



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Sixth Parliament
First Session**

Tuesday, 9 August 2016

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 9 August 2016

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

The SPEAKER read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

[Notices of motions given.]

Private Members' Statements

SCHOOL SHADES

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (12:12): I speak today of an often forgotten and overlooked epidemic that plagues people throughout Australia. Australian residents have the highest rates of skin cancer in the world, with roughly two out of three Australians being diagnosed with some form of skin cancer at some time in their lives. The Australian and New South Wales governments have led many successful campaigns in fighting this disease and promoting awareness of important preventative measures to combat the inception of cancer for all residents. These range from the widely adopted "no hat no play" rule in our primary and secondary schools to the Slip! Slop! Slap! campaign to promote the use of sunscreen for anyone regularly exposed to sunlight. I also take this opportunity to acknowledge the Cancer Council for all the wonderful work it does.

I commend former local schoolteacher David Whetton for spearheading a new campaign to promote sun safety in our primary schools. Having spent 10 years as a primary school teacher, David started a company named School Shades, which offers schools and parents sunglasses with the highest level of ultraviolet [UV] protection. School Shades notes that its target audience, namely primary school age children, are the most at risk of eye cancer and macular degeneration. Children aged between five and 12 years have extremely translucent eyes, allowing the eye to absorb a large spectrum of UV light. I am pleased that during my tenure as Assistant Minister for Health and Minister for Mental Health I was able to form a close working friendship with Mr Whetton and assisted him with discussions with the Department of Education's Work Health and Safety office. Since then, Mr Whetton has resoundingly increased the scope of the program and devoted himself to preventing the genesis of eye diseases in young Australians.

Schools across New South Wales have adopted the program to ensure that kids wear the sunglasses. Yesterday I received a message from Mr Whetton indicating that Bargo Public School in my electorate is the first school in Wollondilly to adopt the program. I thank principal Mrs Anne Bunga for her vision in embracing this program. Eyelid cancers make up 5 per cent to 10 per cent of skin cancers that plague two out of every three Australians. They come in two afflictions known as the basal cell carcinoma and the squamous cell carcinoma, which is commonly referred to as melanoma. All Australians are at risk of experiencing macular degeneration if adequate eye protection is not undertaken from a young age.

Macular degeneration typically occurs at an older age but arises due to wear and tear of the retina through exposure to light. Continued exposure to ultraviolet lighting can impair the membrane and thus irreversibly damage vision. Moreover, exposure can cause tissue growth surrounding the conjunctiva, which requires surgical removal later in life. Australians are also exposed to corneal sunburn. This is extremely common in people who have elongated exposure to sun beds and sunlight. The cornea regulates light and images to the retina and is burned as a result of corneal sunburn.

The final health issue is the forms of cancer that grow in the eye, one of which is the intraocular melanoma. This melanoma is the most frequent form of cancer that develops in the eye and occurs as a result of damage to the uveal tract. Conjunctival cancers have been growing rapidly in prominence. Research undertaken in the United States has shown that over a 27-year period, occurrences of this cancer have increased by 295 per cent. Knowing the far-reaching health impacts that UV light has on the eyes, we must unite to ensure that we protect our children's vision and not burden them in years to come with disability or cancer.

The World Health Organization has already taken pioneering steps to ensure adequate use of sunglasses by our children. The World Health Organization suggests that the genesis of approximately 20 per cent of the 12 to 15 million people blinded by cataracts worldwide is extended exposure to UV rays. This is a considerably important step to also ensure the health and wellbeing of the First Australians. In 2006 the Statewide Ophthalmology Service illustrated that the First Australians had higher rates of overgrowth in the conjunctiva due to sun exposure. Data from 2002, which is the most up-to-date data on record for this particular condition, illustrates that New South Wales taxpayers spend up to \$350 million a year in direct and indirect costs associated

with ocular diseases and the prevention of UV absorption. David Whetton has invested considerable time and effort into making School Shades a success. In excess of 100 schools now participate in the program. I urge all members to take part in this amazing initiative and I commend Mr Whetton for his endeavours in promoting sun safety.

