for Planning, I point out that members of the Opposition remember how the Government has administered the Planning portfolio over the past five years. The amendments made to the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act have left a bad taste in our mouths. The way the Government and its bureaucrats conducted themselves in relation to urban activation precincts, particularly those in my electorate, makes me wary about its approach to planning. I invite members to consider the Government's approach to major projects such as WestConnex—everything is a secret.

Communities of the eastern suburbs were ambushed with the light rail project, and the council amalgamation process was one of the greatest community ambushes I have seen in my 21 years of public life. The Government is now expanding the planning footprint and increasing the density and height of the built environment across the city. There is a lack of affordable housing and insufficient social housing. In Waterloo, 2,000 social housing properties have been knocked down, but only 2,000 of the 100,000 new dwellings are social housing dwellings. In addition, too many approvals have been issued under the gateway provisions. When I say that the Opposition does not entirely trust this Government in relation to all matters of planning, those examples go some way to explaining that position.

However, there is a great deal of goodwill in this bill. I thank the Minister for Planning for the briefing provided to me and the Hon. Penny Sharpe. We were heartened that Professor Bruce Thom and Mr Angus Gordon were at the briefing, and I endorse the Minister's comments about them. A large number of good people worked on this bill, but I find it ironic that it was introduced by a Coalition government. I endorse the Minister's comments about the need for a national approach to climate change because, of course, it is one of the greatest threats to our coastline. I venture to say that the Premier and the Prime Minister do believe that climate change is real and that it is a pressing issue. However, for reasons of political expediency they are refusing to do anything about it. This Government disbanded the Department of Climate Change and Water, and there are still many within the Coalition who question the science of climate change.

The Opposition believes that this bill should contain a provision that the NSW Coastal Council include a member who has expertise in climate change. The Hon. Penny Sharpe sought to include in the bill a provision requiring the appointment of such a person, but her amendment was defeated. Stakeholder groups raised with the Opposition a number of concerns about the bill, and I will refer to some of them. They pointed out that throughout the consultation process they had made it clear that their support for these reforms was assured only if sufficient detail were provided prior to its passage through the Parliament. The New South Wales Coastal Alliance has requested that the bill be withdrawn until more information is forthcoming. It has set out a number concerns about the legislation raised by groups such as the Law Society, stating:

The Law Society is concerned that key aspects of the coastal management package, including mapping for the coastal zone and the draft text of the proposed SEPP, have not been released as part of the consultation package. These are critical elements of the reforms, and without these documents the ability of stakeholders to properly consider all aspects of the reform package at this stage is limited. It is concerning that the proposed SEPP has not yet been released, particularly given the link between management objectives for each of the proposed areas...

We urge that these documents be made available with sufficient time for proper consultation, before the Bill is introduced into Parliament.

Given my earlier comments about this Government's conduct, that request from the alliance is not without justification. The last time I led for the Opposition in debate on a bill dealing with biological matters the House was dealing with the 10/50 land clearing legislation. The Opposition sought a great deal of information about mapping zones and mechanisms, which had not even been worked out before the introduction of the bill. Unfortunately, everything that we predicted in absence of that information—which would have given certainty and made the legislation reasonable—came to fruition. Some parts of Sydney experienced a complete environmental bloodbath and enormous damage was done. Our request for information to be provided before the introduction of the bill was entirely justifiable, given this Government's conduct. However, I do accept that this Minister was not responsible for that. The North Coast Environmental Council commented:

The public is being asked to comment upon, and potentially approve, a scheme without the critical information inherent in the zoning maps. The zoning will be critical.

Gosford City Council stated:

It is understood that the reform process is not complete, however, some information is essential for Council to conduct a thorough review of the implications of the proposed framework on Council's activities. In particular, the spatial mapping underpinning the four proposed Coastal Management Areas is critical information in determining whether the proposed legislative and policy framework can be applied effectively for those areas.

The Nature Conservation Council also made representations to the Opposition, and the Environmental Liaison Office wrote to all members of this place opposing the bill because no proper community consultation had been undertaken. I also note the concerns raised by the Australian Coastal Society. As the Hon. Penny Sharpe said in the other place, all of these groups made detailed submissions and were operating on the basis that they would be

provided with more information before they were asked to support the legislation. The Opposition shares their concerns. I have detailed the Opposition's key concerns and indicate that, in accordance with the stance we took in the other place, we will not support the bill.

**Ms MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley) (17:33):** I support the Coastal Management Bill 2016 and acknowledge the long and hard road the Minister has travelled to have it reach this House. I congratulate him and his officials, and acknowledge the work of Professor Bruce Thom and Mr Angus Gordon. Members were fortunate to be briefed by them some weeks ago. Many of us are concerned about our coastline. The electorate of Oxley has about 150 kilometres of coastline stretching from North Beach near Urunga to Hungry Head, Valla Beach, Nambucca, Scotts Head, Grassy Head, Stewarts Point, South West Rocks, Hat Head and Crescent Head. I note the Minister's comment that it is an ambulatory and dynamic coastline. It certainly is.

Last summer the surf club at Hungry Head faced a terrible situation. A track of water had moved, making it more difficult for club members to get their safety equipment onto the beach. Some nine months later it has moved back to the earlier position. No doubt it will move back again to where it caused the problems, that is, down to the rock at Hungry Head, which was where the creek ran out when the first settlers arrived. I acknowledge too that the mighty Macleay used to find its way out at Grassy Head. That was the main entrance; now it is at South West Rocks. A lot of work was done over that time to create the town and safe harbour of South West Rocks, which is one of the deepest harbours on the east coast of New South Wales.

During the briefing, the Minister mentioned that the coastline of New South Wales from Newcastle up to Tweed, or thereabouts, is approximately 44 per cent national parks. It is also approximately 50 per cent Crown land. Those statistics show that there is virtually no development between Newcastle and Tweed Heads along the coastline—unlike in Sydney, I might add. It is important that we get the management of these areas right. Where we have made mistakes, communities have suffered the consequences. Many communities on the mid North Coast, North Coast and Central Coast are concerned about their local waters because of our ambulatory and dynamic coastline.

The Coastal Management Bill 2016 is an important part of our coastal management reforms. It will establish a simpler, more contemporary legislative framework for the coast. It is the first part of a coastal reform package that will better equip communities to respond effectively to existing and emerging coastal challenges and opportunities. A key element of the Government's coastal reforms will be a new approach to understanding and defining the coastal zone to manage the unique environmental, social and economic values of the coast in a planned and strategic way. Given that the electorate of Oxley has potentially the best surf zones in the whole of Australia, if not the world, it was very exciting to learn of the significant work of the Surfrider Foundation Australia and to have its input. Many surf riders, including my son, are at pains to tell me their ideas about improving the breaks at our various beaches. But nothing beats a north facing break, which is what we have at Scotts Head and Crescent Head.

The New South Wales coast comprises a number of different but often interrelated landforms and environments. There are also different cultural, economic and social values associated with sections of the coast. Under the bill, the "coastal zone" is not defined as a single, homogenous zone. Instead, the new coastal zone will be divided into four coastal management areas to accommodate the different and unique features and specific needs of those different areas. In total, it is proposed that the "coastal zone" is a combination of four coastal management areas: a coastal wetlands and littoral rainforests area; a coastal vulnerability area, which contains areas subject to coastal hazards such as beach erosion, shoreline recession and tidal inundation; a coastal environment area, which contains coastal features including coastal waters, estuaries, coastal lakes, coastal lagoons, headlands and rock platforms; and a coastal use area, which contains areas of land adjacent to coastal waters, estuaries, coastal lakes and lagoons where development is present or may be carried out in the future.

The object of creating the coastal management areas is to create a clear legislative framework with outcome-oriented management objectives for each area to ensure councils apply the best management tools and development controls. It is important for councils to work within this framework to ensure protection, support and potentially economic development within our region. It is important that we accept that the coast is an area that many Australians want to live near and on. We need to have the frameworks in place to enable that to happen in a sensible way that does not put the coastline at risk but ensures economic activity and allows our regions to reach their potential in terms of employment and job opportunities. Coastal management strategies that reduce exposure to coastal hazards will, in the first instance and wherever possible, restore or enhance natural defences, including coastal dunes, vegetation and wetlands.

The final coastal management area is the coastal use area, which is land adjacent to coastal waters and other features and where development may be carried out now or in the future. The management objectives for this area are focused on protecting and enhancing the scenic, social and cultural values of the coast by ensuring that the type, bulk, scale and size of development are appropriate for the location and natural scenic quality of the

coast. This means that our beautiful coastline will always look beautiful while accommodating appropriate development that supports local economic activity. Where these management areas overlap, the objectives will be combined. The bill provides a hierarchy in case there are any inconsistencies. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (17:40):** I wish to contribute to the debate on the Coastal Management Bill 2016. I say at the outset that I will be supporting the bill. This legislation, which will replace the Coastal Protection Act 1979, is arguably quite overdue. Australians love the coast. We love the climate it provides and the recreational opportunities such as swimming, surfing, skiing, fishing and just generally mucking about in boats and on the foreshore. We love to be able to watch the water and are frequently moved by its beauty and in awe of its power. We love the coast so much that we are one of the most heavily coastal dwelling people in the world. But we must be careful, respectful and smart enough that we do not love the coast to death.

Most significantly, I applaud the Government's efforts to re-establish a new statutory Coastal Council, which will replace the existing NSW Coastal Panel and have the power to conduct performance audits on the implementation of coastal management plans by councils. As a former mayor of Lake Macquarie, which is home to the State's best stretch of coastline—I know members are parochial in this regard but they can take my comment as a given—from Dudley, Glenrock Lagoon and the headland at Leggy Point through to Catherine Hill Bay, I am very familiar with the issues associated with the old Coastal Protection Act. That Act has been amended and fiddled with for some 37 years to create a mishmash of confused and complex legislation based on outdated science and knowledge. That is not to detract from the intentions of those early legislators; it is just that we now know much more about the science and the mechanics affecting the coast.

Indeed, while our understanding of local climate and coastal processes is improving, so is our knowledge of the likelihood of impacts from climate change, which will lead to more frequent and more violent weather events. I am pleased that the member for Maroubra so stridently brought that to the House's attention because I think that this Government has not been strong on tackling the issue of climate change. I believe this new bill sets out a broad, sustainable vision for our coastline. It is not perfect but it is a very good start. It will manage and protect it and provide a clear set of rules on how it is managed into the future. I applaud the fact that it recognises Indigenous heritage along with the character and specific requirements of regional areas and will guide councils on how to deal with the immediate and future impacts of climate change.

While I am aware of the role played by local councils and key agencies in forming the new bill, some of my constituents have complained that the bill was drafted without enough engagement with the broader community. I too received many of the representations that were referred to by the member for Maroubra. I note, however, that further public consultation will be held before draft zone mapping has been completed and a draft State environmental planning policy [SEPP] has been finalised. With the re-establishment of the NSW Coastal Council, this bill seems to me to be a good framework for that further work. I understand that following amendments in the Legislative Council, the new Coastal Council will be required to provide an annual report reflecting on the performance of councils and community engagement in the implementation of coastal management plans. That is also a good move.

I note that the Government has not included statewide sea level rise benchmarks in the stage two reform package. I acknowledge the member for Charlestown, the current mayor of Lake Macquarie City Council, who is in the Chamber. Lake Macquarie City Council has been strident in its planning for future sea level rises for more than a decade, often against a backdrop of resistance from some quarters. It should, of course, be applauded for the work it has done, and I back its calls for statewide benchmarks that would provide consistency in coastal planning and hazard mitigation. Lake Macquarie has been at the forefront of this fight and against the policies of its neighbouring councils, which has detracted from the good work that Lake Macquarie has achieved.

As I have said before, it is understandable that we love the coast. It is a complex environment, which we have intensively occupied and modified since European settlement. Frequently we learn that our understanding of the land or water is not correct, and homes, businesses or public infrastructure have been impacted and often destroyed as a result of exposure to the elements, with waves, wind, currents and even tides taking their toll. We must take this into account in all future planning and adjust our thinking so that we work with the natural environment rather than take the view that we can control it. A control attitude is expensive and destined to fail.

I wish to reflect on my role as the chair of the Estuary Management Committee and then the Lake Macquarie Taskforce, which, in the 1990s and early 2000s, addressed the decline of Lake Macquarie. The estuary management study was done under the guidance of the Estuary Management Manual 1992, which I bring to the attention of the House. It was a progressive document produced by the then New South Wales Government through the Department of Public Works. It was a well-considered template for what we were going to do. The estuary management study looked at how the science of the lake worked, and how we used the catchment and the estuary. The areas I am referring to will now be covered in this bill. We looked at everything that needed to be

done to produce a solid estuary management plan, which included comprehensive consultation with the community, whether they were members of the public or business owners.

We consulted with all stakeholders throughout the process. The study produced a great result. During that study I first met Professor Bruce Thom, and developed a great relationship with him and many other academics and highly qualified people in New South Wales. Lake Macquarie City Council had an excellent relationship with Professor Thom, as I am sure other councils now have with Mr Angus Gordon. The estuary management plan used the best science available that was developed to work the natural systems, looking at how reinstating natural beaches would dissipate wave energy and reduce its deflection, which frequently caused neighbouring land to bear the burden of erosion. We looked to nature to address the movement of fine colloidal pollutants and nutrients into the lake and we moved away from the earlier well-intended but failed attempts to control these things with concrete, gross pollutant traps and the like. [*Extension of time*]

Lake Macquarie City Council, in conjunction with the State, worked largely in accordance with the estuary management plan to develop expertise in recreating wetland systems as well as working to protect and improve existing natural wetland systems. It is good science, but it is also common sense. I refer to my time when we looked at producing a coastal management plan that was to be similar, but under the former Act. It was a much poorer process than that which we had developed with the estuary management plan. For a number of reasons, the framework and guidance were not present and there was no commitment from the State government at the time. I note that the council has moved on with the coastal management plan and it has done some extraordinary work. The coast is an extraordinarily complex area and is rather expensive to fix when it goes wrong. We have been getting it wrong since European settlement. We have modified the coastline and have tried to train the water to do what we wanted it to do. We have tried to tame the tides and manipulate the currents. It does not work. We must be smarter and work with nature.

This bill establishes common-sense pathways and principles for the sustainable management of our coastal environment. No doubt, as has been alluded to by the member for Maroubra and other members who have made speeches in debate on this bill, there will be some emerging problems. That likelihood should not stop the Government from proceeding. It means the Government must be prepared to address such issues. I note the Minister for Planning is in the Chamber. As a result of my discussions with the Minister for Planning and his staff, I have confidence that he is aware of the sensitivities around this issue. This bill is about changing how we do things. It should not be about disadvantaging property owners who, understandably, want to protect their rights. I understand those concerns.

I mention the doctrine of erosion and accretion, which is in clause 28 of the bill. I am sure it will feature in members' contributions. I am disappointed that some of the explanatory notes did not go back to Roman law and talk about the rights that were taken to England and became part of our system of law, as they include the rights of the shoreline and the doctrine of erosion and accretion. Until recently, in Lake Macquarie the doctrine of erosion and accretion allowed a waterfront property owner whose land had eroded because their boundary was on the mean high water mark—not the deed high water mark as people believe—to go to the Department of Lands and say, "Here is the mean high water mark. My land is gone. Can I build a seawall and reinstate it?" There was no problem and the land owner could build it.

The doctrine of erosion and accretion says it happens naturally so there is give and take. If it erodes through natural causes, bad luck, the land is lost. If the land builds up, a little is gained. It works out. For many years, what was happening in Lake Macquarie was happening around New South Wales and we have lost a lot of our waterways through this process. Over the years Professor Bruce Thom and I have spent some time talking about these issues. It comes down to public access to lands and the ecological zone; the intertidal zone is impacted by people's views about their rights to do what they like on their parcels of land. I am pleased about the change in the doctrine of erosion and accretion and how it will be interpreted by the Minister or a court. While it is a minor point, it is a very interesting one and one that has been abused by many people over the years.

I understand that some people will have concerns about this legislation. There are few pieces of legislation that go through this House where people do not have concerns. Is it legislation that the Opposition should oppose? I do not think so. The Opposition should get on board and work with the Government to make sensible amendments as problems emerge. This bill improves greatly on the legislation. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (17:54):** I support the Coastal Management Bill 2016 and acknowledge Minister Stokes, who is in the Chamber, and the positive contributions of the member for Oxley and the member for Lake Macquarie in supporting this bill. The member for Lake Macquarie summed it up beautifully when he said that it was a simple, straightforward, logical step for us to take. As the member for Terrigal, I know that over decades a plethora of studies have been done on the Central Coast—millions of dollars worth—but no

action has been taken. Some residents have been terrified by the lines that have been drawn on maps because they are not a true representation of the situation.

I also acknowledge the Minister's staff and Mr Angus Gordon, who is in the gallery. They have been very kind and generous with their time in briefing me on the bill. I have had representations from my local coastal residents association and I thank Craig Hillman for his contribution to my understanding of the amendments and the position of residents of the Central Coast. The Coastal Management Bill 2016 is an important part of the New South Wales Government's coastal management reforms. These reforms make the existing legislative framework simpler, more strategic and more supportive of residents and councils. Previously there were two councils on the Central Coast—they are now one—and each had very different views on coastal management. Their views were almost direct opposites, which is an indication of the complexities of coastal management.

Today we heard that there can be no one-size-fits-all approach because beaches react differently. We have seen that on the Central Coast, where beaches at Ettalong and Umina have been growing in size but the beach at Wamberal—it is a topical issue in my electorate—has suffered significant beach erosion over decades. The State Government took ownership of certain parcels of land after significant storms in the 1970s. There has been a growth in the number of people wanting to live by the sea along the eastern seaboard, and it is our right to make that choice. The Minister used the words "saltwater economy". That is evident on the Central Coast. People have lived there for decades and industry has grown up around the waterways of Brisbane Water and Empire Bay. People have chosen to live on the Central Coast because we have such beautiful beaches. Those people need to have surety about the continuing future of their properties.

The first part of this coastal reform will better equip coastal communities to respond effectively to existing and emerging coastal changes and opportunities. The key element of the New South Wales Government coastal reform is to empower local governments to manage the coast in partnership with our communities and other public authorities. Wamberal is a good example. I went through a cost-benefit analysis with Mr Gordon in detail. Hundreds of millions of dollars worth of residential property is on the beachfront at Wamberal. In the past, analyses of Wamberal have only looked at beach erosion and not how the beach would look should protection or a revetment be put in place. Gosford City Council has had a revetment slated for 20 years. It has been discussed and hypothesised, studies have been done, but no funding has been allocated to Wamberal.

The Minister and the Treasurer recently announced funding for councils. I discussed my concerns about Wamberal with the Minister and looked at a cost-benefit analysis with respect to protecting not only the hundreds of millions of dollars worth of council investment but also the homes. I am speaking about council's assets and the homes located around Wamberal Lagoon. This legislation gives us the ability to have a stable framework from which to start, as opposed to the previous Act, which was complex and convoluted and which made it confusing for councils that were trying to deal with sea level rises and erosion on the Central Coast. Currently, the coastal zone management plans are developed separately from councils' main community and financial asset management planning processes. The Coastal Management Bill will establish requirements for the preparation of evidence-based coastal management programs [CMPs]. Over time, CMPs will replace current coastal zone management plans.

Under this bill, a local council may—and must if directed to do so by the Minister—prepare a CMP in accordance with the legislation. The council's CMP will need to consider and promote the objects of the Act and give effect to the management objectives of the coastal management areas. In the example of Wamberal, no consideration was given to the expected result should protection be put in place. The bill also establishes key requirements that a coastal management program must meet. These are to identify the coastal management issues affecting the areas to which the program is to apply; to identify the actions required to address those coastal management issues in an integrated and strategic manner; and to identify how and when those actions are to be implemented. Putting a time frame on the implementation is important.

As I said, 20 years has gone by on the Central Coast when nothing was done. We know it is an issue, but the council has been unwilling to push forward. The bill also requires the coastal management program to identify the costs of those actions and proposed cost-sharing arrangements and other viable funding mechanisms. As I said, Wamberal is a classic example of a situation where the assets of the council and residents must be protected. The bill requires that the delivery of a coastal management plan is consistent with the timing of the implementation under the coastal management program, and, if needed, include a coastal zone emergency action plan that outlines the roles and responsibilities of all public authorities in response to coastal zone emergencies, such as beach erosion. In developing a CMP, a council must consult with the community and relevant public authorities.

These requirements are to ensure that councils develop coastal management programs that are feasible, proportionate to risk and able to be resourced. It will also be important that councils and other public authorities with a role in the coastal zone collaborate to ensure that actions at all levels reflect the objects of the bill and are compatible with the long-term strategy for the coast. This is supported by a requirement that a coastal management

program must not include proposed actions or activities to be carried out by any public authority or relating to any land or other assets owned or managed by a public authority unless the public authority has agreed to the inclusion of those proposed actions or activities in the plan.

In return, all public authorities will be required to have regard to the objects of the Act and any relevant coastal management programs when carrying out their functions, such as coastal planning, management, and undertaking infrastructure and other works in coastal areas. Importantly, the bill recognises that waterborne sand and other sediments move on a scale larger than local government boundaries. This matter was discussed in detail with me by the Minister and his team. I appreciate that. Consultation should also be at the scale of these sediment compartments so that coastal management activities can take into account strategic issues on a regional scale.

The Coastal Management Bill links coastal zone management planning with the planning that councils already invest in for their mainstream asset management and community service delivery functions. The new coastal management programs will have a strong emphasis on implementation. The bill does this by requiring coastal management programs to be given effect within the local government integrated planning and reporting framework. The integrated planning and reporting framework is established under chapter 13 of the Local Government Act 1993 and is the main mechanism by which councils comprehensively plan for and report on their asset management and service delivery responsibilities within a local government area. This means that coastal management programs and identified coastal management activities are aligned with broader community strategic plans, reflect community priorities, and are feasible, financially viable and able to be resourced. [*Extension of time*]

The bill also provides the Minister with the authority to certify or refuse to certify that a council's coastal management program has been prepared in accordance with the legislation's requirements. The Minister may seek advice from the NSW Coastal Council, which will comprise people with expertise in areas relevant to coastal management, such as coastal physical sciences, economics and social science. The NSW Coastal Council also may be tasked by the Minister to audit the performance of a local council's implementation of its coastal management program, which is key to the Coastal Council's authority.

Although millions of dollars worth of studies have been done, nothing has been implemented, especially to a degree on the Central Coast. Having the Coastal Council referring audits back to the Minister is a key part of implementation and assists in clarifying issues on the Central Coast specifically. That will enable the Minister to determine whether coastal management programs are being implemented effectively. On the Central Coast, that has not been the case. I am particularly pleased by the idea of having a coastal management manual. The bill also provides for the Minister to gazette and publish a coastal management manual to establish mandatory requirements that will provide guidance in connection with the preparation, development, adoption, amendment and review of the contents of coastal management programs.

The manual will be an invaluable resource for coastal communities as they plan their future on the Central Coast. I know of councils that have their own interpretation of the Act, which has led to excessive confusion, especially on the Central Coast, and the delivery of very diluted messages to residents that have served only to cause greater concern. The manual will provide clear instructions and step-by-step guidance for councils and their staff in meeting the requirements of the legislation. Compliance with the manual will ensure that councils fulfil their good faith obligations under section 733 of the Local Government Act 1993.

The manual builds on existing guidelines and fills critical gaps that councils already have identified. At its core, the manual will promote collaboration and consultation to ensure that management programs are developed by the community for the community. In particular, the bill outlines that the manual will include the following: evidence-based technical information and guidance on matters such as hazard mapping, ecological health, cost-benefit analysis and implementation and funding tools; requirements relating to the consultation that must be undertaken in connection with the preparation, development or review of coastal management programs; and a risk management process that local councils are to follow when preparing their coastal management programs, including a process of identifying and assessing risks to environmental social and economic values and benefits, and evaluating and selecting management actions to address those risks.

The manual and related technical information will provide coastal communities with the best available scientific information about coastal processes and the potential impacts of climate change on coastal areas, such as the Central Coast, including changes in sea levels, severe weather events and flooding. I again draw to the attention of the House a recent incident at Terrigal Beach following some storms. We saw significant beach erosion at the seawall at Terrigal Beach, but within a matter of four or five weeks all of that sand had returned naturally to the beachfront in Terrigal, with no action having to be taken. I commend the Minister, his staff and Mr Taylor for their engagement in consultation. Everybody has had an opportunity to put forward their point of view. The manual will be the subject of continuing consultation in the future. I commend the bill to the House.



**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (18:03):** It is with pleasure I participate in debate on the Coastal Management Bill 2016. The now defunct Wyong Shire Council's coastal management plan notes that the Wyong coastline boasts a varied natural landscape that includes long sandy beaches, numerous small bays, intertidal rock platforms, high sandstone cliffs and rocky bluffs. This stretch of coastline would be the envy of most and certainly is cherished by the local population. Long-term erosion and the pressure of development across the region as well as the threat of the sea level rising mean the coastline is under considerable threat. Our treasured piece of coastline is an important part of our lifestyle and hosts many recreational activities that include fishing, boating, swimming, surfing, snorkelling, diving, walking, running, picnicking and sunbathing—activities that are a significant reason why people move to the Wyong area. For that lifestyle to continue, only effective management of the coast will ensure the continued enjoyment of those activities for current residents and potential new ones.

I note that a strategic coastal zone risk assessment, which was prepared by the Australian Government in 2009, identified the former Wyong shire as one of the most at-risk local government areas in terms of the effects of sea level rise and other climate change impacts on the built environment. In 2010, when I was the local member of Parliament, the then New South Wales Government identified The Entrance North, Cabbage Tree Harbour and Hargraves beaches as coastal erosion hotspots, with detailed hazard studies identifying around 50 residences within the immediate coastal erosion hazard zone. Those residences could be impacted by storm erosion at any time. I visited those areas with the then Minister, Frank Sartor, and met with council and local residents so that Minister Sartor could see and hear their stories firsthand.

In the 2007 storms, Cabbage Tree Harbour suffered significant damage that necessitated expensive works to slow erosion of the cliff faces and protect residential assets. It is interesting to note that in that area at least six houses were threatened by the possibility of falling down the cliff into the ocean. Protection of that area required very extensive earthworks. Only part of the cliff face was strengthened and other parts where no houses existed were left alone. The situation now is that the area continues to suffer damage, particularly at the Norah Head Boat Club, which is home to the Norah Head Marine Rescue Unit. The frontage of the property is slipping into the ocean and there is a risk that the clubhouse may collapse into the water.

The boat club made representations to the local council to have the issue addressed. Because there was something of a stand-off between the council and the Department of Lands, I sought to meet with the department. Unfortunately, at the moment the department is giving me the run-around. I hope I am not delayed to the point at which the building has to fall into the Cabbage Tree Harbour before the Minister or his representatives agree to meet with me and discuss remedies. Hopefully my speech will not presage a collapse. I am mindful that in the Swansea electorate, the Pelican Marina fell into Lake Macquarie. The point I make is that there are examples of occurrences on the Central Coast that are the result of inaction.

Coastal erosion hazards are expected to worsen as climate change and sea level rise take effect in the coming decades. As such, other beaches and properties are likely to be affected in the future in a manner similar to those I have outlined. Coastal hazards can impact on residential and commercial development, infrastructure, recreation space and activities, scenic coastal outlooks and coastal ecology. The science now recognises that changes to coastal processes strongly suggest that a business-as-usual strategy is not appropriate. Our shadow Minister in the upper House, the Hon. Penny Sharpe, made some very sensible comments in regards to this legislation in the other place.

The Hon. Penny Sharpe correctly pointed out the haste with which this bill has been brought into the Parliament, with little time for close consideration by members of the community. Stakeholder groups were told that this bill would not be brought to the Parliament for several more weeks. There is considerable and growing concern about the lack of consultation prior to the Parliament debating it today. This is a complex reform that deals with one of New South Wales most precious public assets, our coastline. I acknowledge and thank the Minister for ensuring that this legislation will establish a simpler framework and ultimately will enable us to move forward, but the Opposition has a number of concerns about how quickly the legislation has been introduced and a lack of consultation.

We are also concerned about the requirement for local councils to prepare coastal management plans. We believe while requiring their preparation is a good thing, local councils will need resources to enable them to do so. One of the greatest concerns raised by local councils is that they do not want to be left carrying the can, so to speak, in funding the work required to protect coastal areas. The Labor Party believes certain things should happen before this legislation is passed. These include the release of the mapping of the proposed coastal zones, the release of the proposed Coastal Management State Environmental Planning Policy [SEPP], and outlining the additional resources the Government will allocate to councils to complete coastal management plans.

Labor also tried to move very reasonable amendments in the other place to improve the legislation. These included: amending the bill so that management of climate change impacts becomes part of the objects of the Act; including climate change and community engagement as part of the listed expertise held by members of the

NSW Coastal Council; amending the bill so that the public right of pedestrian access becomes part of the objects of the Act; amending the bill so that "coastal environment area" includes coastal lakes and areas of high conservation value, as identified in the Threatened Species and Conservation Act 1995—that is particularly important for the Central Coast, where Tuggerah Lakes intersect the residential and business areas between the mountains and the coastline—amending the bill so that the Office of Environment and Heritage has the power to acquire land for coastal management purposes; and amending the bill so that it incorporates existing council policies for planned retreat.

It is important to note that NSW Labor also took a policy to the 2015 election that included the creation of an independent New South Wales coastal council and a review of the Coastal Protection Act 1979, State Environmental Planning Policy—Coastal Wetlands, SEPP 14, and State Environmental Planning Policy—Coastal Protection, SEPP 71. I note that many groups have an interest in this legislation and that the Sydney Coastal Councils Group [SCCG] does not support passage of the bill without the mapping and details of the SEPP. The SCCG strongly supports the essential need to embed coastal management into the State's land use planning framework while ensuring, as stated in its submission: protection of coastal processes and the enhancement of environmental, cultural and ecological values of the coast; maintenance of public access and protection of coastal amenity, natural character and use; recognition of the need to manage both present and future coastal hazards, taking into account the effects of climate change; both local and regional scale effects of coastal processes to be considered so that cross-council and State agency collaboration is realised; and community engagement and participation in the development and implementation of coastal management and planning strategies for the coast. *[Extension of time]*

I certainly support these principles and acknowledge their importance. The SCCG's response goes on to outline that it is:

... deeply concerned however that the proposed framework in its current form fails to adequately address the fundamental need to enhance the whole of government partnership approach necessary to ensure the sustainable management of the coast and achieve the objectives of bill.

This key limitation of the proposed new framework requires urgent attention.

Without the provision by the State of a clear understanding of the current and future challenges facing the coast, and a comprehensive and transparent review of the current management and planning regimes in place, the SCCG has difficulty understanding how these new reforms deal with many of the legacy coordination, integration, management, vulnerability, land use planning and inadequate funding issues affecting our coast.

Sea levels are rising and coastal foreshores will continue to recede at increasing rates, inundation will escalate and pressures for protection from some sections of the community and the relocation of development as the preferred approach by other sections will increase.

Unfortunately it is hard to see how the current reforms will effectively address the increasing conflicts of the numerous vested interests and instil the essential, and more equitable partnership with the State and the NSW community.

Other groups also have issues with the legislation as it currently stands. The NSW Coastal Alliance has called on the Government to withdraw the bill until mapping and changes to SEPPs are included in the package of reform. The Australian Coastal Society has requested a list of amendments to the bill before supporting it. Its members feel the introduction of this legislation is an ambush. I must concur with the Hon. Penny Sharpe and other members of the Opposition who point out that mapping has not been completed and the other issues I have raised have not been taken into account. In light of this concern, together with the Government's refusal to support the Opposition's amendments or to refer the issue to an inquiry—and because this legislation will have a significant impact on my electorate and on outcomes for places such as Cabbage Tree Harbour and Hargraves Beach—I am not in a position to reassure residents that the legislation will protect their interests properly. Therefore, I must oppose the bill in its current form.

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (18:20):** I am delighted that the Coastal Management Bill 2016 provides for the integrated management of the New South Wales coastal environment, consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable development for the social, cultural and economic wellbeing of the people of New South Wales. The bill consequently repeals the Coastal Protection Act 1979 and associated regulations—a framework that has become increasingly complex and unclear due to multiple amendments, and is therefore in need of change. In my electorate of Davidson there is only a small area of coastline. Rather than focusing on that area of natural local beauty—which may not compare with the coastlines of some other electorates but nonetheless I acknowledge as a valuable asset—I will make some portfolio-related comments as Parliamentary Secretary with responsibility for the areas of trade and tourism.

The New South Wales coastline has played a major role in the development of New South Wales over 200 years. It has helped to define who we are as a people and continues to be one of the greatest influences on the State's prosperity, including through bulk exports such as wheat, coal, wool and other commodities. It has also provided a wonderful playground for the people of New South Wales to enjoy, including country residents who

often head to the coast for holidays. New South Wales likewise attracts an increasing number of tourists from other States and from overseas who are lured by the State's many attractions, including its magnificent coastline.

Tourism Research Australia figures for last year showed that New South Wales attracted some 28.1 million domestic visitors, which is up 4.4 per cent on the previous year. They spent some \$16.1 billion, which is a 5.1 per cent increase. New records were also set for international visitors. Tourism Research Australia figures showed that 3.4 million international visitors came to New South Wales last year, which is up 6.6 per cent, spending some \$8.45 billion, up a massive 19.2 per cent. Sydney was voted the top destination in Australia and the South Pacific in the 2016 TripAdvisor's Travellers' Choice Destination awards.

Regarding the lucrative and growing Chinese tourist market, it has been said that New South Wales has a comparative advantage in the areas of "teachers and beaches". While educational opportunities are definite attractions, it is our coastline yet again that proves to be a real tourism drawcard. Iconic structures such as the Sydney Harbour Bridge and the Sydney Opera House sit on the shores of the finest harbour in the world. Together with our bays, inlets, beaches and headlands, these attractions have helped inspire millions of tourists to experience our magnificent coastline. The rugged headlands and many white sandy beaches, from the far South Coast to the Far North Coast—including Sydney's world-famous Bondi Beach, which Mr Assistant-Speaker Notley-Smith knows well—add to the appeal of the New South Wales coastal fringe. Many tourists take their visit further by actively participating in a wide variety of coastal activities including swimming, surfing, scuba diving, skindiving, sailing, fishing, waterskiing, motor cruising and enjoying the many coastal walks, parks and reserves.

Many coastal businesses reap the rewards of a healthy tourism industry and provide employment for thousands, from our young people through to our seasoned entrepreneurs. Boating and associated businesses, clothing retailers and food outlets are among the many who benefit. It is essential, therefore, that the coastline is managed well. The wide variety of tourism activities can operate alongside the other coastline considerations, including environmental factors and coastal industries such as boat building, boat maintenance and shipping associated with trade. The coastal reforms that cover the entire New South Wales coast include beaches, headlands, various harbours, bays, estuaries and the coastline's major regional centres of Newcastle and Wollongong as well as the smaller coastal centres.

This bill heralds the largest comprehensive coastal reform package in New South Wales history and is supported by the largest funding boost to coastal management since the 1970s. An allocation of \$86.3 million over five years includes \$63.2 million for the implementation of coastal management programs, which will support local councils to implement equitable and cost-effective actions that reduce exposure to coastal hazards. The package includes funding to assist councils in transitioning to the new regulatory arrangements and to support the delivery of statewide science and technical advice. The bill will establish a simpler, contemporary legislative framework for management of the New South Wales coast. The coastal reform package also includes a new coastal management manual and the new Coastal Management State Environmental Planning Policy.

During the second stage of public consultation in the second half of 2016 there will be further engagement on the draft State environmental planning policy and associated mapping. I particularly encourage those involved in coastal tourism to consider the relevant documents and provide constructive comments. I congratulate the planning Minister on driving this comprehensive reform as well as the professionalism of his office and advisers. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (18:26):** I oppose the Coastal Management Bill 2016 and urge the Government to reconsider the sensible amendments proposed by Labor in the Legislative Council. I acknowledge that the bill has considerable positive aspects. The objective of these much-needed and long-awaited coastal management reforms is to make provision for the ecologically sustainable management, use and occupation of the New South Wales coast. They aim to better equip coastal communities to respond effectively to existing and emerging coastal challenges and opportunities. I acknowledge that the bill will establish a simpler and more contemporary legislative framework for the management of the coast by replacing the existing legislation for coastal management, which includes: the Coastal Protection Act 1979; the Coastal Protection Regulation 2011 and the State Environmental Planning Policy—Coastal Wetlands, SEPP 14; the State Environmental Planning Policy—Littoral Rainforests, SEPP 26; and the State Environmental Planning Policy—Coastal Protection, SEPP 71.