TRIBUTE TO FATHER PATRICK MACAULIFFE

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (12:17): I pay tribute to a great man in recognition of his tremendous contributions and services to our community. Father Patrick MacAuliffe—better known as Father Mac—has served the local community for more than 42 years and recently celebrated his sixtieth year in the priesthood. To mark this occasion a special celebration was held at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in Cabramatta, and the entire parish and members of the local community came together to celebrate and honour Father Mac. Father Mac is well known in the local area as the parish priest, and for 40-plus years has dedicated his services to the Fairfield-Cabramatta Police Citizens Youth Club [PCYC]—20 years of which were spent as club president. In honour of Father Mac's service to the PCYC and, in particular, his passion for basketball, on 29 June 2016 the member for Cabramatta, Nick Lalich, and I had the great pleasure of joining members of the community at the PCYC to name the basketball hall after Father Mac.

An honorary plaque paying tribute to Father Mac's contributions was unveiled. For many years he was a coach and trainer at the PCYC. He is an all-round top bloke, who has helped guide local youth in the right direction. The many years he has spent nurturing our community is why he has earned such a reputation and is adored by all. Father Mac is a humble man, who does not like attention being called to him. So it was hard to put him through all the ceremonies and celebrations that took place to honour and thank him for his service to our community. However, great men like Father Mac do not come along every day. By highlighting his deeds and dedication to the community, the church, and his fellow men and women we will hopefully inspire a new generation and affirm the values for which he stands.

I have personally had the opportunity to work with Father Mac over the years—more closely when I was teaching at Patrician Brothers College, Fairfield. Father Mac would always make himself available to us, even more so to students in need. Father Mac's kindness, empathy and care for all truly are beyond measure. I remember the many camps that Father Mac attended with us at Wisemans Ferry to support the year 7 boys and to lend an ear when it was needed. For anyone who truly knows Father Mac, there is a distinguishing fact about him that I believe should be noted in this House today. Father Mac is a mad, mad, mad South Sydney Rabbitohs supporter. Father Mac lived, breathed and dedicated his life to the church, his country, the community and of course the mighty Rabbitohs. As a passionate West Tigers supporter, I understand his passion and commitment to the church, our country, our community and of course his beloved Rabbitohs. I wholeheartedly agree with most of the choices he has made—most of them.

Father Mac is an absolutely brilliant individual whose passion for helping others knows no bounds. He is a hard worker who prefers to work in the background—a coy attempt to avoid the spotlight. However, his contributions have not gone unnoticed. He played an integral role during the waves of migration to Cabramatta in the 1970s and 1980s—welcoming and ministering to the new Australians. Father Mac has always been about welcoming people and rendering assistance in any way possible. The assistance he provided to the Vietnamese and Taiwanese communities during their settlement in the Fairfield region was truly instrumental in their successful settlement process.

Over his many years of community service, Father Patrick MacAuliffe has earned the respect and admiration of everyone in the community. His promotion of interfaith dialogue and his works with people from all walks of life has earned him a special place in everyone's heart. Father Mac is now in retirement and is a resident of the Rosary Village in Yennora in the Fairfield electorate. However, in retirement he has not slowed down one bit. I firmly believe there is nothing that anyone can do to stop this truly amazing man. The man who finds the light and uses humour in every situation has brought countless joy to everyone around him. On behalf of the Fairfield community—thank you, Father Mac, for your time, dedication and immense contributions to our community. You are truly a living legend.

REGIONAL TAFE

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (12:22): Because the world has changed dramatically, driven by the rapid adoption of new technology, changing student needs, new skills needed by employers and tough competition from other providers, we need to continue to invest in TAFE and support those campuses in regional New South Wales. That is why this Friday I am hosting a Gunnedah TAFE strategy meeting titled "Gunnedah: Let's Keep Working" that will bring together industries from across the Gunnedah basin, such as Browns Tyre Service, Namoi Valley Brickworks, Gunnedah Toyota, St Mary's Gunnedah, Shenhua Watermark, the Gunnedah Chamber of Commerce, Whitehaven and other industries across the board, including those involved in education.