The bill also replaces the NSW Coastal Policy with a new coastal management manual and redefines the "coastal zone" with new mapping and coastal land use categories. The bill divides the coastal zone into four management areas: coastal wetlands and littoral rainforests; coastal vulnerability; coastal environment; and coastal use. It replaces the statutory NSW Coastal Panel and NSW Coastal Expert Panel with the NSW Coastal Council, and requires local councils within coastal zones to prepare coastal management programs as directed by the Minister. As citizens of New South Wales, we are fortunate to have a coastal zone characterised by a wide range of beautiful geographical features, including ocean beaches, dunes, cliffs, estuaries, wetlands and lagoons. Ours

is a coastline that should be protected and well managed. It is where people live and work and where many millions of us choose to spend time doing the things we love, be it finding peace and solitude in nature or more active pursuits such as swimming, surfing, walking, fishing, bushwalking, diving or boating. It is also a major hub for business and remains a focus of economic development and growth for New South Wales.

The coastline is arguably one of our most important public assets. Our coast does not belong to any one of us, it belongs to all of us. However, that is not reflected in this legislation. The bill's objective is to maintain public access, not to recognise our right of public access. My Labor colleagues in the other place moved to amend the bill's objective to clarify the right to public access and use of our coastal zones. The legislation should proudly assert our right to access and use of the coastal zone. It is a public place that should be available to all. It is concerning that the Government did not support this amendment in the upper House. The Opposition believes the right to public access to coastal lands is part of the Australian identity. In Charlestown we are fortunate to have coast on both the east and west sides of the electorate. The south Pacific Ocean is on one border and Lake Macquarie on the other. Dudley and Redhead beaches are part of our stunning coastline and are popular for swimming, surfing and long walks.

The member for Lake Macquarie will agree that Australia's largest coastal saltwater lagoon, Lake Macquarie, is another wonder we are lucky to have daily access to. The coast enables many of the people in my electorate to make a living. It helps fuel our economy through the industries that rely on it, including tourism, commercial fishing and boating. It is the responsibility of legislators to ensure that future generations are able to use and enjoy the coast. The Labor Party recognises this and introduced an amendment in the upper House to include climate change expertise in the list of fields required by a New South Wales coastal council. An identifiable priority must be given to climate change. It is important that the bill explicitly provides that some members of the NSW Coastal Council must have climate change expertise and that the Minister must regard it as important. The Government rejected the amendment on the basis that it "believes the issues raised by members are already covered in the bill". If that is the case, why not make it explicit and not implied?

Coastal management is complicated. There are many competing interests for coastal resources, including tourism, mining, ports, environment protection, agriculture and mariculture. In addition, the coastal population is continuing to grow at an accelerated rate, with more than 80 per cent of the State's population living in an area adjacent to the coast. The natural wonders of New South Wales need protecting and managing. Our extensive coast is a finite resource. We cannot extend it or create more of it, making effective coastal management crucial. We need to get this right. We should be listening to those who are concerned about inadequate detail in the bill. I acknowledge that there has been a community consultation process for this bill. I commend all the councils, community members and experts for their valuable input, time and attention. More than 400 submissions were made by the community.

The documents released for public consultation included a draft Coastal Management Act, a draft coastal management manual and a draft Coastal Management State Environmental Planning Policy [SEPP]. However, numerous aspects of the package have not been released. While many support elements in the bill, three-quarters of submissions requested that the legislation not go before Parliament until the basic information of mapping and the draft replacement State environmental planning policy are available. It is concerning that key elements of the coastal management package have not been released as part of the consultation process. Key stakeholders have said that they do not support passage of the bill without this mapping, including the Sydney Coastal Councils Group and the NSW Coastal Alliance. The Law Society of New South Wales submission states:

These are critical elements of the reforms, and without these documents the ability of the stakeholders to properly consider all aspects of the reform package at this stage is limited. It is concerning that the proposed SEPP has not yet been released, particularly given the link between management objectives for each of the proposed areas and development controls.

These documents should have been made available with sufficient time for proper consultation before the bill was introduced. The legislation should not be passed before the proposed SEPP and maps are fully drafted and reviewed because they are an essential part of the legislation. Without the proposed new maps and new coastal SEPP, which may include infrastructure provisions, how are we to make an informed decision in relation to this law? My colleagues and I also remain concerned that there is insufficient recognition of some of the other significant conservation areas protected under existing instruments, including some coastal lakes and high conservation value coastal vegetation. That is why the Labor Party has suggested that the bill be amended to include in the coastal environment area coastal lakes and areas of high conservation value as identified in the Threatened Species and Conservation Act 1995. I take the opportunity while speaking on this bill to congratulate my local council, Lake Macquarie City Council—as referred to by the member for Lake Macquarie—and the members of that community on their work in this area.

Last year the council adopted its Coastal Zone Management Plan, comprising four volumes covering the coastline, the estuary, the Swansea Channel, and an action plan. The action plan contains several themes: actions

to manage coastal process hazards and risk; actions for a healthy coastal zone protecting biodiversity and ecological resilience; actions for sustainable community access, use and value; actions to improve council's focus and capacity to manage coastal values; actions to ensure strong governance and supportive partnerships; actions for communication and collaboration; and actions in relation to knowledge and adaptation, and managing uncertainty.

Lake Macquarie's Coastal Zone Management Plan was developed with a considerable amount of input from the community, and it is testament to the community's passion and commitment to ensuring the safety of that part of the coast. If we in this place are serious about the proper management of the New South Wales coast for current and future generations, we should amend this bill along the lines proposed by the Opposition. I call on the Government to re-examine the Opposition's proposed amendments. In the absence of an agreement to do so, I will oppose the bill in its current form.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (18:35):** The comments of Opposition members about the Coastal Management Bill 2016, when the Government is cleaning up the mess they created, defy belief. Their contributions to this debate display their hypocrisy and are outrageous. Coastal communities have endured a great deal in recent times. The Eurobodalla Shire Council, which is in my electorate, of its own volition adopted a sea level rise policy that applied to all homes under five metres of elevation in the shire. In essence, that move sterilised any economic activity in the shire for four to five years, without any appropriate streamlined legislative framework. As a result, I can now understand why some people are apprehensive about any government attempt to establish a legislative framework. It must be acknowledged that action taken by one shire in my electorate has created enormous apprehension about this issue.

It is important to put this legislation in perspective. The Minister wants to establish a streamlined legislative framework to which a State environmental planning policy [SEPP] will be applied. In addition, a coastal management plan will be required and more data and information will be provided as we work through the process. That means we should not walk away from the key principles behind the Government's action. We must ensure that development continues to take place in these communities because some of them are doing it tough economically. They are a long way from experiencing the economic growth that we are experiencing in Sydney and they are facing enormous challenges. People want to ensure that headlands and beaches are protected and, at the same time, that inappropriate coastal protection measures that adversely affect other property owners are not implemented.

The Government's objective and the Minister's aim are clear. First, we want to provide a legislative framework. That is an important stake in the ground for many of these communities. From there, we will be able to work through the issues outlined by a number of residents. Removing the complexity in the process is key to achieving that goal, and we must have clear planning objectives. That has not been the case in the past because the Labor Government threw the process to local government in an ad hoc manner and that resulted in frustrated residents, particularly in my part of the world.

This legislation provides that coastal protection works may be permitted with consent. Again, anything that is done under this legislation must be part of a coastal management process. As is the case elsewhere, the planning process on the far South Coast must be finalised by the local council. It is only appropriate that we have regional panels with appropriate expertise to determine certain development applications for new coastal protection work. That is entirely consistent with a planning system that is designed to provide expert advice. We must also acknowledge that the new framework requires significant proposals for coastal management to be considered strategically through the development of a coastal management program. Again, that is eminently sensible.

Of course, the Government acknowledges that the appropriate compliance and enforcement arrangements must be in place. We have seen much duplication and the Minister is trying to streamline the process to provide consistency. I know the Minister for Planning well and I know that he is committed to providing a clear pathway and a legislative framework. We will have a State environmental planning policy and coastal management planning to inform the process, and as a result we will have certainty. The NSW Coastal Alliance has raised some concerns with my office. The member for Terrigal and I come from areas that have heightened awareness of these issues because of the actions of local government authorities operating without an appropriate framework. That is why the Government has stepped in with this legislation. We can work through the issues that have been raised because this framework will facilitate that process. If we do not have a framework we will not be able to resolve the existing challenges.

Members should look at what happens under the existing planning approach to coastal management throughout this State and then consider what this legislation will achieve. That is the key point. I acknowledge that some people will not like this process and that others will. However, it will give us a pathway to follow at a more strategic and local level to deal with many of the hotspots that are subjected to storm surges, coastal erosion

and the like. This legislation also provides for emergency services to step in and for other agencies to be engaged in the process. Members must acknowledge that everyone from emergency services to local government authorities and planning bodies will be engaged in this process. That is an important factor in many areas. As I said, I am keen to see the mapping once it is completed. However, the way in which the Eurobodalla Shire Council handled its sea level rises policy has left a foul taste in the mouths of many property owners in our region.

With this type of framework in place, we are now providing a direction that previously was absent. I find the actions of the Labor Party in this place somewhat abhorrent because they created this mess. It is all very well for them to oppose the Government, which is trying to give strategic leadership and direction on this issue, but they should question themselves given that they did not show leadership on this issue. As a result, there were some very bad planning outcomes and circumstances for hundreds of residents in areas such as the Central Coast and parts of the far South Coast. People were left with significant uncertainty as a result of a very bad planning regime that was foisted upon them by Labor. I commend the Minister for taking this approach to coastal management. You can never please everyone but this bill gives a very clear direction. It will stand us in good stead as we work through the specifics, particularly as they apply to the State environmental planning policy [SEPP] and to coastal management planning, which in areas like my electorate will be significant given the vulnerabilities that exist in parts of the far South Coast.

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (18:45):** I speak on behalf of The Greens in support of the Coastal Management Bill 2016. There is a saying that I like, which is: Happiness is coherence. We are very grateful for that, particularly in my community, the Ballina electorate, where there has been a vacuum in coherence around coastal management. This bill is a very welcome way forward. I also note the North Coast draft plan. With the awareness that development east of the highway now threatens our marine and coastal environments, that is a very welcome mandate. We are very much looking forward to this legislation informing our local governments. As the Minister outlined, coastal management is, in some cases, at the whim of councils which push for actions without having any larger rationale. We hope that this legislation will provide that larger rationale.

I will not go into too much detail about the bill as it has been covered so extensively. This bill will replace the current Coastal Protection Act 1979. It provides for the integration of coastal management and planning requirements, establishes a new statutory NSW Coastal Council, includes new statutory objects and a new definition of "coastal zone", integrates compliance and enforcement, requires new consultation arrangements, provides comprehensive guidance for councils, and supports evidence-based coastal management decision-making. I too am somewhat surprised that my Labor colleagues are not supporting this bill. Whilst there are areas about which The Greens have minor questions, they are certainly not serious enough to go back to the drawing board.

The proposed Coastal Management State Environment Planning Policy [SEPP] will simplify the current system by replacing SEPP 14, SEPP 26 and SEPP 71 with one integrated Coastal Management SEPP. The provisions in the three existing SEPPs are being consolidated and updated. The Coastal Management SEPP will include new content relating to sensitive catchments, headlands, rock platforms and coastal hazards. It also will replace provisions in the State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007 concerning coastal protection works. Again, whilst there are concerns that we have not seen the SEPP, we are confident that there will be extensive consultation on that process and that we will be part of that.

The bill moves away from the existing coastal protection zones to define four areas: coastal wetlands and littoral rainforest area; coastal vulnerability area; coastal environment area; and coastal use area. Although we believe the existing zoning is acceptable, we do not oppose this change. We do, however, note that the vegetation protected should be expanded to include not just wetland and littoral rainforest but also other important coastal vegetation types that have conservation significance. We look forward to seeing those maps and engaging with that further. The Greens note that the coastal vulnerability area management objectives should recommend against development on that sort of land and that development that remains should be encouraged to transition to safer areas. The hierarchy of management objectives, if overlapping from the area of most sensitivity, is appropriate and supported.

The bill also provides for the making of coastal management programs. Local councils will be required to make these plans, which set the long-term strategy for the management of coastal land. That will be good. The Minister may direct councils to make such plans and may specify the time within which they must be made. Plans are to be made in accordance with the manual and must follow the objectives of the Act and the objects of the zone. That is coherence. Draft programs must be subject to community consultation. Finalised programs will be gazetted by the Minister. If the Minister refuses to gazette a program because it fails to meet the requirements of the Act, the Minister may prepare a program under proposed new section 20. Plans must be reviewed every 10 years. The Greens believe these are welcome safeguards.

The coastal management manual that will guide this process will be published by the Minister and, similar to the SEPP, it will be presented later this year. The Greens have been advised that the Act will not commence until these are in place. Consultation on the new SEPP will occur later in the year, and, as I said, we are looking forward to contributing to that process. The Australia of the future relies on us to be responsible and to consider what we are doing today and how it will affect the future. The risk management approach that is contained in this bill is very important. Councils will be bound to meet the standards and the objectives that are set out in this legislation, which, when enacted, will herald higher standards in coastal management across the State. Some concerns have been raised that the \$9 million allocated to local councils will not be sufficient or will be inadequate for them to do proper mapping and assessment and that it represents further cost shifting to local government. We will monitor the implementation of this legislation and continue to work with local government.

The bill has been improved by the Government taking on board two issues raised by The Greens. In the other place, the bill was amended to add "traditional and contemporary Aboriginal use and management of the coastal zone" as an area of expertise to be included in the membership of the NSW Coastal Council, which is established by this bill. This issue was raised by my colleague Ms Jan Barham in briefings. The Government agreed to include it so that the Minister will have expert advice on Aboriginal issues relating to coastal management. The bill was amended also to ensure that all performance audit reports conducted by the Coastal Council at the request of the Minister, under clause 26 of the bill, will be tabled in Parliament.

This will provide an opportunity for public scrutiny and awareness of the expert advice and analysis coming from the Coastal Council. Again, this matter was raised by The Greens in briefings and agreed to by the Government. This piece of legislation has been informed by two luminaries in the world of coastal expertise: Mr Angus Gordon, who is currently the chair of the Coastal Panel, and Professor Bruce Thom. As was noted in the other place, between them they have more than 100 years of experience. They have generously contributed their expertise and brought a level of rigour to this legislation. We now have a coastal management plan. I congratulate the Minister and all staff involved on creating this blueprint with which to move forward. The Greens support the bill.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (18:52):** I wish to make a contribution to the Coastal Management Bill 2016. As we have heard, this bill replaces the existing Coastal Protection Act 1979 and the State Environmental Planning Policy 14—Coastal Wetlands, State Environmental Planning Policy 26—Littoral Rainforests, and State Environmental Planning Policy 71—Coastal Protection. It divides the coastal zone into four coastal management areas: coastal wetlands and littoral rainforests; coastal vulnerability; coastal environment; and coastal use. It replaces the statutory NSW Coastal Panel and NSW Coastal Expert Panel with the NSW Coastal Council. Importantly, the bill requires local councils within coastal zones to prepare coastal management programs.

While the creation of an independent NSW Coastal Council and a review of the 1979 Act, SEPP 14 and SEPP 71 were part of NSW Labor's election policies in March 2015, members of the New South Wales Opposition hold concerns about a number of elements of this bill. We are concerned that, to date, the Government has not released the mapping of the proposed coastal zones. That seems quite extraordinary, when the Government is asking for the Opposition's support. We have concerns that the Government has not released the new Coastal Management State Environmental Planning Policy. The bill also requires local councils to prepare coastal management programs, but the Government has not announced any additional resources to allow councils to undertake this task.

This is again quite extraordinary considering how important such programs will be along our coast, particularly in electorates such as Swansea. Alarming, but perhaps to be somewhat expected from this Government, the bill contains inadequate recognition of climate change impacts and mechanisms for adaptation and mitigation. This could prove to be hugely problematic for the Swansea electorate, where every suburb—with the exception of two—has a boundary that is water, and some of those suburbs are at sea level. Additionally, the composition of the NSW Coastal Council does not include climate change and community engagement as relevant expertise for council members. Obviously, that is of additional concern to me and should be to anybody living on the coast.

Again, and importantly for an electorate like Swansea, the bill does not recognise significant conservation areas that are protected under existing instruments, including some coastal lakes and high conservation value coastal vegetation, and it does not include any provisions such as compensation for councils that have adopted policies for planned retreat. The shadow Minister for the Environment, the Hon. Penny Sharpe, has consulted widely with stakeholders who represent those who will be affected by this bill. The Australian Coastal Society has requested a list of amendments to the bill but ultimately feels that the bill is an ambush.

The NSW Coastal Alliance [NCA] has called on the Government to withdraw the bill until mapping and changes to the SEPPs are included in the package of reform. Representatives from the NSW Coastal Alliance for

Lake Macquarie recently contacted my office to share their direct concerns about the bill and its effects on our local area. The NCA is concerned that we are being asked to debate the bill without critical information that informs the bill, the SEPPs or the all-important mapping. The NCA notes that more than 75 per cent of submissions on the proposed reforms share the same concerns. Further, the NCA states it is also concerned that:

... the proposed framework lacks the support of existing communities and may influence councils to adopt planned retreat instead of adaptation protection. There is no mention of compensation or any address of cost benefit analysis requirements to include residential and commercial losses in this regard.

Likewise, Lake Macquarie Coastal Residents Inc. is concerned about beach nourishment and dune fortification as it continues to draft a plan for Blacksmiths and Pelican in the Swansea electorate in collaboration with Lake Macquarie City Council. It points out that this is an issue lacking detail in the reforms framework. Lake Macquarie City Council has acted responsibly in addressing the concerns my community has about sea level rise benchmarks. It has been up-front with the community about the effects of climate change on the people of Lake Macquarie if we continue on a path of not addressing the realities of climate change. Lake Macquarie City Council rightfully points out that the New South Wales Government requires councils to factor in sea level rise when planning for future risks from flooding and coastal erosion. It advises that when setting sea level rise benchmarks:

... councils should consider projections that are widely accepted by competent scientific opinion.

In accepting this advice from the Government, Lake Macquarie City Council used expert advice from scientists and the Government for coastal and flood planning to calculate a level of 0.9 metres rise from 2011 to the turn of the next century. As the council indicated in its submission, it was to its surprise, and mine, to note that the Government has not included statewide sea level rise benchmarks as part of the reform package. Lake Macquarie City Council continues to affirm its previous support for the adoption of the statewide benchmarks to provide a consistent approach to coastal planning between local government areas. The council also continues to reaffirm its previous request that statewide benchmarks be reintroduced to provide for consistency in coastal planning and hazard mitigation.

This example highlights the bill's inadequate recognition of climate change impacts and the mechanisms for adaptation and mitigation. It also serves to highlight why it is important that members of the NSW Coastal Council have climate change expertise. If the bill passes in its current form, climate change expertise will not be considered when representatives of the council are chosen. Only last week we read newspaper headlines that stated "NSW ranked worst State for renewable energy in Climate Council report". The report indicates that New South Wales is again ranked as the worst performing State for the supply of renewable electricity, according to the latest report card of the Climate Council, and that the State's proportion of renewable energy fell from 7 per cent in 2013 to 6 per cent in 2014. It would appear that today, once again, this Government has its head buried in the sand when it comes to addressing climate change.

I raise one final point that members on both sides of the House should consider during this debate, that is, that surf life saving clubs must be allowed to continue to do their important work without significant impediment. As an avid and active surf lifesaver in the Swansea electorate, I must note the concerns of Surf Life Saving NSW. There are 129 surf life saving clubs along the east coast of New South Wales and they are greatly impacted by the government policy decision relating to coastal management. Those clubs are affected by any legislative change concerning coastal management that impacts on public safety at the beach. After all, their primary role is to protect and save lives. This cohort must be listened to in this conversation.

The New South Wales Government must be on the front foot when considering coastal safety measures as part of coastal planning. This could be mitigated if it were effectively managed in the planning stages of development instead of responding retrospectively to incidents of coastal injury or death that may be preventable. Again, this cohort must be part of this conversation. It is known that development or changes to coastal access can significantly change swimmer behaviour and the way people use the coast. It is most important that we identify and recognise this and make sure that we address those issues in this legislation. In addition, a number of clubhouses in New South Wales are situated in close proximity to the ocean and some have been gazetted in coastal protection zones under the Coastal Protection Regulation 2011.

I support the wish of Surf Life Saving NSW that surf lifesaving clubs are considered and protected as much as possible to ensure their future viability. In considering this bill, however, ultimately I side with many key stakeholder groups that are concerned about the lack of detail. The Government should consider addressing those concerns so that our coastal communities, like many communities in the Swansea electorate, can be assured of the protections that they deserve. Until that time, Labor opposes the bill.

**Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning) (19:02):** In reply: I thank all members for their second reading contributions on the Coastal Management Bill 2016. I thank the member for Maroubra, the member for Wyong, the member for Charlestown, the member for Swansea, the member for Lake Macquarie, the



member for Ballina, the member for Oxley, the member for Terrigal, the member for Davidson and the member for Bega. I confess to being perplexed by some of the issues raised in members' speeches. I was disturbed to hear members from this side of the House stating that their electorates had the best beaches in the State when, as everyone knows, the best beaches are in the electorate of Pittwater. I make the observation that the only beach mentioned by the Beach Boys in their song *Surfin' USA* is "Australia's Narrabeen", in the electorate of Pittwater. Turning to specific comments on the bill, the member for Maroubra raised a number of points. He referred to WestConnex, council reform, urban activation precincts, Waterloo, housing affordability, housing density, planning gateways, and the 10/50 legislation, none of which is relevant to the bill.

I note, however, that he provided bipartisan support. In fact, I was pleased that all members of the House who spoke about the contributions of Professor Bruce Thom and Mr Angus Gordon expressed their support for their involvement. A range of concerns were raised, a lot of which related to the proposed Coastal Management State Environmental Planning Policy [SEPP]. Some members were confused. They thought that the bill would abolish the various State environmental planning policies relating to the coast. I urge Opposition members to read legislation before contributing to debate. The bill makes it clear that while there will be various public pronouncements in relation to coastal reform, there will be an integrated Coastal Management State Environmental Planning Policy. That is not before the House in relation to this bill. State environmental planning policies are made and altered all the time. They are provided for in the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, which was created back in 1979.

The idea that it is necessary to introduce a State environmental planning policy at the same time as a piece of legislation is contrary to the process that successive governments have been following for the better part of 40 years. It is quite appropriate that complex reform involves iterative consultation at a local level. A process of consultation on coastal reforms has been going on for several years now. I was bemused by Opposition claims that it has been ambushed by this bill. The bill has been on public display since November last year—that is a six months long ambush. Opposition members cannot suggest that they are surprised by a bill when they have had six months to read it. I also note that in relation to the Coastal Management SEPP an explanation of intended effects has been available for several months.

According to established process, I intend to consult separately on the consolidated State environmental planning policy, noting that many of the provisions of the policy are already contained in existing State environmental planning policies. I note that the mapping of areas, using the definition in the bill, will require specific localised consultation with affected local communities. The mapping will generally adopt existing maps developed by local government in accordance with existing processes, where they exist. Part of the reason for these reforms is that local councils, in many cases, have not undertaken coastal zone planning, despite having that responsibility for more than 30 years. A clear and consolidated approach is needed. We are providing more support to local communities. The additional funding will help them with the fundamental objective of planning in a strategic way for the future of the coastal zone.

I note the contribution of the member for Lake Macquarie, his strong continued advocacy for coastal communities and his clear understanding of the wicked problem of seeking to apply certain rules on dynamic and unpredictable systems. I also note the contribution of the member for Terrigal, specifically his concerns in relation to the beachfront at Wamberal. I am pleased to say that the council has engaged in a sensible and consultative process of planning in relation to Wamberal. The citizens of Terrigal are lucky to have such a well-informed and passionate advocate as the member for Terrigal.

The contribution of the member for Wyong contained a few inaccuracies. I note that he is a passionate member of the Soldiers Beach Surf Life Saving Club. He raised a couple of concerns, including that climate change was not referred to as an objective of the bill. I draw his attention to clause 3 of the bill. That explicitly refers to the impacts of climate change in relation to coastal management. Coastal lakes are already recognised in the bill. The member for Wyong called for an independent Coastal Council. That is something I endorse, and the bill will implement that. A Labor Government previously abolished a New South Wales coastal council, so the member's contribution was confusing, to say the least.

I note the contribution of the member for Davidson and his pride in the fact that his ostensibly land-locked electorate has a beach. He acknowledged the crucial role of the coast as a tourism asset. While it is absolutely right that the bill is cognisant of waterfront landowners, which I note has been the focus of Opposition members, it is also important that we recognise and protect the interests of the broader community and local and international visitors. The beach belongs to all of us. It is important that while we recognise the very clear and understandable interests of different groups within the community, we need to recognise that the coast is a concern for all of us.

The member for Charlestown spoke at length about Opposition amendments in the other place. I would urge her to read those amendments, because the totality of the Opposition amendments—I counted them—amounted to 45 words. They were not terribly long. The member for Charlestown talked about the need for the

bill, as one of its objects, to maintain the right to public access. That is precisely what clause 3 (b) of the bill does. The member referred to amendments which were not moved. That puzzled me. She referred to amendments to protect coastal lakes and coastal vegetation but the amendments put forward by Labor in the other place amounted to 45 words in length and did not refer to those matters.

The member for Bega raised concerns on behalf of his constituents regarding regulatory overreach by councils and excisions of private property. He mentioned, and I concur with him, that the bill seeks to provide improved and simpler architecture to support commonsense decision-making in order to balance competing interests and concerns along the coast. I noted the support of the member for Ballina and I share her astonishment at the lack of Opposition support. When one looks at the objects of the bill and its focus on strategic planning for the coast to maintain public access to the coast, to recognise amenity, use and safety of the coast, to recognise the coastal zone as a vital economic area, to support sustainability of coastal communities, and to recognise the principles of ecologically sustainable development on the coast, it is difficult to see what the Opposition does not support.

The Government supported The Greens amendments in the other place. I put on record that those amendments were supported because they were coherent and well argued. The Greens amendments added to the bill, while the Labor amendments did not add anything that was not already adequately covered in the bill. I thank the member for Swansea for her services as a surf lifesaver and commend her for her passion for the coast. I was confused about her stated concern that the reform process did not offer any more resources to local councils. Funding of \$83.6 million will be provided over the next five years to support coastal planning and, most importantly, to support actions under those plans to better protect and manage our coastal resources. She was concerned that people should be appointed to the Coastal Council for expertise in community consultation. I point out, as a matter of semantics, that "community consultation" is not an expertise; rather, it is a process.

The process is enshrined in the bill to ensure that planning is done in a manner that is collaborative and consultative. A range of concerns have been raised and I believe many of them are quite misplaced. In one sense it is no surprise that our coast evokes strong passion since it is something that so many people in New South Wales love and are passionate about. I thank many people in the community with whom I was able to consult directly in relation to the bill over the past two years. I thank members of the Coastal Alliance, whom I met at the Central Coast in meetings and elsewhere to discuss their concerns. I also thank Geoff Withycombe of the Sydney Coastal Councils for facilitating an opportunity for me to brief that council on reforms. I also thank residents of the Belongil Spit in the Ballina electorate—noting the strong advocacy of Mr Pat Aitkin—for the numerous phone discussions and meetings that I was able to have in connection with the bill.

Earlier I mentioned the Collingwood Beach residents. I also thank Craig Hillman and Central Coast residents Stephen Papadopoulos and Michael Fox from Boomerang and Blueys; Karen Coleman, who is a noted legal expert and passionate defender of residents' rights on the coast; John Corkhill, OAM, who is also a legal expert with a clear passion for good coastal management processes. I also thank the Australian Coastal Society for men like David James, who also are passionate community members and who take a real interest in good consultative and collaborative management processes being developed for our coast in a strategic manner. I acknowledge the conversations and meetings I have had with Brendan Donohoe, Tom Kersop and others from the Surfrider Foundation in relation to ensuring that coastal management includes a focus on the protection of the surf zone in the interests of surfers and others who love the beach. I also thank Ron Cox and many other coastal engineering experts, who have provided so much input into the reform processes.

With the indulgence of the House, I acknowledge a number of people within the public service who often are not recognised for the work they do: from the Department of Planning and Environment, Alex O'Mara, Luke Walton, Santina Camroux and Natasha Highman; and from the Office of Environment and Heritage, Dr Tom Celebrezze, Althea Kannane, Matthew Clark, Jane Gibbs and Kerrie Palmer. Those people have a passionate commitment to better environmental outcomes for our community generally as well as for sustainable economic outcomes and great social outcomes for communities that call our coast home. A common love of our coastline and beaches has united both sides in debates over coastal management, but we should not tarry or delay in proactively managing our coast. While there have been and will be constant calls to postpone action, I do not believe that that is the correct approach. As Tim Winton said:

For every moment the sea is peace and relief, there is another when it shivers and stirs to become chaos. It's just as ready to claim as it is to offer.

Our response to coastal management challenges too often have been reactive following inevitable erosive events. This bill is part of a coastal reform process that is proactive. It recognises that coast is ambulatory and that we need an adaptive and disciplined approach to protect public access, amenity and environmental values as well as the interests of coastal communities. I do not believe that engaging in interminable delay is the right approach. Instead I believe we need to bed down legislative reforms and then undertake detailed consultation to finalise the

mapping of vulnerable areas of our beaches and coastline, which have been a cause of discord, division and uncertainty for a long time. Obviously coastal management is a wicked problem. It is something that can never be solved ultimately but really can only be managed—but manage it we must.

Management really is the responsibility of a government that seeks to provide leadership, clarity and vision. The idea that we should delay strategic coastal planning will not make problems go away. The risks are present and we must identify them. We also must ensure that they are properly mapped and that there is clear legislative architecture to support rational decision-making. Of course, different communities will have different appetites for managing risk, but the risks do not go away by delaying action. I thank all members who contributed to debate on the bill. I commend the bill to the House. I conclude by saying that coastal management must be finalised. The Government must provide clear and supportive legislative architecture so that communities right along the coast can be empowered to plan for their vision for a healthy and sustainable coastline together with healthy and sustainable communities as well as a thriving saltwater economy.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Melanie Gibbons):** The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

**Motion agreed to.**

### **Third Reading**

**Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning) (19:20):** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

### **NORFOLK ISLAND ADMINISTRATION BILL 2016**

### **STATUTE LAW (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL 2016**

### **First Reading**

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

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Melanie Gibbons):** I order that the second readings of the bills stand as orders of the day for a later hour.

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

### **Second Reading**

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (19:21):** On behalf of Mr Mark Speakman: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

As the bill was introduced in the other place on 4 May 2016 and as the second reading speech is in the same form as appears in *Hansard* for that day, I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (19:21):** I lead for the Opposition in debate on the National Parks and Wildlife Amendment (Adjustment of Areas) Bill 2016. I state at the outset that the Opposition does not oppose the bill. Labor members are very proud of the contribution the Labor Party has made to the National Parks Estate in New South Wales. The estate protects 877 areas covering seven million hectares, which equates to approximately 9 per cent of the State. In addition, 66,000 hectares of marine waters are protected. The national parks estate comprises a great diversity of mangrove swamps, eucalypt forests, alpine herbs fields, rainforests, deserts, coastal heaths and grasslands. There is great diversity in both flora and fauna. As I stated, the Labor Party is very proud of its record of declaring and increasing the National Parks Estate in New South Wales.

Bill McKell, a former Labor Premier, created the fantastic Kosciuszko National Park way back in 1944. Neville Wran saved rainforests in the north of the State, expanded the Blue Mountains National Park, created the Wollemi National Park and banned sandmining in coastal national parks. He also introduced Australia's first wilderness parks. The Carr Government is probably the government that is most widely known for its national parks policies. First, the Carr Government saved the coastal forest in the State's north-east and south-east. Later it created more than one million hectares of new parks in Western New South Wales and banned the large-scale clearing of native vegetation, which the Opposition hopes is not again under threat.

In fact, between 1995 and 2011 Labor added in excess of three million hectares to the National Parks Estate in New South Wales. That works out at about 190,000 hectares per year every year for 16 years and it comprises 123 national parks. We note that in contrast, since coming to office in 2011 the Coalition Government

has added 55,000 hectares, which is around 14,000 hectares per year. At that rate, it would take the Government 219 years to match Labor's achievement. We remain very disappointed by that aspect of this Government's record.

In my electorate of Maroubra, in January this year the Minister for the Environment, Mark Speakman, stood with the Federal Minister for the Environment, Greg Hunt, and the Liberal candidate for Kingsford Smith in the upcoming election, as well as the member for Coogee, Bruce Notley-Smith. They promised to return Malabar Headland to the people of New South Wales as a national park. Not more than three or four weeks ago, the Federal Coalition signed a 50-year lease with shooters for use of that headland. I do not know how they propose to combine a national park with a shooting range—pretty difficult, I would think—and that part of the national park declared by this Government last year has now been restricted to being a two-day-a-week national park. Those who want to know about this Government's policies on national parks need look no further than its broken promises for Malabar Headland.

In addition, this Government has not delivered a new national parks establishment plan. This was promised for mid-2014 but we are still waiting for it. Without an updated plan, the Labor Opposition will remain committed to the priorities identified in the New South Wales National Parks Establishment Plan 2008, Labor's plan. The priorities include commitments to target unrepresented ecosystems and habitats, particularly those most under threat from climate change, and future development pressures or loss of natural river flows, and to focus on critical landscape corridors which facilitate the daily and seasonal movement of animals across the landscape and the intergenerational transfer location of plants and animals in response to gradual environmental changes, such as climate change. Much of this has been traversed in the other place by my colleague the Hon. Penny Sharpe, the shadow Minister for the Environment, whom I represent in this place.

This bill will amend the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 to facilitate a range of park reclassifications and adjustments to various boundaries of national parks around the State. The boundary adjustments of the bill include 141 hectares from Kosciuszko National Park to enable realignment of the existing Snowy Mountains Highway with the addition of a new road reserve. I note that Roads and Maritime Services has voluntarily offset that with the provision of 71.8 hectares of land. Another adjustment is within Morton National Park to remove sections of the Bugong Fire Trail. That is an adjustment of 18.5 hectares, which includes Bogong Road and Tallowa Dam Road. We are aware that some private landowners in that area have been isolated by the park and that this adjustment offers a remedy for that problem.

There is a small adjustment to Middle Brother National Park of just over one-third of a hectare to correct an inadvertent boundary encroachment, which occurred during Pacific Highway upgrade works. I believe I was the Minister for Roads when those upgrade works occurred. There is a very small adjustment to Lane Cove National Park from the Royal National Park to deal with boundary errors associated with urban car parks. There are also very small adjustments to Jervis Bay National Park, Yaegl National Reserve and Wollemi National Park as well as the transfer of certain sporting ovals in Royal National Park to the ownership of the Sutherland Shire Council. In addition, about 36 hectares from the Macquarie Pass State Conservation Area is being returned to Aboriginal ownership. We salute that, as it is appropriate, we support the return of 88 hectares from Gwydir Wetlands that was incorrectly reserved over an Aboriginal land claim. This bill is largely an exercise in tidying up national parks. As I said, the Opposition does not oppose the bill.

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (19:30):** I speak in support of the National Parks and Wildlife Amendment Bill (Adjustment of Areas) Bill 2016. I note that it is appropriate that this legislation be debated today, on the day that so many in this place have paid tribute to the founder of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Tom Lewis. This bill makes sensible amendments to the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 to revoke small areas of land from national parks. The land concerned does not belong in the reserve system. It includes local sporting fields, a car park, sections of road and a rail corridor. I commend the Minister for making these amendments. This is not controversial legislation, as all of the areas under assessment, like existing sporting ovals, have minimal conservation value.

Conservation of our national parks is incredibly important to me. The Royal National Park is located within the Sutherland shire and immensely loved by shire residents who frequently enjoy the park's bushwalks, famous beaches and picnic sites. Colloquially known as the "nasho" or the "royal", the Royal National Park is more than 15,000 hectares of protected national park. It was founded by Sir John Robertson, Acting Premier of New South Wales, and formally proclaimed on 26 April 1879. The royal is the world's oldest surviving purposed national park, predating Yellowstone National Park in the United States and the first to use the term "national park" anywhere in the world. Its original name was the National Park, but it was renamed in 1955 after Queen Elizabeth II passed by in the train on the way from Wollongong during her 1954 tour. The park was added to the Australian National Heritage List in December 2006.