The meeting will consider how to address the school attrition rates from year 10 to year 12, training data in industry areas, apprenticeships, traineeships, school-based apprentices and traineeships over the past five years, part-qualification and pre-vocational take-up in Gunnedah, presented by our regional manager, Greg Poetschka, and TAFE enrolment data. The meeting will also consider how to better connect with industry to take advantage of what TAFE has to offer. Discussion points for examination include why year 10 students are not progressing to year 12 and where they go; trends and industry questions around apprenticeships, traineeships and school-based apprentices and traineeships; and an explanation as to why people have taken up part-qualifications and pre-vocational programs. The group will talk to industry stakeholders and the meeting will be opened up for general comments.

We will discuss what we are going to do about training. We will engage the Gunnedah shire to take up training locally. Some of the others that will be involved include large employers of young people—for example, participants in the fast food industry such as McDonald's and KFC, but hopefully Harvey Norman, the Telstra Shop and Peel Valley Machinery will also be there. In addition, we will be talking to community colleges and others that operate in that sphere. Gunnedah TAFE was recently the recipient of a \$700,000 investment from the Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business, John Barilaro. This is stage one of making sure that our regional campuses play a significant role in looking after, training and providing opportunities for young people in regional New South Wales.

We want to make sure that we can address what happens in years 9, 10, 11 and 12. Not everybody wants to go to university. So, first and foremost, we need to look at what training they want, when they need it and how they want to receive it. We want to see what training is on the list of what they would like to receive. We need to match that list with the needs of industries. We need to ask industries what they require, how they want their training delivered and what sort of people they are looking for. We need to ask whether the training is flexible and whether it is online. We need to discover whether the training can be delivered in the workplace of the employer rather than have the student disappearing for quite some time to go on block release.

It is an expensive business for an industry to engage an apprentice or a trainee. Quite often the first, second and third year is about investing in the apprentice or trainee—whether the students be mature age, teenage or school leavers—because the employer has to get the students involved in the business. The return on that investment is minimal. Often, it is not until the fourth year that the employer will see a return on the investment. We need to look at how we keep young people engaged in regional towns. Gunnedah is a thriving regional town. It has a growing population. It has a thriving industrial area. The heart of the main street is beating quicker than it has for some time. There is confidence and there is a great deal of optimism in and around Gunnedah. The way we build on that confidence and optimism will be to provide opportunities for young people.

I am very excited about the Gunnedah TAFE strategy. I am looking forward to meeting with industry. I am looking forward to engaging with the education component of TAFE to make sure that we meet the needs of regional New South Wales and young people as well as mature-age students who are looking to upskill or start a new career. It is all about making sure that we adapt to a world that is changing dramatically. We want to be at the forefront in meeting the challenges presented by those changes.

SOCIETY 389

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (12:28): Local Macarthur charity Society 389 was formed in 2008 when local businesses and tradesmen in Macarthur decided they wanted to do more for children with disabilities. They met over a bottle of Penfolds Bin 389—hence the name of the charity. Over the past eight years, the charity has made a big difference to children in need and their families. Society 389 aims to raise funds for the purchase of expensive equipment needed for disadvantaged and sick children who would otherwise have no means of purchasing it. The charity assists children to further their development or simply improve the quality of their lives. The club never gives cash, but instead purchases much-needed equipment such as special wheelchairs, computers, motor vehicles and playground equipment. In some cases, airfares and accommodation are provided for families needing to travel interstate for specialist surgery or care.

Organisations that have benefited from the assistance of Society 389 are Mater Dei and Mary Brooksbank School, Campbelltown Hospital and KU Starting Points Macarthur. Applications are made to the club in writing and then submitted for approval. The club also liaises with local organisations such as hospitals and Rotary and Lions clubs. Mater Dei is a wonderful co-educational school for students from kindergarten to year 12 who have been assessed as having mild to moderate cognitive disability as their primary disability. The school is within the Catholic Diocese of Wollongong and comes under the auspices of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan. The sisters have always made sure that each student is offered holistic education in a safe, non-threatening environment.