I have said previously that I grew up in Bundeena, and my home is surrounded by the beautiful and historic Royal National Park. I have grown up with the national park as my backyard. I frequently walk along the

famous coast walk to Wedding Cake Rock and I have been brought up to respect the conservation needs of our State's national parks. However, the areas we are discussing in this bill and the revocations of these areas will not compromise the natural values of the national parks system. Mapping errors, accidental encroachment and past policies have resulted in these areas being within the boundaries of national parks. Their revocation will help to ensure that the appropriate authority, such as local council, will have legal responsibility for the land and compensatory lands will be added to national parks where appropriate.

I focus on the revocations in this bill that relate to sporting fields that fall within the boundaries of national parks. There are three ovals within the Royal National Park: Grays Point Oval, Heathcote Oval and Loftus Oval. These ovals have facilities such as toilet blocks, storage facilities, car parks, canteens, fencing and floodlights. Sutherland Shire Council has managed these ovals for many decades and it is entirely appropriate that it should have legal responsibility for the land. The bill revokes 13.3 hectares from the Royal National Park to enable the transfer of these ovals to the council. It goes without saying that the land to be revoked is cleared and has minimal conservation value. Grays Point Oval, Heathcote Oval and Loftus Oval currently being within the boundary of the Royal National Park is an unusual situation and was not caused by a mapping error; rather, it is the result of previous policies regarding appropriate uses for the national park.

Sport is widely played in the Sutherland shire. The three ovals currently in the Royal National Park are used by clubs from all across the shire, playing sports such as cricket in summer and soccer in winter. In fact, the importance of sport in the shire is evidenced by the fact that Sutherland Shire Football Association has 19,000 registered members and is the largest football association in the Southern Hemisphere. Due to the fact that sport is such a popular activity in the Sutherland shire, it is essential the sporting fields and grounds are readily available and managed effectively. To give some perspective, Heathcote Oval is used by seven different sporting codes: soccer, the Australian Football League [AFL], baseball, cricket, rugby league, Oztag and netball. This oval has been used by a number of Sutherland shire clubs over the years and is an essential sporting landmark in our local area. Transferring this oval across to Sutherland Shire Council will not negatively affect the Royal National Park in the slightest. This is a sensible amendment that benefits our community and all of the shire's sporting clubs that use these ovals.

The ovals are used not only by local sporting clubs but also by the public for general recreational purposes and by schools. Grays Point Oval sits adjacent to Grays Point Public School and students use the oval for their cross-country, Public School Sports Association and other sporting activities. The ovals represent a great asset for the local community and should be both owned and managed by the council. Compensation is not required for their revocation as they have a long history of sporting use and minimal conservation value, as I have already mentioned. The bill contains another minor revocation from the Royal National Park. Part of the Waterfall train station car park is within the national park due to a historical boundary anomaly. This will be corrected by revoking 0.1 of a hectare and vesting it with the appropriate authority, that is, Transport for NSW.

The bill revokes a patch of degraded land to enable the expansion of the St Ives Pistol Club. The loss of land from Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park will be compensated by the transfer of about 140 hectares of Crown land adjacent to Heathcote National Park to the reserve system. This wildlife corridor is a good conservation outcome that more than adequately offsets the limited conservation values that will be impacted by this revocation. This bill supports the interests of local communities. It will help to ensure that sporting fields are owned and managed by local councils and that roads passing through national parks are owned and maintained by the appropriate authority. I am pleased to commend the bill to the House.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (19:35):** The National Parks and Wildlife Amendment (Adjustment of Areas) Bill 2016 includes routine adjustments to national park boundaries to reflect actual areas of conservation as well as unnecessary and unacceptable loss of national parkland at a time when we should be expanding the estate. Australia has a shameful record of biodiversity loss with the highest rates of species loss among developed countries. In New South Wales, 100 animals and plants have become extinct since European settlement and nearly 1,000 are at risk, with 59 per cent of animals listed as threatened. Indeed, last week I was briefed about the absolute dire situation of koalas in this State, particularly along the State's coast.

We have lost more than one-third of our native vegetation and almost all of our rainforests. National parks are the cornerstone of biodiversity conservation, and if we fail to expand protections we will lose much more. National parks provide essential habitat to the majority of our threatened species, and they work best when they are large and well connected. National parks are carbon sinks with significant sequestration capabilities. This role is becoming increasingly important with climate change, and our need to meet national and international targets and commitments. Only 9 per cent of the State is protected under national park and many significant areas remain unprotected.

Six bioregions and 49 subregions have less than 5 per cent of their area protected and 11 subregions have no protection at all. This Government has been very slow to increase national park protection and this must be

addressed. The bill proposes revocation of more than 350 hectares of national park-declared land and downgrades 2,020 hectares of Khappinghat Nature Reserve. National park declarations are meant to be in perpetuity, and maintaining and expanding the estate must be a priority. The National Parks and Wildlife Service Revocation of Land Policy states that revocation of conservation areas and national parks should only occur as "an avenue of last resort and where no other practical options are available". While some revocations in this bill appear to adhere to this policy, such as the two in connection with successful Aboriginal land claims, it is unclear with others.

Of particular concern is the revocation of 1.25 hectares of land from the Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park for the expansion of a pistol club. This revocation is absurd and is nothing more than a land grab for private interests likely connected with some deal with the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party to get unpopular legislation through at the expense of environmental protection. The Government has said the land is small and degraded. This is beside the point. If degradation of the land is a problem, the Government should invest in its regeneration.

Furthermore, I note that the land is on the perimeter of the park and that land closest to the border in developed areas is usually the most degraded. The compensation proposed is for high conservation land near Heathcote. The two parks are far from each other and support different ecosystems. If the land at Heathcote is high conservation, why has it not been protected already? Could there have been a delay to ensure it was available as compensation when the need arose? This would be an unacceptable approach to protection. Real protection cannot be revoked and traded. The bill sets a dangerous precedent that future deals could trade off protected land. I cannot support the bill.

**Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (19:39):** I am pleased to speak in support of the National Parks and Wildlife Amendment (Adjustment of Areas) Bill 2016. This bill seeks to correct a number of national park boundary errors and encroachments related to roads, railways and sporting fields. It also aims to rectify an inappropriate reservation at Penrith Lakes and reverse the reservation of land subject to determined and undetermined Aboriginal land claims. It realigns reserve categories with management values and will facilitate the expansion of the St Ives Pistol Club. To achieve this, small areas of land must be revoked from the national parks system. These areas will remain vested with the Minister for the Environment while the final steps to transfer titles to the appropriate authorities are completed. This includes finalisation of appropriate compensation arrangements to ensure that the overall conservation value of the national parks system is maintained.

I will focus first on the proposed alignment of a new cadastral road reserve with the Snowy Mountains Highway. Currently, major sections of the Snowy Mountains Highway lie within the Kosciuszko National Park rather than the current road reserve. This means that the Office of Environment and Heritage has legal responsibility for sections of the road despite it being managed by the Roads and Maritime Services. Clearly, this is not a desirable situation. The inquiry following the 1997 Thredbo landslide identified the need to revoke major through roads from national parks and vest them with the appropriate roads authority. This led to the Alpine Way and Kosciuszko Road being transferred to the then Roads and Traffic Authority in 2004.

The Office of Environment and Heritage and the Roads and Maritime Services have followed a similar collaborative process to legally identify the proper cadastral road reserve for the Snowy Mountains Highway. The proper road reserve aligns to the existing road, and is also designed to meet all the necessary safety and maintenance requirements whilst having minimal impact on the national park's boundaries. The road reserve is generally 40 metres wide. However, in some sections it is wider to accommodate large cuttings or embankments and specific laydown areas, such as Alpine Creek. The overall footprint of the road reserve has been reduced wherever the terrain allows and where adjacent land requires protection, such as the historic former Kiandra township, which remains part of the park.

The revocation of national park land to support the realignment of the road reserve is an identified action in the statutory Kosciuszko National Park Plan of Management. The proposed road reserve will remove approximately 141 hectares from Kosciuszko National Park. The length of road affected covers 68.8 kilometres. Following a final survey, the land will be transferred to the Minister administering the Roads Act 1993. This will ensure that the appropriate roads authority is responsible for maintaining the Snowy Mountains Highway. The land to be revoked has little to no conservation value. The proposed road reserve will cover the existing road. Compensation for the revoked land is therefore not required.

Nevertheless, the Roads and Maritime Services has agreed to transfer approximately 72 hectares to the Kosciuszko National Park to offset the loss of land. I understand that this includes about 59 hectares of the current road corridor that is no longer required by the Roads and Maritime Services in the new road corridor. Overall, this proposal will deliver a public benefit by ensuring that the legal and management responsibilities for the Snowy Mountains Highway are held by the same agency. This bill contains a number of other revocations that are designed to vest roads with the appropriate authority. The revocation of approximately 18.5 hectares of Morton National Park will enable the transfer of two roads and a fire trail to the Shoalhaven City Council. These roads

traverse the park and are primarily used to access neighbouring private properties. They were reserved in error and transferring them to the local council will ensure that they are owned and managed by a single authority.

Similarly, the revocation of less than 0.1 of a hectare from Jervis Bay National Park will allow the transfer of the turning circle used by the Vincentia Public School bus to the road authority. These are both sensible measures that have the support of the local council and the local community. This bill is necessary to correct a number of minor boundary errors, encroachments and inappropriate reservations. The revocations will not compromise the natural values of the national park system, and compensatory lands will be added to national parks where appropriate. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (19:44):** National Parks are vitally important to New South Wales. They sustain biodiversity and protect threatened species. They bring millions of visitors to our State. Our connection to the natural environment promotes healthy and active living and improves our physical and mental wellbeing. In the United States, where the system of national parks is extensive, highly utilised and at the core of the national psyche, the motivation to preserve and protect wild places is well understood. President Kennedy said of American national parks:

It is the course of wisdom to set aside an ample portion of our natural resources as national parks and reserves, thus ensuring that future generations may know the majesty of the earth as we know it today.

More recently, President Obama spoke of the deep connection Americans feel to their national parks, noting:

... it's not just the iconic mountains and parks that we protect. It's the forests where generations of families have hiked and picnicked and connected with nature.

That is a beautiful sentiment. It acknowledges that mountains, rivers, beaches and bush are where we make memories, where we take the time to pause in our busy lives and take stock of what is most important. That statement evokes memories of my childhood, such as picnicking at North Head, camping at The Basin or taking longer trips with the family to the Warrumbungles or Kosciuszko. The iconic national parks in our State are places we love. We should be proud that they are preserved for eternity. It is a sentiment that I believe also drove Bob Carr, when he was Premier, to introduce the Wilderness Act in 1987. Perhaps it related to his love of all things to do with American history. In introducing the Act, he said:

If we lose our feel for this grand old continent in its natural condition, then we lose something of our character as a people. The case for conservation is founded therefore on patriotism. Our commitment to protecting our wilderness is a measure of our maturity as a nation and pride in our identity.

The truth is that Labor has long understood the vital importance of protecting the wild places in New South Wales. The first Labor government in New South Wales protected land around Sydney Harbour, including the land now home to cherished landmarks like Taronga Zoo and Nielsen Park. It is fitting that today this House has paid tribute to the contribution of former Premier Tom Lewis, who was responsible for establishing the National Parks and Wildlife Service. When last in office, between 1995 and 2011, Labor added 190,000 hectares to the national parks estate each year, a total of 3.07 million hectares. That is an extraordinary contribution to our natural heritage.

It is a record we are proud of and are committed to progressing in the future. A future Foley Labor Government would deliver Australia's first koala national park to stem the loss of koalas to land clearing and development. Labor also has a proud record of protecting marine environments. When last in office, Labor delivered six protected marine parks, covering more than 340,000 hectares. Labor is committed to creating a Sydney marine park. Labor understands that Sydney Harbour is one of the most biologically rich harbours in the world and needs our protection. As the use of the harbour increases, we must also increase measures to protect its biodiversity.

It is clear that one of the greatest challenges in our national parks system is to balance the core objectives of conservation with the secondary needs of visitors. That is something that the national parks system in the United States gets right. American national parks attract countless visitors, who make a contribution to funding the expansion and conservation of the parks and their inhabitants. The challenges of achieving this balance cannot be underestimated, and we should be careful to ensure that conservation is not sacrificed to increase attendance. We need to get the balance right, but we also need to meet the needs of park visitors.

Like many residents in New South Wales, I was appalled when the O'Farrell Government opened 12 parks to amateur hunting, in a deal done behind closed doors with the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party and the Christian Democratic Party. Shooting in our national parks obviously puts other park visitors at risk. I share the concerns of park users—bushwalkers, birders and tourists. In 2014, 3.9 million people visited our national parks, according to the National Parks and Wildlife Service. They overwhelmingly want a safe visit. We in this place have a responsibility to safeguard citizens' rights to access those special places without harm. Media reports of confrontations between hunters and visitors or archers and visitors do not instil confidence. That is not the right approach.

I share the concerns expressed by residents and my colleagues that this bill proposes to revoke 1.25 hectares of Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park to expand the St Ives Pistol Club. As the Hon. Penny Sharpe, the shadow Minister for the Environment and Heritage, said in the other place, this bill largely tidies up errors by making small adjustments and, importantly, returns land to native title owners. We welcome that. We are concerned, however, about the handing over of land to the St Ives Pistol Club. We are also concerned about the expansion of horseriding in national parks and will seek an amendment to omit plans to convert Khappinghat Nature Reserve to a national park. That important amendment should be considered. We also oppose revoking Penrith Lakes Regional Park, because the park is surrounded by Crown land and we share the community's concern about the potential development of that land.

Labor supports this bill, pending the passage of those amendments. National parks are living, breathing things. They are places that we love and we must preserve them for future generations. This bill is largely about housekeeping, to fix errors and to improve community use. Labor supports that. I reiterate my firm opposition to hunting in our national parks. I put on the record my strong support for our national parks system. With our growing cities and the environment increasingly under threat, these parks serve as a refuge not just for unique and threatened wildlife but also for us.

**Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (19:50):** I speak in support of the National Parks and Wildlife Amendment (Adjustment of Areas) Bill 2016. The bill makes amendments to the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 to revoke small areas of land from the national parks system to correct boundary errors and encroachments relating to roads and sporting ovals. For example, the bill will facilitate the Mona Vale Road west upgrade. It will change the category of two reserves to align with management principles and improve visitor safety. It will recognise valid Aboriginal land claims by removing claimed land from the reserve system. The bill will also remove an inappropriate reservation of land with no conservation value, Penrith Lakes Regional Park.

I will focus on two aspects of the bill: the revocation of land at two State conservation areas to recognise valid Aboriginal land claims; and a change in the reserve category of two parks. Both revocations relating to Aboriginal land claims are required to correct oversights in the reservation process and reverse the reservation to respect the importance of Aboriginal land claims. With regard to the Macquarie Pass State Conservation Area, the Illawarra Local Aboriginal Land Council was successfully granted a claim in the New South Wales Land and Environment Court and now holds the title to that land. The claim was lodged under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983 in 1986, before the land was reserved. When the land previously known as Tongarra Crown Reserve was reserved as the Macquarie Pass State Conservation Area, normal interdepartmental consultations did not reveal the land claim.

To respect the court's decision and the significance of a successful Aboriginal land claim, the land needs to be revoked to correct the administrative error. A similar error occurred in the Gwydir Wetlands State Conservation Area. There is an undetermined Aboriginal land claim by the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council on part of the Gwydir Wetlands State Conservation Area. The reservation was finalised in 2014. Unfortunately, normal interdepartmental consultation did not identify the claim and about 88.42 hectares was added to the Gwydir Wetlands State Conservation Area in error. The practice of the Office of Environment and Heritage is to exclude lands subject to Aboriginal land claims from reservation until the claim is determined.

Incompatible land uses in Khappinghat Nature Reserve mean that the Office of Environment and Heritage is required to amend the category of part of that reserve to national park. Part of that nature reserve aligns with the management principles for nature reserves, while the remainder aligns with the management principles for national parks. To resolve incompatible land uses, we need to change approximately 2,020 hectares of the reserve to create Khappinghat National Park. This will leave approximately 1,521 hectares of sensitive land protected as a nature reserve. An area of 367 hectares was gazetted as the reserve in 1993, principally to protect environmentally sensitive lands around Khappinghat Creek on the lower North Coast. Another 3,147 hectares of State forest and Crown land was added in 1999, as a result of the Lower North East Regional Forest Agreement. At the time of addition, management principles for reserve categories now contained in the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 had not been developed. New parks were often categorised according to their size. Large areas of more than 6,000 hectares often became national parks.

The 1999 additions to Khappinghat Nature Reserve included an extensive network of trails and roads associated with former timber harvesting uses. Many of these trails had long been used for recreational activities, such as vehicle touring, and access for fishing, cycling and horseriding. The additions also included powerlines, underground telecommunication cables, water reservoirs and pipelines, as well as softwood and hardwood plantations and through roads. Consultation with the local community indicated that the existing recreational uses in the parts of the park that were added in 1999 were inconsistent with the management principles for nature reserves. This legislation now delivers this change.



There is a strong case for changing approximately 2,020 hectares of the reserve to national park. This means the majority of horseriding and cycling routes would be in the new national park, while the least disturbed and most environmentally sensitive parts remain a nature reserve. This proposal will lead to better alignment with the objects and reserve management principles in the National Parks and Wildlife Act. It identifies appropriate parkland that has the capacity to accommodate recreational pursuits such as horseriding and cycling. The safety of these pursuits will be ensured by providing routes along management trails and removing potential conflict between horses and vehicles. The proposal will result in better conservation outcomes and reserve management by reducing the maintenance liability and the incidence of waste and arson currently associated with vehicle access to trails in the nature reserve.

Another park that was reserved before the 2002 development of management principles is Ben Halls Gap National Park. It has limited vehicle access, visitor facilities and recreation use. Changing the category of about 3,018 hectares, being all of Ben Halls Gap National Park, to nature reserve will enhance the protection of an area with high ecological and conservation value without impacting on current low-impact visitation. This bill makes sensible changes to recognise the importance of Aboriginal land claims as well as the importance of realigning reserve categories to reflect what is required for the proper conservation and management of a park.

Earlier today we had a condolence debate about a former member for Wollondilly and a former Premier of New South Wales, the Hon. Tom Lewis, AO. It was an honour to speak about him in this House while his family were here. He established the National Parks and Wildlife Service as we know it. We in Wollondilly certainly value our environment, our national parks and the work that the Hon. Tom Lewis did way back in the 1970s to establish those parks and our National Parks and Wildlife Service. We see his work still evident today. We have built on the work of the Hon. Tom Lewis by recently classifying 11,000 hectares in Wollondilly as wilderness area.

The Labor Party did not want to conduct an inquiry into the falling water levels at Thirlmere Lakes National Park. It took a Coalition Government to come in, and the work of the Minister for the Environment and I, to ensure that there was an inquiry into those water levels. We have now secured \$200,000 to conduct baseline studies, which are publicly available on the website. They will inform us on what needs to be done in the future. We have also worked with the community to ensure that we have an understanding of not only the expectations of the community but also the measures we need to put in place for the future.

In relation to Thirlmere Lakes National Park, I have also established the Friends of Thirlmere Lakes. This is a group of conservationists and environmentalists who regularly go out and clean up this area, monitor what is going on there, and provide me with advice every couple of months on water levels. They send me clear messages to pass on to the Government. We also created Dharawal National Park. One of the first things this Government did in 2011 was to establish Dharawal National Park right in the heart of Wollondilly. I could not be prouder than I was when I was able to deliver on that election commitment. National parks are important to us; they are something that we value.

I note that earlier in the debate members of the Labor Party said that this Government has introduced hunting in national parks. If I recall correctly, this was for pest eradication, and both sides of politics have been in government when that practice has occurred. It is not just shooting for the sake of shooting; it is to ensure that certain pests do not destroy our national parks, and there are strict guidelines on how that shooting is conducted. So I think that was a bit of an alarmist thing to say. All of us in this place, regardless of which side of politics we come from, can agree that protecting our national parks is vital. I note that the Minister for the Environment is with us in the Chamber. He is doing a fantastic job. Only recently he and I were discussing some further aspects of the national parks in the Wollondilly area. I am glad he is here with us for this debate. This is a sensible bill, and I commend it to the House.

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (20:00):** I contribute to this debate on the National Parks and Wildlife Amendment (Adjustment of Areas) Bill 2016. It gives me great pleasure to stand in this place and speak about New South Wales national parks because our national parks are a standing legacy of the environmental record of Labor in New South Wales. New South Wales would be unrecognisable today without the huge estate of national parks gifted to the people of this State by former Labor governments and former Minister for the Environment Bob Debus.

Bob Debus is a former member for Blue Mountains and a former "Minister for everything" in this place, but his work as Minister for the Environment is his most lasting and enduring legacy. Bob Carr and Bob Debus spent a great deal of the 1990s and early 2000s ensuring large areas of bushland and wilderness throughout our State were invested in, protected and made accessible to the people of New South Wales. Over 350 new national parks were declared by Bob Carr and Bob Debus in that time. Between 1995 and 2011 Labor added more than three million hectares to the national parks estate. As has been mentioned before in this place by the former

member for Marrickville, when Bob Debus was the Minister for the Environment he gazetted more national parks in one day than the former Coalition Government gazetted in its entire term of office.

No other political party has ever created more national parks than has the Labor Party. We created the largest collection of national parks in the country and we will protect them. No other political party represented in this place can make that claim. The Liberals resent our achievements on environmental conservation and The Greens look on from the crossbench. That is why it is so important to elect Labor governments, because only Labor can use the mechanisms of Executive government to protect the environment. Our record on the environment is lasting and enduring. Labor knows that a government must balance the strength of the economy and protections for our environment, and Labor members know that as politicians we must bring the people along with us on these issues.

At this point, I acknowledge that the land comprising the Blue Mountains, our city surrounded by national park within a national park, is Darug and Gundungurra land. I also acknowledge the proactive and protective work of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society and the Colong Foundation, two large local organisations. Labor is in step with the community on stopping coal seam gas. We are in step with the community on the need to reduce our carbon emissions, and we are in step with the community on the critical need to invest in renewable energy. We know that these issues are at the forefront of people's concerns right now and we know that we cannot afford to waste any more time in tackling them. That is why Labor, in government, would move to put a moratorium on coal seam gas, legislate an emissions trading scheme, and invest in renewable energies like solar and wind.

But just as Labor faces opposition from the Liberals in delivering these protections today, it has faced opposition from the Liberals in the past on other basic environmental protection issues. It was this Liberal Government, led by Barry O'Farrell, that allowed amateur hunters to enter our national parks for recreational hunting. That happened in the Blue Mountains. It is the Liberals who oppose the creation and expansion of marine reserves in our waterways. It is the Liberals who made the ludicrous claim that logging is beneficial for koalas. So, with these issues in mind, I am concerned that the legislation put forward today is yet another attack by stealth on our national parks, and I have to speak to that. Let us not forget that the culmination of almost a century of preservation occurred in the year 2000, when Bob Carr and his environment Minister, Bob Debus, witnessed the Greater Blue Mountains being declared a World Heritage area.

Today we have listened to members pay tribute to former Premier Tom Lewis. In doing so, the Premier, the Minister for the Environment and others on the Government benches spoke about Tom Lewis's legacy in creating national parks and they reflected on the importance of the environmental protection that national parks provide. It is therefore unsettling that they have chosen this week to put legislation forward that enables the Government to cut sections out of our national parks. The Government proposes to remove one section of up to 140 hectares. This is being done in Jervis Bay, Kosciuszko, Ku-ring-gai, Lane Cove, Penrith Lakes, the Royal National Park and the Wollemi National Park north of and adjacent to the Blue Mountains National Park.

There are good reasons put forward for some of those changes. In some instances the sections of land being cut out of national parks are almost insignificant. However, what is disconcerting is the wording of the bill and the powers it vests in the Minister for the Environment. Specifically, part 9 of the bill will enable the Minister to sell, grant leases of, dispose of, or otherwise deal with the section of land in question. Where this is being done in very small sections to create bus-turning circles or to lay driveways to neighbouring properties so be it. But I do not trust the Government and its stated commitment to the privatisation of public assets and I look at its list of proposed cuts to national parks with some scepticism. I am deeply suspicious of the decision to revoke the reservation of the Penrith Lakes Regional Park, some 6,656 square metres that has apparently been deemed "unsuitable for conservation". I suppose we shall see whether it turns out to be suitable for development or commercialisation.

I am troubled by the gifting of 1.25 hectares of the Ku-Ring-Gai Chase National Park to the St Ives Pistol Club. The land giveaway is equivalent to two football fields and represents a huge transfer of public land to a social group comprising the wealthy and privileged. This is not a government that is known for its generosity or kindness to people who are vulnerable or disadvantaged. The Baird Government habitually makes cuts to community services and public housing, but it can find two football fields of public land to gift to gun owners in its safe Liberal heartland. This really does highlight the twisted priorities of the Baird Government: if you are old, sick, or poor there is no limit to the efforts Mike Baird will go to to make your life a little bit more miserable; but if you are a gun-toting Liberal voter from the North Shore, boy, does he have an offer for you!

We saw at the weekend the thousands of protesters who marched against Mike Baird. We saw their anger, anguish and determination to stop this conservative Government and its regressive agenda. My electorate was represented by the Residents Against Western Sydney Airport, who are fighting the Abbott-Turnbull-Baird proposal for an airport at Badgerys Creek, which will see aircraft fly over our national park. They were joined by the Windsor Wobbler, Kim Smith, calling on the Roads and Maritime Services to protect the heritage of Windsor

Bridge and Thompson Square from a ludicrous proposal that will destroy the town and open the door to sandmining operations further up river. The message from those thousands of voters who protested last weekend was abundantly clear: the people of this State have woken up to Mike Baird.

The voters of New South Wales are realising that Mike Baird is a puppet of big business and a stooge for his former colleagues in the investment banks and big consortiums that want to make big profits from public assets. This Parliament recently debated a petition containing more than 10,000 signatures from people concerned by moves to privatise sections of the Sydney Harbour National Park, in particular around Watsons Bay. These people are not radicals or lifelong leftists; they are residents of the State electorate of Vaucluse who have said enough is enough. They do not want to see their national park, small though it may be, opened up to further privatisation. They want public access to public assets.

They do not want to have to stump up for a \$100 per head degustation menu in order to enjoy the views across Sydney Harbour from their national park. They want visitors from across Sydney and the country to enjoy those views as much as they want to protect their own access as local residents. The Government must think carefully about these proposals and put a stop to any move to reduce the national park estate. It should consider the legacy of Bob Debus and Bob Carr and make some effort, however overdue or inadequate, to honour that legacy. We need to improve our national parks instead of eroding them or degrading them through commercialisation, restricted access, recreational hunting, or whatever other proposal the Government has in the pipeline.

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (20:09):** I make a contribution to debate on the National Parks and Wildlife Amendment (Adjustment of Areas) Bill 2016. The great joys in life are often the simplest. There are not many healthier, more sociable or relaxing activities than to experience our preserved and protected national parks. I find walking down the Wentworth Falls track in the Blue Mountains—although walking up I must say is a little more effort—or trekking along the cliffs of the coastal walk in the Royal National Park with a daypack filled with snacks and lollies such enjoyable experiences. That natural beauty is available and protected for all of us now and into the future. There is growing evidence that for a person to maintain their physical and mental wellbeing they must stay in contact with natural environments and open spaces. While initiatives to boost infrastructure should be encouraged, it is also important that we balance development with environmental appreciation. One positive strategy for governments is to dedicate certain areas of significance as national parks. This allows us to preserve the natural beauty and heritage of our country indefinitely, so that future generations can enjoy the resources that benefited previous Australians.

Labor has a proud record of environmental conservation. One of former Premier Carr's greatest legacies was the establishment of new national parks. The Carr Government was responsible for saving the coastal forests in the State's north-east and south-east and created more than one million hectares of new parks in western New South Wales. Between 1995 and 2011 Labor added 3.07 million hectares to the national park estate. Since coming to office the Coalition Government has added only 55,000 hectares. At this rate, as stated by the member for Maroubra, it will take the Coalition Government 219 years to match Labor's achievement. I suspect no-one in this Chamber will be here to see that occur. I know I will not. It seems, however, that the Coalition has no intention of matching Labor's achievements and would prefer to take national park land away from the people.

I have stated previously in the House that open space should not be misconstrued as vacant land ready to be commercialised at any cost. Open space is a crucial resource that helps our society function. Its physical benefits climatically and psychologically far outweigh the parasitic accumulation of a few hectares here and there for purposes other than conservation. An article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* states that open green space can assist in heat reduction in our communities as compared to a community covered in concrete and cement. Revoking urban green space such as the Penrith Lakes Regional Park for more urban development will be detrimental to communities that are already suffering from unfettered urban sprawl.

At a time when the nation's population is increasing and the natural world is shrinking it is fundamentally important to protect and expand public open space. It is truly one of the few remaining public assets. Preserving and protecting our environment should be a primary guiding principle in public policy. Creating national parks should be a binding promise. In his second reading speech, the Hon. John Ajaka argues that the purpose of national parks is conservation, not development, and that park boundaries need to be adjusted and areas revoked for key public assets to be established. Protected land is already a public asset producing a valuable public good. I fail to understand how revoking and readjusting park boundaries produces any result other than a public asset being turned into a public asset.

Why would we create national parks if we did not believe they were valuable to the people? Why would we dedicate a specific amount of land to national parks if we did not think it was a necessary natural curtilage to protect places of great heritage and aesthetic value? Every hectare we take from national parks causes greater stress on our air quality, boundary ecosystems, and the safety of endangered plants and animals. Although

proposed plans to upgrade Mona Vale Road and, subsequently, disturb less than a hectare of Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park have attracted compensation, other land in the bill will not be as lucky. The rationale for removing land from other national parks without compensation has been the result of boundary errors and road access issues. One would assume that if such issues existed, an exact figure for land could be calculated.

National park land, no matter the size or degree of biodiversity, must attract compensation if it is reclaimed. The land, like any other form of property, was designated for a reason. To remove it requires compensation. Compensation does not mean gifting national park land to the St Ives Pistol Club; it means adding lost hectares of land to another national park, or extending the land at another boundary of the national park. If that land were a person's property, I imagine they would fight to retain it or to receive adequate compensation no matter the area involved. National parks are the people's land; it is a communal asset.

Like anyone else, I support infrastructure development opportunities. However, to revoke a national park land designation without consulting specific communities and the public at large is not acting for the public benefit or in the public interest. People need open space just as much as they need infrastructure. One need not always be truncated by the other on the mistaken impression that roads or the hobbies of vested interest groups are more important than the air we breathe and the biodiversity we cherish. Using drawing errors, mistakes and inappropriate purpose as an excuse to justify the removal of national park land is flawed. It lacks proof and lowers the level of transparency and accountability. Let us be specific, let us know what we are giving up before we let it go, and let us recognise that the public interest in national and regional parks is valid and should not be tampered with or compromised unless the public benefit is clear.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Heritage, and Assistant Minister for Planning) (20:17):** In reply: I thank members representing the electorates of Maroubra, Miranda, Sydney, Albury, Summer Hill, Wollondilly, Blue Mountains and Macquarie Fields for their contributions to this debate. The proposals in the National Parks and Wildlife Amendment (Adjustment of Areas) Bill 2016 are sensible and will lead to good outcomes for the people of New South Wales. Each of these outcomes is focused on the needs of local communities. The bill ensures that roads and sporting facilities are managed by the appropriate authority, and allows these assets to be upgraded and expanded in response to community need. The bill realigns reserve categories to reflect visitor use and community safety concerns; it recognises the importance of Aboriginal land claims for local Indigenous communities; and it ensures that inappropriate reservations that are no longer required in the reserve system are corrected for the benefit of the broader community.

The bill proposes to amend the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 to remove land from the reserve system. This is required to correct boundary errors and encroachments and past policies that have resulted in small parts of road corridors, railway infrastructure and ovals being reserved in national parks. Small sections of reserved land need to be revoked to facilitate an essential road upgrade to improve road safety, as well as the expansion of a sporting facility on degraded park land. The bill enables land title to be transferred to ensure appropriate management and ownership of land. Land revoked from Kosciuszko National Park, Middle Brother National Park, Yael Nature Reserve and Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park, where it relates to the Mona Vale Road West upgrade, will be transferred to the Roads and Maritime Services—not to developers as suggested by one member. Likewise, Grays Point, Heathcote, Loftus and Bilpin ovals in Royal National Park will be transferred to the local council that currently manages them—again, not to developers. The proposals reversing the inappropriate reservation of determined and undetermined Aboriginal land claims recognise that this land does not belong in the reserve system and transfers ownership to the Illawarra Local Aboriginal Land Council and the Minister administering the Crown Lands Act 1989.

I support the proposal to revoke part of Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park to enable the expansion of the St Ives Pistol Club. St Ives Pistol Club, which is located on Crown land adjacent to Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park, wishes to upgrade and expand its facility to accommodate the club's expanding membership. Club membership is diverse and growing. It currently has about 400 members, including men, women and juniors. Club members have represented Australia at the Olympics, the Commonwealth Games and the World Shooting Championships. I am told that 92 per cent of club members are from the area north of Parramatta River to Palm Beach. The club was established on its existing site in 1964 under lease from Crown Lands.

The expansion proposal is currently constrained by existing Aboriginal land claims on its southern and eastern boundaries and by Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park on its northern and western boundaries. Because the expansion of the club is not a permissible activity under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974, the most practical and viable option available to enable the expansion to proceed is to revoke 1.25 hectares of the national park on the club's western boundary. Much has been said about the protection of biodiversity, but the land proposed for revocation is already degraded. This has most likely been caused by neighbouring land uses, including a quarry. Its revocation will not have an impact on the park's overall conservation values. The vegetation

on the land to be revoked has weeds, including lantana, pampas grass, Crofton weed, whiskey grass, and cassia. There is also evidence on the land of former quarry uses, including earth mounds and areas of fill.

The St Ives Pistol Club currently occupies a 1.3 hectare parcel of Crown land under a lease agreement administered by the Department of Primary Industries—Lands that is in addition to the area being revoked. I am advised that under the terms of the Crown land lease agreement the club currently pays a market rental of \$9,556 a year. Once the land is transferred, and after compensatory land has been added to the national parks system, I understand that the department will enter into negotiations with the pistol club for a new lease to cover the existing 1.3-hectare site and the additional 1.2 hectares. I also understand that, as part of the lease negotiations, the department will engage a valuer to undertake a valuation of the whole of the site with a view to determining a market rent. The club may be eligible to rental reduction up to a maximum of 50 per cent from the market rent in accordance with departmental longstanding rental policies that can apply to not-for-profit, single-purpose sporting organisations.

An enormous amount of compensation has been agreed to for the revocation of the 1.25 hectares. Agreement has been reached for the transfer of about 140 hectares of Crown land adjacent to Heathcote National Park to the south of Sydney for addition to the national park system. As a result, a significant overall conservation gain will be achieved through the inclusion of those lands in the national parks system. This is a good conservation outcome that will more than adequately offset the limited conservation values that will be impacted by this revocation. Under the bill, once the lands are revoked from Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park they will be transferred to the Minister administering Crown lands, but only when the compensatory lands have been acquired. Members should compare this 1.25 hectares with the more than 1,000 hectares that was revoked by the Labor Government in 2006 from the Bargo State Conservation Area to enable expansion of the Southern Highlands Regional Shooting Facility. This proposal ensures continued public safety in the national park. I am advised that range plans must be approved by the Firearms Registry of the NSW Police Force, thereby ensuring strict scrutiny and implementation of all necessary safety features.

Some members commented on the recategorisation of part of Khappinghat Nature Reserve. A total of approximately 2,020 hectares, being just over half the nature reserve, will become national park. This is a commonsense proposal and will ensure the reserve's values are managed appropriately. The National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 provides management principles for each reserve category. The management principles for national parks include sustainable visitor use and enjoyment. In contrast, the management principles for nature reserves focus primarily on the protection of natural and cultural heritage values. The need to change the category of just over half of Khappinghat Nature Reserve can be explained by its history. An area of 367 hectares was gazetted as the reserve in 1993, principally to protect environmentally sensitive lands around Khappinghat Creek on the lower North Coast. Another 3,147 hectares of State forest and Crown land was added in 1999, as a result of the Lower North East Regional Forest Agreement.

The 1999 additions included an extensive network of trails and roads associated with prior timber harvesting uses. Many of these trails had long been used for recreational activities such as vehicle touring and access for fishing, cycling and horseriding. The additions also included powerlines, underground telecommunication cables, water reservoirs and pipelines, softwood and hardwood plantations and through roads. At the time of these additions the management principles for reserve categories now contained in the 1974 Act had not been developed. This proposal will align management principles to park values. It will remove potential conflict between vehicles, horseriders and cyclists by clearly designating suitable tracks and enforcing rules for their use. It will ensure ecological and cultural values as well as asset and infrastructure values are managed in a way that is consistent with the principles of nature reserves and national parks.