Mary Brooksbank School offers education programs for students with special needs, from their early years through to the end of school. The students receive an education within a caring and supportive environment.

The school is part of a network of services for children with special needs provided by the south-western Sydney region of the Department of Education. In about 12 months time a new school will open at Narellan, providing education from kindergarten to year 12 for children with special needs. I look forward to the opening of that school, as do many members of my community.

In January last year Society 389 provided Mater Dei Camden with an early intervention playground valued at more than \$15,000. It also provided \$4,000 to enable a year 12 student to travel from Mater Dei to John Therry Catholic High School throughout the year. That program provides an opportunity for Mater Dei students to experience education in a mainstream school. Everyone in the school community gains from the experience. The charity has made a number of other significant donations, including an Invacare tilt and elevate powered wheelchair, valued at more than \$20,000, and a Kia Carnival, valued at \$60,000, to a family from Mary Brooksbank School. The fundraising committee is to be congratulated on its efforts over the past eight years. A great mate of mine, Adrian Sawyer, is the founder and current president. He is assisted by Billy Moore, who does a great job, and a wonderful team in Michael Aldridge, Lauren McInnes, Damien McBride, Colin Rooke and Damien Ward. The Christmas in July event, which I attended, raised more than \$15,000, enabling the purchase of two special wheelchairs.

Society 389 has great sponsors who do everything they can to support it: Combined Real Estate, Camden and Narellan; the Royal Hotel, Camden; Hayters Timber and Paving; Grassmaster Environmental Services; Winwave Roofing; and Avijohn Contracting. These outstanding local businesses help Society 389 to contribute so much, and I know the organisation is very grateful. There are many other local businesses and individuals who contribute where they can: Clean Freak Mobile Detailing; Sharon's Photography; Hillbrick Bicycles; Whooshka Hair, Picton; Steve Wisbey; CPE Tree Services; Picture THAT photo booth hire, Sydney; Early Expressions Childcare; Sarita's, A Collective Emporium; Daniel and Sheena Geale and family; Mac DJ's Entertainment; Merit Planning; Camden Valley Inn; Fitzpatrick Group; Cobbitty Grove Kitchens; MLG Conveyancing; Fi's Country Kitchen; Voila Hair, Beauty and Nails; Ultimate Karting Sydney; and Maximum Skating. They all do a wonderful job for a wonderful organisation, and our community thanks them.

HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION WEEK

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (12:32): I acknowledge the significance of last week. It was Education Week, a time to celebrate public education, and it was Homelessness Prevention Week. I want to reflect on the disturbing numbers of homeless people, including children and youth, in our otherwise very affluent society. I recognise the many organisations that work every day to help the homeless. I continue to call on government departments to work together to put homeless clients at the centre of efforts to help them. Homelessness Prevention Week is an annual event coordinated by Homelessness Australia. It is used to raise awareness of homelessness and related issues and is held in the first week of August.

I understand that many charities traditionally run events in that week, primarily because it is the coldest week of the year and provides the starkest reminder of what it must be like to live and sleep on the streets. The data is sobering, especially for a country as affluent as Australia. Tonight is census night. The census of 2011 told us that there were more than 105,000 homeless people in Australia, including approximately 44,000 children and young people. The rich data for New South Wales shows that 28,190 people were homeless. Of greatest concern to me is the fact that more than 3,500 people under the age of 12 were homeless.

I think about the youngest and the oldest not having a safe place to call home. It does not mean that they live only on the street. We know that being homeless does not mean people end up on the street; it could mean any number of things. People could be sleeping rough in improvised dwellings, tents, or sleeping out—and we know that 77 per cent of homeless people do that. It could also mean that people live in supported accommodation for the homeless or stay temporarily in households, boarding houses, and other severely overcrowded temporary lodgings.

I hope the 2016 census shows that New South Wales is doing better as a State but, sadly, as I walk around the city in the evenings I see that more and more people seem to be sleeping out than previously. Members tell stories of their electorates in this House relating to those who through compounding circumstances have fallen through the cracks. That is reflected in the number of people who are couch surfing. I am sure that I am not alone in dealing in my electorate office with those issues. I am sure that many members deal with similar issues in their electorate offices and would know that homeless people have to rely on the kindness of friends, relatives, or people they have simply come across. All members of this House know that such situations are not sustainable. Far too many of our constituents tell us stories of the great tensions in households as a result of such circumstances.

Madam Speaker, as a former schoolteacher you would know how often schools deal directly with homeless students by providing them with the food, shelter and wherewithal that we trust every child should have. I will refer to a particular constituent of mine, but of course I will not refer to him by name. He is an incredibly

intelligent gentleman, but he is troubled by mental health issues. Despite all the efforts, including those made by my electorate office, Housing NSW, the police, local community groups and churches or mosques and other charities, he still ended up living on the streets of Lakemba and relying on charity.

Ultimately this culminated in him sleeping at the back of a block of units. People brought him food and blankets. They exhibited great charity by giving to him. I often wonder how he fell through the cracks when I know that so many organisations were trying to help him. His is but one story, but every time I had a discussion with him I could not help but notice his obvious intelligence. We have no way of knowing his history, or the knowledge he may have acquired, or what has led him to become homeless; but he would visit my electorate office because he regarded it as a safe space where he could have a cup of coffee or a cup of tea and clean himself up. My electorate office became his safe space. I know many other electorate offices do the very same for others.

This and similar stories serve to remind us that there are so many people who suffer one adverse event in their personal life—such as losing their job, eviction, family breakdown, family violence or mental health issues—that has resulted in their becoming homeless. Sydney, with its very tough rental and housing market, is a difficult place for many who have fallen through the cracks. I know that all members of this House are cognisant of those circumstances. I could talk for ages on this subject but I realise there is a limit. I will conclude my speech by saying that I was proud to participate together with my colleagues the member for Bankstown and the member for Fairfield in the 2016 Vinnies CEO Sleepout. We raised more than \$5,000 that was combined with other funds raised to make a total of \$1.7 million. My favourite element of the sleep-out was to walk a mile in the shoes of homeless people and experience sleeping rough. I hope that in 2017 we can make a difference on a much bigger scale.

MAYFIELD GARDEN, OBERON

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Local Government) (12:37:3): It gives me great pleasure to inform the House of a special feature that is of great significance to my electorate. In this House, members often reflect upon unique attractions, landscapes, and visitor experiences in cities, towns and electorates we represent. The feature might be a big prawn, a giant ram or a pineapple but whatever it is, it identifies our local communities. The feature is something with which people identify and connect and it is something of which local people are very proud. This week I was fortunate to go behind the scenes and tour the incredible Mayfield Garden, situated just outside Oberon in my electorate. I am very proud that Mayfield Garden is located in the Bathurst electorate.

Mayfield Garden is one of those places that truly could be described as special, super-sized and impactful. It has 165 acres, or 64 hectares, of architecture, landscaping, waterways and the most incredible collection of trees and flowers. It is the largest privately owned cool climate garden in the Southern Hemisphere and one of the largest gardens in the world. The garden began to take shape in the mid-1990s, but visitors could be forgiven for thinking that the established garden has been a part of the landscape in Oberon for more than 50 years.

Mayfield Garden is the handiwork and personal project of Gerrick Hawkins, an impressive businessman whom you cannot but like for his down-to-earth demeanour and obvious passion for this one-of-a-kind project, and his family. He employs locals, and his investment into the area is helping the Bathurst and Oberon districts. The 165 acres sit as a part of the larger 5,000-acre working farming operation, where some of Australia's most impressive beef products are exported through local supermarket giants and overseas. Mayfield Garden is a key employer in the area. The gardens are constantly under construction, and have a cafe and nursery, and trades that include horticulture, stonemasonry, greenkeeping, general labour and machinery operation. The gardens employ 30 full-time staff who get the opportunity to work in what can only be described as one of the most magical places in New South Wales.