Activities such as horseriding are generally permitted on management trails in national parks, subject to the relevant park's plan of management. Horseriding currently occurs in Khappinghat Nature Reserve on management trails and it is considered appropriate for this activity to continue. Hence this part of the park should be a national park. The least disturbed and most environmentally sensitive parts will remain as a nature reserve. Most of the horseriding and cycling routes are in the northern part of the nature reserve and in a small area in the south of the reserve near Diamond Beach. This proposal will ensure these recreational activities are concentrated away from the most environmentally and culturally sensitive areas of the reserve. This proposal also provides enhanced protection for the area around Khappinghat Creek, which holds significant cultural value for the local Aboriginal community.

This proposal does not merely reflect the interests of horseriders. It aims for greater protection of ecological and cultural values as well as more appropriate management of asset and infrastructure values. Both the National Parks and Wildlife Advisory Council and the Lower North Coast regional advisory committee support the recategorisation proposal. The committee had previously identified the need to resolve this issue in its recommendations regarding the draft plan of management. Just as this is being recategorised, Ben Halls Gap

National Park will likewise have its reservation status change. It will be upgraded to better protect the park's values under an appropriate reserve category. It will be changed to a nature reserve to enhance the protection of an area with high ecological and conservation value without impacting on visitation.

Some members referred to Penrith Lakes Regional Park. The revocation of a small area of Penrith Lakes Regional Park is urgently required to enable planned urban development under the Penrith Lakes Scheme by the Penrith Lakes Development Corporation. If this inappropriate reservation is not revoked it will hold up important infrastructure development. Let us put this in perspective: Penrith Lakes Regional Park is a strip of land 10 metres wide and 660 metres long. It has no public access, no facilities and no recreational or conservation value, and it is no longer required. This small piece of land was originally reserved in 1998 to form the basis of a larger regional park following the development of the Sydney International Regatta Centre in Western Sydney. Those plans were not pursued and the land has never been used for recreational purposes. There is no access to the park and it is entirely surrounded by lands managed for extractive material production by the Penrith Lakes Development Corporation.

Even though no conservation value is lost through removing this park from the reserve system, there will be overall community conservation benefits because the proposed development will be accompanied by large areas of parkland along the lake and pond foreshores. Removing Penrith Lakes Regional Park from the reserve system will tidy up the management of the reserve system by ensuring that only land with conservation value is the responsibility of the National Parks and Wildlife Service. It will correct a completely inappropriate and no longer required reservation. This bill recognises the goal of the National Parks and Wildlife Service to achieve an overall public good outcome where park revocation is necessary. Where appropriate, the loss of land will be offset by adding new land to the reserve system. A total of 214 hectares of land has been offered in compensation. Much of this land has high conservation and cultural heritage value. I commend the bill to the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Melanie Gibbons):** The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

**Motion agreed to.**

### Third Reading

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Heritage, and Assistant Minister for Planning) (20:28):** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

### WATER NSW AMENDMENT (STAFF TRANSFERS) BILL 2016

#### Second Reading

**Ms TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (20:29):** On behalf of Mr Anthony Roberts: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Water NSW Amendment (Staff Transfers) Bill 2016 was introduced in the other place on 4 May 2016 and is in the same form. The second reading speech appears in the *Hansard* for that day. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (20:30):** I should say from the outset that members of the Opposition oppose sections of the Water NSW Amendment (Staff Transfers) Bill 2016 for reasons that I will outline, but we do not plan to divide on it—I do not know whether other members hope to do so—unless we are tempted into it by the member for Drummoyne. It is possible; I am not sure. For those who are working hard and perhaps wanting to hit the road, we do not propose to divide on the bill. As the Minister said in the other place:

This bill provides a mechanism to allow staff to move from a government department to Water NSW without loss of entitlements and sets up Government to focus on planning, policy and regulation.

In many respects, this brief, innocuous-sounding piece of legislation is in fact limited to the transfer of entitlements and leave provisions. However, buried within the intent of the bill is, I believe, a poison pill that will result in the redundancies of many Water NSW employees or Department of Primary Industries—Water division employees. There simply has not been enough information provided by the Government to take what I and the Opposition regard as this extraordinary step. The legislation has been introduced initially in the Legislative Council. During that debate many issues were raised about the intention of the legislation, which effectively revolves around the central issue of redundancies in regional parts of New South Wales.

**Ms Katrina Hodgkinson:** No. That is wrong.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** It is interesting that you say that because the Minister would not give that assurance in the other place. I think perhaps we will wait for your contribution.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** Order! The member for Kogarah will direct his remarks through the Chair.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** If indeed we are wrong, that will be an interesting benchmark by which we can judge whether there are any redundancies from the Department of Primary Industries—Water division. All of a sudden we are being told something in the lower House that was not revealed during discussions in the other place. That would be an interesting addition and addendum to this piece of legislation. We are concerned about the bill for a number of reasons. The first reason revolves around a lack of information relating to the report that was presumably done by the Department of Primary Industries and particularly the loss of positions in regional areas. There are two big sections in Deniliquin and Goulburn where Department of Primary Industries—Water division employees are located. The proposed legislation will enable those employees to move from that department to the new WaterNSW organisation.

I should say from the get-go that this is presumably an attempt, as the Government has suggested, to streamline and find efficiencies within that department. But the Government also suggested in briefings with members of the Opposition and crossbenches that 60 positions will be lost. So, on the one hand, members are asked to look at a piece of legislation that revolves solely around the issue of efficiencies within those government departments but, on the other hand, we are also being told—not during the debate but certainly in discussions behind the scenes—that 60 positions will be lost. I do not think 60 positions should be lost immediately without considered thought by this Chamber and in the other place because those 60 positions are a significant economic driver in those regional New South Wales communities. We were told during discussions that many of the positions, were they to be lost, would be lost because of duplication of responsibilities.

If duplication of duties is currently taking place in the administration of water in New South Wales, we would like to know where it is taking place. If many people are doing work that can be done by one person, we would like to know where that is happening. Unfortunately, the Opposition has received no information to substantiate that claim. We are told that a report was prepared by the Department of Primary Industries, but the report has not been furnished to the Legislative Council or in this place or during discussions in relation to this legislation. If a significant duplication of duties is taking place in the administration of water in New South Wales and a report has been written to that effect, the Government should give us that report. The Opposition is being asked to accept at face value that these are voluntary redundancies and jobs will not be lost in regional New South Wales. Presumably a wide net will be cast across the Water divisions of the Department of Primary Industries and people across the State will be given an opportunity to take voluntary redundancies. Voluntary redundancies may occur in Parramatta, Deniliquin or Goulburn. The point is that the Government does not know where they will be.

**Ms Katrina Hodgkinson:** Have you read the bill?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** The bill is two pages long, so I managed to get through it. This legislation will enable people to be pushed out of the Department of Primary Industries. The purported reason for that is efficiency, but no information has been given to the Opposition to substantiate that claim. Other parts of the legislation are problematic. Some issues were dealt with by the Minister in his second reading speech, but there is a loss of technical and scientific expertise in the newly created corporation named Water NSW. Last year the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that the positions of five of the top six scientists from the old Catchment Management Authority have been made redundant and there is now a critical lack of senior scientists in who are responsible for the water management of this State.

A reasonable person who is given minimal information about the loss of positions in regional New South Wales and potentially Parramatta, in addition to receiving information that five of the six most senior scientists have been sacked, would ask to see the report that was commissioned by the Department of Primary Industries in order to be informed about what jobs needed to go. I do not know how the Government can substantiate its claim in the absence of a report. On 22 February this year the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported:

Five of the six top scientists in charge of monitoring the health of Sydney's water have had their positions axed as part of state government cuts that experts warn will compromise the safety of drinking water.

The loss of top scientific expertise is part of deep staff cuts of up to 25 per cent in the agency created to ensure the safety of Sydney's water catchment after the city's drinking water crisis in 1998.

It is incumbent on the Government to assuage the concerns of all members voting on this bill that the safety of water is not being compromised by expertise potentially flooding out—excuse the pun—of this important administration. We have not been given that guarantee. We do not know who conducted the report or when it was conducted. We do not know which positions are being duplicated and therefore require efficiency gains. We do not know how far spread the loss of positions will be. The fact is that the Government cannot guarantee that all or

some or most of the positions that will be lost from the Department of Primary Industries will be from regional centres as a result of a suite of voluntary redundancies being offered.

The Government does not know who will take a voluntary redundancy. It might be someone in Parramatta, but it might be someone in Deniliquin or Goulburn and significant expertise in those regional centres will be lost as a result of this enabling legislation. That is why the Opposition made a reasonable attempt at bipartisanship. Ultimately we aim for a discrete level of bipartisanship wherever possible. It was not to reject the legislation, because the Minister for Lands and Water seemed sincere when he presented the legislation in the other place. We simply wanted to test the assumptions that underline this legislation. Rather than outrightly objecting to the legislation, the Opposition asked that it be referred to General Purpose Standing Committee No. 5 for a brief review of the underlying assumptions.

That review could have been undertaken within 48 hours and we could have asked how many positions will be lost and whether those positions will be lost in regional centres. We wanted guarantees from the Government and senior officials that experts were not leaving the organisation. That amendment was defeated in the other place. I often hear from members opposite—perhaps not unreasonably—that the Opposition should not act simply in opposition to legislation that comes before us but should act in order to get to the root and branch of the objectives of the legislation. That is what we were attempting to do in the Legislative Council, and we were cruelly knocked back. It was a sad day for parliamentary democracy. We were cruelly shot down. The Minister in the other place gave commitments that regulators would not be embedded with operators, which was a key concern of the Opposition. The Minister clearly articulated that the regulators for water policy in New South Wales would not be embedded with the operators of these important institutions.

**Mr Mark Coure:** How is Nick Varvaris doing?

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** The member for Oatley will come to order.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** Nick Varvaris is a member of the Liberal Party, so I should be asking the member for Oatley how Nick Varvaris is going. I understand that Nick Varvaris is a keen water drinker, so he is of germane interest to this legislation. The Opposition wanted this legislation referred to General Purpose Standing Committee No. 5 so that we could get to the bottom of some basic questions and assumptions relating to this legislation. Regrettably, that request was rejected by the Government. They could have easily provide answers to some of our questions, particularly relating to regional job guarantees and regulators being embedded with operators. Unfortunately, we were not given that opportunity. We are left with a mechanical bill that will allow the transfer of staff, but there are serious questions that remain on the table. Will regional jobs be lost and will those job losses be concentrated in Deniliquin and Goulburn? We do not have the answers. Therefore, members should oppose this legislation.

**Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Cootamundra) (20:43):** I support the Water NSW Amendment (Staff Transfers) Bill 2016, which states:

The object of this Bill is to amend the Water NSW Act 2014 (the principal Act) to enable employees of the Department of Industry, Skills and Regional Development to be transferred by Ministerial order to WaterNSW (which is a State owned corporation that employs its own staff).

The Sydney Catchment Authority was created following the cryptosporidium outbreak in Sydney in 1998, and sensibly so because we needed an organisation that would look after the hygiene of Sydney's drinking water. We could not risk having a second outbreak of that magnitude. In about 2012 there was an issue with one of the gates at Warragamba Dam, which highlighted the lack of dam management skills in the Sydney Catchment Authority. State Water had excellent dam management, as it was full of engineers. The Sydney Catchment Authority was created to focus on hygiene and the safe drinking water of New South Wales. There was very strong expertise with respect to health in the catchment authority and great engineering expertise when it came to State Water. Why not marry the two? Indeed, we did, so that we could have the very best of technical and hygiene experts in the same organisation. Thus, in 2014 Water NSW was born. I was very pleased to be the Minister who introduced that Act in Parliament.

The findings of the 2013 independent Bulk Water Delivery Review, carried out by Terry Charlton, informed the decision to form. The recommendation was that the two organisations—the Sydney Catchment Authority and State Water—come together. There was no intention to eliminate jobs; the intention was to have one organisation. I hear interjections from those opposite but they should read the review. Those on the opposite side of the Chamber want to know what the catalyst was. We did the work behind the review and we were very pleased when the Water NSW Act came into being.

The review by Terry Charlton indicated that it would take 18 months, or possibly a little longer, to get to this stage. This piece of legislation, the Water NSW Amendment (Staff Transfers) Bill, is on track in accordance with the recommendations of the Bulk Water Delivery Review time frame. I compliment Minister Niall Blair on



his continuation of this very important piece of Coalition policy. Likewise, he has followed through with other policies, such as the release of the commercial fishers policy today. I was very pleased to work on that policy for four years. The Minister deserves to feel a great sense of achievement. I feel very proud of the contribution that I made towards that and many other policies along the way. It is a great outcome.

As I said, in 2014, the New South Wales Government created the new Water NSW Act, which consolidated the Sydney Catchment Authority with the Water Corporation to create a centre of excellence for bulk water management and associated catchment protection within New South Wales. It merged two equals into a modern and responsive service provider for the New South Wales bulk water sector, thereby ensuring that we met legislated requirements to provide clean and safe drinking water and that there were no changes to the objectives of water and catchment quality and related public health and safety outcomes.

By uniting water quality, dam management, flood mitigation and catchment management skills and expertise, ensures the highest quality and most efficient service to customers across New South Wales. As I said, it was created to leverage the combined strength of these two organisations to deliver improved service delivery and better outcomes for customers. The bill provides certainty for staff who are transferred to from the Department of Industry, Skills and Regional Development. Existing superannuation and leave entitlements will be preserved for staff to make sure they are not disadvantaged by a change in employer. Continuity of service will also be provided to staff.

The bill maintains the continuity of services essential for water management in New South Wales. It also ensures that there is no need for re-recruitment of staff, which would be disruptive and inefficient. The amendments will benefit those staff who transfer to by providing them with certainty and maintenance of their current benefits. The bill also puts in place transitional provisions allowing existing licence applications and compliance notices to be transferred to where the related function is to be transferred. This will facilitate the transfer of functions to ensure that there is no duplication between the government and.

Staff members need to know that their entitlements will be protected through this change, and this bill does exactly that. There are potentially up to 247 staff that may be transferred between the department and over the next year. The majority of staff to be transferred are based in the Sydney metropolitan area. These staff need to know that their entitlements are protected and that we have an efficient mechanism to facilitate these moves. This mechanism alleviates the need for wholesale redundancies and re-recruitment of staff. It means that any redundancies will be focused solely on efficiency gains and, most importantly, will be voluntary.

**Dr Hugh McDermott:** How many regional jobs?

**Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON:** I ask the member why he would deny people a voluntary redundancy if they wanted it? They may want to do something different with their lives.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans)** Order! The member for Prospect will not debate the issue. The member for Cootamundra has the call.

**Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON:** Voluntary redundancy is a very sensible option for many people, depending on their circumstances. The Government will not deny them that opportunity. These are not forced or compulsory redundancies; they are voluntary redundancies. That is very sensible. If people wish to move on and do something different with their lives they can take voluntary redundancy. Through various stages of my life I have known people who have taken redundancies, and they have been happy to do so. I repeat that these are not forced redundancies; they are voluntary redundancies and will depend on who wants to take them.

The effective and efficient management of water in New South Wales affects us all. The Government is committed to reforming the management of water to make sure that we achieve the best possible outcome for the people of New South Wales, whether they are in the regions or in metropolitan areas, in relation to dam safety and water quality. will achieve that. It is a terrific, relatively new organisation that is working its hardest to make sure that we have the very best water quality and water safety compared with anywhere in the world. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (20:51):** On behalf of Mr Anthony Roberts, in reply: I thank all members who contributed to the debate. I thank the member for Kogarah, the member for Cootamundra and the member for Mulgoa. In relation to issues raised by the member for Kogarah, I indicate that the Government has given this transformation project the consideration it needs in order to ensure functions are transferred to achieve greater efficiencies and reduce duplication.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans)** Order! The member for Prospect will come to order.

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI:** This investigation was undertaken to inform these important discussions. It is not for those opposite to cherry-pick information for the purpose of fuelling their scare campaign. As to the issue

raised by the member for Kogarah about referring the bill to a standing committee, the bill is the result of a number of reviews over the past decade, including the Schott Commission of Audit and the Bulk Water Review, which have recommended that roles and responsibilities of water agencies should be reconsidered and realigned.

The Government has carefully considered this reform to ensure that the most appropriate mechanism is used to transfer staff to preserve their entitlements and give them certainty. This bill is about ensuring that government has expertise where it is needed. It will ensure that we have clarity of roles and responsibilities. The Department of Primary Industries will focus on providing the strategic direction for water management in New South Wales, including water planning and policy, representing New South Wales interests at the national level and overseeing government-funded water infrastructure.

The department will retain the scientific expertise it needs to ensure that New South Wales continues to lead water management, including strategic modelling and analysis to inform policy as well as to coordinate responses to blue-green algae outbreaks. Both the Government and remain fully committed to maintaining world's best standards for drinking water catchments. Water quality protection will remain as one of the core business objectives of.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans)** Order! I call the member for Rockdale to order for the third time. I direct the member for Rockdale to remove himself from the Chamber for a period of 10 minutes.

*[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Rockdale left the Chamber at 20:53.]*

That will help to facilitate effective water management in New South Wales. The bill will facilitate the delivery of outcomes for customers right across the State and avoid an onerous process of recruitment of staff that are transferring to Water NSW. The Government is committed to reform water management in New South Wales to ensure it is both more effective and more efficient. It is a priority of the Government that staff who are transferred as part of this reform have certainty, including the transfer of their existing entitlements and conditions. I commend the bill to the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

**Motion agreed to.**

### **Third Reading**

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (20:56):** On behalf of Mr Anthony Roberts: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

### *Budget Estimates*

### **BUDGET ESTIMATES 2015-16**

**Debate resumed from 22 March 2016.**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (20:55):** For several reasons I am delighted to speak in debate on the 2015-16 budget. When we first came to government in 2011, we inherited forecast deficits totalling \$4.4 billion. I am pleased to state that this Government has turned around Labor's budgetary position completely. After four years of hard work, the budget is firmly back in the black. That is the motto of the member for Drummoyne: Back in black. In the 2015-16 financial year, and in each year of the forward estimates, the Government is forecasting surpluses. In the experience of the member for Wyong it is unheard of for a government to deliver budget surpluses and a strong fiscal position so that it can deliver for communities across New South Wales the infrastructure that for years people cried out for under Labor. In 2015-16, we are forecasting an underlying surplus of \$713 million, increasing every year to reach \$895 million in 2018-19. I know the member for Cessnock would have read the forward estimates; in fact, he has the budget papers in his hands.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** I call the member for Oatley to order for the first time.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** When our reforms to transport assets are included, the 2015-16 budget surplus is \$2.5 billion. That means the Government is investing in record infrastructure on a scale that has not been seen in New South Wales for many decades—certainly not for the 16 years of Labor government. Every election commitment this Government made is being met. This Government says what it will do and then delivers it.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** What about transparency? How is that commitment going?

**Mr MATT KEAN:** That concept is foreign to Labor members, but that is what the Government is committed to. When we came to government, expenses growth averaged 6.4 per cent while revenue growth was

5.2 per cent. Again, this Government has turned that around. Today average expenses growth is in line with revenue growth across the forward estimates. The State is living within its means. The story just gets better. This Government has brought debt under control whereas Labor members think that the way to solve debt is by borrowing more.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** I call the member for Oatley to order for the second time.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** Public sector net debt was forecast to be \$62.4 billion by March 2014-15. That would have put the State's triple-A credit rating at risk. We did not let that happen. Today, this debt figure in 2014-15 is estimated to be \$38.2 billion, or \$24 billion less than forecast under Labor. It is all good news from this Government. I am delighted to speak about this good news. I commend this take-note motion to the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** The question is that the House takes note of the budget estimates and related papers.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Private Members' Statements*

**TRIBUTE TO KATHY MARVELL, OAM**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (20:39):** Today I inform the House of the death of Kathy Marvell, OAM, a dear friend and community servant. Kathy first started volunteering during the 1960s when working at the Concord Repatriation Hospital as an admissions officer. During her time at Concord she noticed a group of very sick veterans coming in regularly but not seeming to get any better. After investigating, she found that these patients were undergoing kidney dialysis on large non-portable machines, which was very time consuming for them and their families and most uncomfortable. Kathy started to sit with those patients on a regular basis during their dialysis treatment, talking, reading and just being someone they could talk to. The families of those veterans would call Kathy and thank her for spending time with their loved ones.

Other hospitals started to hear about the great impact that Kathy was making with the patients and their families, so she and representatives from these other hospitals formed the Renal Association of New South Wales. The Renal Association's mission is to support patients with all forms of renal failure and their families, friends and carers. Anyone undergoing dialysis at that time had no choice but to undergo treatment in hospital, which made it very hard for them and their families to enjoy the simplest of life's pleasures, especially family holidays. The association asked Kathy and her husband, Ken, to find them a suitable property on the Central Coast where the patients and their families could holiday and take along with them their dialysis machines. The house in Beachcomber Avenue, Toukley, still operates today as a retreat for renal patients and their families.

When Kathy finally retired to the Central Coast over 20 or more years ago she found she had more time to volunteer and was involved with a number of community groups in the Wyong area. Some of the groups included Legacy, Toastmasters, Toukley Torchbearers, and the fundraising arm of Legacy. Kathy was also the welfare officer for the Toukley sub-branch and became a celebrant, officiating only at funerals—and most of those were veterans. The Toukley Torchbearers was formed in 1986 and raised more than \$1 million for veterans and their families. Kathy organised the annual Harry Moore Charity Golf Day and was the matriarch and master of ceremonies at the Gathering of the Clans Festival, which this year will celebrate its twentieth year. Unfortunately, Kathy will not be there to celebrate.

Each fortnight, when she was able, Kathy visited war veterans and widows who were in the Wyong Hospital to make sure they had everything they needed. Kathy and her late husband, Ken, formed the Happiness Club to help veterans and widows stay connected by taking them on picnics for morning tea and then on to a local club for lunch. Kathy cooked all the morning teas and Ken drove the bus. Kathy received many accolades over the years, including an Order of Australia Medal in 1997 and an Australia Day Medal all for her great work as a volunteer. Kathy loved volunteering and helping those in the local community who needed assistance. It kept her busy and gave her the opportunity to make a difference to people of all ages and backgrounds. Rest in peace, Kathy Marvell, a wonderful member of our community, who will not be forgotten.

**LAURIETON ROTARY CLUB FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY**

**Ms LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie—Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education) (21:02):** I stand in the House this evening as a very proud Rotarian of nine years. I am pleased to inform the House that my local club, the Rotary club of Laurieton, recently celebrated its fiftieth anniversary, which is a commendable milestone for any organisation. The club held its first meeting on 5 March 1966 at the Laurieton Hotel but these days we meet at the Laurieton United Services Club. The Rotary Club has had a rich and valuable history during the past half century, with hundreds of members serving the Camden Haven community under the guidance of 47 presidents, three of whom served for two terms:

Wayne Poll, Ian Jackson and Doug Walters. President Graham Hare leads the club this year, which currently has 25 active members.

Almost half of those members have been awarded a Paul Harris Fellow by Rotary International. I am proud to be one of those recipients and will always treasure this acknowledgement of my contribution to such a wonderful organisation. During the past 50 years the Rotary Club of Laurieton has achieved an enormous amount for the benefit of our local community as well as making significant contributions to support international projects. End Polio Now is just one example of what Rotarians across the world can achieve when they work together, united in their goal and resolute in achieving it.

Polio cases have been reduced by 99.9 per cent across the world thanks to Rotarians and partner organisations, with 2.5 billion children vaccinated against polio in 22 countries. As Rotarians we have also raised money and donated to assist people overseas affected by natural disasters; supported the Rotary Oceania Medical Aid for Children, which provides medical treatment for children from developing countries; as well as sending volunteers to work on the Interplast program, repairing bodies and rebuilding lives in the Asia-Pacific region. The real strength and dedication of the members of the Rotary Club of Laurieton over the past 50 years is reflected in its support for communities in the Camden Haven. The activities have been varied and clearly demonstrate a willingness to assist the community broadly, whether it is hosting a Christmas dinner for seniors and people with a disability in 1967, donating a surf rescue boat to the Camden Haven Surf Life Saving Club in 1975, or in 1986 overseeing the construction of the \$400,000 Kew Tourist Information Centre, one of the biggest projects undertaken by a Rotary club outside of Sydney.

Rotary's "Service Above Self" motto continued in recent decades by raising money to build the indoor stadium at Camden Haven High School in 1993-94 and in 2005 the club was heavily involved in the Towers of Strength project constructing lifeguard towers at beaches in the Camden Haven and Port Macquarie to support the vital work of our surf lifesaving volunteers. I learnt very quickly that Rotary members do not rest on their laurels. They are always on the lookout for ways in which they can help others, and in 2012 our club supported the Laurieton Men's Shed with a donation of \$10,000 so it too could support others in the community. In 2013, the Rotary Club of Laurieton, in partnership with the New South Wales Government, the Camden Haven Chamber of Commerce and the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council, built public amenities at Bruce Porter Reserve at Laurieton. This is a popular open space for locals beside the beautiful Camden River that is utilised by anglers, walkers and cyclists and once a month accommodates thousands of locals and visitors who come to enjoy the markets.

Whether you drive or walk around the Camden Haven, you will not have to go too far before you see a plaque, a sign or a dedication with the words "Thanks to the work of the Rotary Club of Laurieton". I have been a member of Rotary since June 2007. Whilst my attendance has dwindled in recent years due to parliamentary commitments, I look forward immensely to club meetings and events to catch up with fellow Rotarians and friends, and I enjoy the opportunity to support other clubs in the district. I can assure the House that Rotary's mission statement to "provide service to others, promote integrity, and advance world understanding, goodwill, and peace through our fellowship of business, professional, and community leaders" is alive and well in the Camden Haven. Congratulations once again to the Rotary Club of Laurieton on 50 fabulous years of community service. I have no doubt that the club will continue to serve the community for another 50 years.

#### **CRONULLA WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Heritage, and Assistant Minister for Planning) (21:07):** Yesterday I joined the Minister for Lands and Water, the Hon. Niall Blair, to announce an innovative renewable energy trial at the Cronulla Wastewater Treatment Plant. From January this year, Sydney Water has been investigating the use of liquid food waste to generate biogas, consisting mostly of methane and carbon dioxide, which can then be converted into electricity. The plant has already been using a cogeneration system, which enables anaerobic digester gas, a wastewater treatment by-product, to be used to produce electricity for the plant. In this way, the plant minimises the amount of electricity it needs to purchase from the grid.

In order to generate more biogas, the trial will use the existing cogeneration facility to produce electricity from liquid food waste like pulped fruit, vegetable waste, and some beverage waste, which will be collected from local businesses. The process of breaking down two or more organic wastes by anaerobic microorganisms in order to harvest methane is known as co-digestion. The reaction leaves residual solids, which can be composted and used as a natural fertiliser. Used in this way, food waste solids that have already been anaerobically digested give off less volatile organic compounds, and that means less pollution in the air.

With the trial underway, Cronulla Wastewater Treatment Plant is processing approximately 60,000 litres of liquid food waste per day and is producing enough renewable energy to supply about 60 per cent of its own

energy needs. Not only does this process enable the plant to increase renewable energy generation, it is also an effective way of managing organic municipal waste that would otherwise be sent to landfill. It is important that we look at ways of diverting organic waste from landfill, which presents issues in relation to space, superfluous greenhouse gas emissions and possible groundwater contamination. To facilitate the storage and conversion of organic waste as part of the co-digestion trial, an additional storage tank, dosing unit and pipes have been constructed at the site.

This trial is set to run for three years and will help Sydney Water to build knowledge and experience before co-digestion technology and processes are extended to other wastewater treatment plants. Indeed, the benefits of co-digestion of food wastes at wastewater treatment plants are being recognised worldwide. There is enormous potential to make significant sustainability improvements with waste-to-energy programs and technologies, as well as considerable economic benefits. At the end of the day, we want to ensure we are getting the best outcomes for customers, for the community, and for the environment.

The New South Wales Government has already delivered a \$46 million odour control and reliability project at the Cronulla Wastewater Treatment Plant. This included the installation of new covers over the primary sedimentation tanks of the plant and construction of four new biotrickling filters. The upgrade greatly reduces odours—99 per cent are now captured within the plant site. On a slightly different note, the plant also plays a very important educational role in the community, operating tours for students to understand different treatment processes and waste management strategies. This includes a new program for stage 5 Geography, Issues in Australian environments, where students will tour the plant to learn about the urban water cycle; and general excursions for stage 6 Geography, Biology, and Senior Science, which focus on separation processes and public health and environmental issues. I commend Sydney Water on its trial, and look forward to seeing effective cogeneration systems making use of food waste at other wastewater treatment plants.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMALGAMATIONS

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (21:10):** During my first year as a member of Parliament I have come to understand and deepen my appreciation of the critical role of local councils and what they mean to people. Most members of Parliament will tell you that apart from complaints about social housing, which unfortunately are a dominant part of an electorate like mine, many issues raised are essentially about local councils. Why is that the case? It is because these issues affect people's daily lives—their backyards, fences, roads, parks and footpaths—and can mean the knock of developers on their front doors. People care deeply about these issues, the organisations that respond to them and the people who keep those organisations honest, the democratically elected councillors.

Today I will talk about forced council amalgamations, a process characterised by a complete lack of transparency and inconsistency culminating in an arrogant act, the sacking of an entire level of government by another level of government. Of course, a handful of councils have been spared. It is hard to believe that pressure from Federal Coalition colleagues has not played a role in that appeasement. Is it any wonder that across this State people are angry? They are simultaneously amazed and appalled by the way in which this Government has driven this process purely for its own gain. Is it any wonder, at this time of incredible change across Sydney and regional areas, that people are concerned that there may be a broader and more sinister plan at work here?

Today I will talk about how this has impacted my local electorate and to relay the very real concerns we have as a community, a community that is simultaneously dealing with WestConnex on its doorstep, a proposal to massively increase its population and a half-baked plan to completely change the rail line at massive expense. These issues are on top of the usual issues we contend with as one of the most disadvantaged electorates in this State. What we have witnessed so far has been appalling: a failure to truly build the case for change, the lack of transparency, inconsistencies and sham consultations. I, together with other members of Parliament, attended the public consultation held at Bankstown Sports Club where very few, if any, people supported the amalgamation. Indeed, Bankstown had been identified as being fit for the future early in the process.

The Liberal-Nationals Government has consistently failed to provide any detailed information justifying its key assumption that "bigger is better". This includes the flawed KPMG report that demonstrates that cost savings are based on false assumptions and incorrect data. The Minister for Local Government, Paul Toole, and Premier Mike Baird have spoken at length about mergers as only "one part of a package of local government reforms". If this process were truly about reform of local councils, why would the Government not accept the sensible ideas of the Leader of the Opposition, Luke Foley?

The first sensible idea is that developers and real estate agents be banned from being local councillors. The second sensible idea is that political donations and spending be capped in council elections. What does the Government have to lose by refusing to accept these reasonable proposals? We have seen politically motivated boundary drawing and sham consultation. Across the State we have seen many examples of logic and good sense

being rejected. This is obvious when we look at the proposed amalgamation of Hurstville and Kogarah councils, which combined do not have the same population as Canterbury has.

We cannot trust the process that got us here and must ask what has been compromised and what will the cost be in terms of democratic representation, good governance and community building in the coming years? Canterbury Bankstown itself is bigger than Tasmania in terms of its population, yet it will have only 15 representatives. In my electorate two councils, Canterbury and Bankstown, are merging into one, which will be headed by an administrator and two former general managers. Democracy has been suspended for the next 16 months. During that time the Sydney Metro will conduct the environmental impact statement for the Sydney to Bankstown metro upgrade. Ordinarily local councils would be active in the community during the consultation processes. They would present diverse and, for the Government, inconvenient views. Who will rally the community now? Who will represent the diversity of opinion at the heart of local democracy?

In that same period the Sydenham to Bankstown urban renewal corridor will be in full swing. The Department of Planning and Environment says, "We are working closely with the city of Bankstown and Canterbury, the Inner West Council and the local community to look at opportunities for more homes and jobs". Who will the department work with? I have always respected the hardworking employees of both councils. I imagine most are now in fear of losing their jobs. Mr Baird, New South Wales is not a company nor a corporation. You are not the chief executive officer or chairman of a board. The people of this State have the right of representation on their councils by democratically elected people. Justice delayed is justice denied. There was no requirement that local councils be sacked immediately as part of the amalgamation process. Do the right thing. Move council elections forward to 2016 so that people can be assured that somebody that does not answer to the Government is putting their interests first.

### SHORT-TERM ACCOMMODATION LETTING

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (21:15):** Governments cannot ignore the shared economy and have a responsibility to introduce appropriate controls that enable it to grow without impacting on others. Airbnb began in 2008 as a way for people to open a spare room to visitors. Occupants of the home could make a few spare dollars, while visitors could find an affordable accommodation option. Some people use it to let their homes for a short period while on holiday. This is what the sharing economy is about and I do not oppose it. However, the business model is being hijacked by some to make massive profits at the expense of neighbours, community and, in the case of apartments, other owners. Stayz is also a popular holiday letting site used by owners.

In the inner city, short-term accommodation is changing the landscape of neighbourhoods, especially in larger apartment buildings. Some buildings have turned into quasi hotels with permanent residents the minority. People do not buy or let a home to live in a holiday facility. Short-term letting has a number of impacts on other residents and owners. Visitors in holiday mode can create noise and overrun facilities like pools and gyms, the constant movement of luggage on wheels and service trolleys can cause greater wear and tear of common property, and the transience of visitors reduces the sense of security and community. Commercial listings on Airbnb are growing, with many hosts letting more than one property. A new industry is evolving to serve these owners by providing locations to pick up keys, and cleaning and maintenance services. Landlords make more profit than if they let homes to long-term tenants.

Allowing free-for-all conversion of residential homes to visitor accommodation reduces the supply of available homes, contributing to Sydney's housing affordability crisis. It also prevents strategic land use planning. This does not guarantee the best outcome for our city. Cities around the world have tried to grapple with the growth in short-term letting. Some have imposed time limits on how long a property in a residential zone can be used on a short-term basis, while ensuring the property remains residential for the majority of the year. I support this approach. However, its success has been limited in many cities by lenient provisions and a lack of enforcement. New South Wales must learn from other experiences and listen to the community to find the right balance.

Finding the right level of restriction will be vital. London and San Francisco use 90 days, and Paris uses 120 days. I share my constituents' view that these numbers are too high and go well beyond the normal period of a holiday and what could be justified as the sharing economy. A shorter period should be used, with different limits applying to letting a spare room than an entire home, provided there are protections against overcrowding. Owners corporations should be able to take a bond from owners or occupants letting out their properties on a short-term basis in case of by-law breaches such as noise or damage to common property and action should be available in the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. The Victorian Government will allow neighbours and owners corporations to take a landlord to the tribunal for impacts such as property damage and noise, with the potential to lose the right to host holiday rentals on a "three strikes" basis.

The laws should include a mechanism to stop clustering of short-term rentals in apartment buildings to prevent homes suffering cumulative impacts from multiple adjacent lots. Owners corporations must be able to ban any form of short-term letting in a building or put limits above those that State laws impose. Approval for short-term letting should be required by the owners corporation either by special or unanimous resolution, with approval not to be based on proxies. Importantly, there must be a robust enforcement regime so that properties not complying with restrictions are stopped. It is now unlawful to operate short-term letting in residential zones, but councils struggle to prevent the practice.

Councils cannot use circumstantial evidence such as evidence of persons entering and leaving a premise or depositing luggage, or advertisements of room layout. Instead officers must witness the practice firsthand, which is difficult because they need an owner's or occupant's permission to inspect. Councils must also determine the type of unauthorised use of a premise such as identifying whether it is being used as a boarding house or a backpackers hostel, which increases the level of evidence needed. These challenges must be fixed before any new regime is introduced. Introducing an obligation on host sites such as Airbnb to provide data for enforcement to councils is essential so that action can be taken against hosts who breach the laws. The sharing economy is creating challenges, but governments have the tools to respond in a way that can encourage innovation while protecting the community. I look forward to the outcomes of the current inquiry.

*Bills*

**EMERGENCY SERVICES LEVY INSURANCE MONITOR BILL 2016**

**Returned**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** I report a message from the Legislative Council returning the abovementioned bill without amendment.

In accordance with standing and sessional orders the House will now stand adjourned until Wednesday 1 June 2016 at 10.00 am.

**The House adjourned at 21:21.**