Mayfield Garden was first opened to visitors in 2008 for one weekend, and the response was so enthusiastic that it was decided to open the private garden each autumn and spring for a set program of open days, and to create a visitor garden—the Water Garden—specially designed for year-round visitation. The Water Garden is open all year and has a six-acre stone and water feature garden at its heart. It includes a bluestone bridge, a red bridge, boardwalks, a copper tree fountain, an obelisk pond and countless species of trees and groundcover that almost seem too perfect to be real. Completing the Water Garden experience is the nursery, with its extensive range of cool climate plants, and the Kitchen Café, serving seasonal, freshly prepared food.

Something like this does not happen overnight, and it does not happen without a team of dedicated employees, who are as proud of Mayfield Garden as Mr Hawkins and his family. I was lucky enough to hear of some of the exciting changes to the gardens, with the recent employment of a chief executive officer, Hamish Keith, a local Bathurst boy who flew the coop a few years back and spent six years working as an events and strategy director for some of New York's biggest A-list clients. Hamish has returned home after what he

described as "one of the greatest opportunities ever". He now has an opportunity to work at the gardens to increase tourism and employment in the region.

Former Cobblestone Lane chef and restaurant owner Heath Smith has also been brought to the table to deliver a range of fresh, seasonal produce to be served through the cafe and restaurant facilities. He has established a cult following for his famous food, and I have no doubt that many of his diehard fans will make the 25-minute journey from Bathurst to Oberon to enjoy his offerings. Director of farming operations, Amy Collins, sits beside these successful men. Amy is delivering the business objectives of the larger farming operation, which extends to properties in the northern part of Australia. She has been Mr Hawkins' "right hand" for around six years. Amy is a pretty impressive lady.

Visiting these gardens will open people's eyes and shine a new light on what they might think is an impressive retaining wall, a few box hedges and standard roses that sit in their backyard. Apart from being blown away by the breathtaking views, structures and immaculate detail of every little thing, this operation really has some great things planned for the future. An education centre, looking to create opportunities for hands-on learning experiences from kindergarten right through to TAFE and university, is an emerging development, as are the food and beverage, and nursery operation and events, as well as a produce pantry that will sell fresh, seasonal produce from the area. I am excited to be part of a government that recognises the importance of tourism and the value it adds to our economy. I applaud magnates like Garrick Hawkins for growing these opportunities right here in our own backyard.

AUSGRID INNER WEST TREE CUTTING

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (12:42): I call on the Government to address a series of failures across the board that have resulted in severe damage to the streetscapes in my community and around the inner west and unnecessary safety risks to the public. I am referring to the brutal and unprofessional cutting of trees by Ausgrid contractors, Treeserve, which this year has been an absolute catastrophe for residents in our area. Many of the streets in the inner west are justifiably famous for their trees, with rows of beautiful flowering myrtles and bottlebrush adding elegance and value to the suburbs. For decades Ausgrid has successfully trimmed the same trees to keep their branches safely away from powerlines, while still maintaining their health and appearance.

This year, following a policy change by Ausgrid in December 2015, new contractors Treeserve have taken a very different approach. The chainsaws have come out, and street trees the length and breadth of the inner west, including many heritage trees in suburbs, have been absolutely butchered. Meters of height have been cut off trees nowhere near powerlines and residents have watched in dismay as contractors cut down their beloved street trees, in some cases to little more than stumps. The contractors carrying out this carnage have been doing so in an unsafe and unprofessional manner with no proper traffic controls, and branches and trees left blocking roads and pavements and falling onto cars.

Residents are asking themselves and, of course, asking me what changed this year. The answer seems depressingly clear, and illustrates the multiple effects of State Government policies on the people in my electorate. First, we have Ausgrid, which we hear is implementing a range of cost-cutting measures after expensive funding cuts ahead of its sales to overseas buyers. This forced cost cutting as a result of privatisation poses real risks, as we have seen with the asbestos removal, a fight that has been led by the Electrical Trades Union [ETU], including a recent rally on 22 July that raised the failure of Ausgrid to address that issue adequately. It seems that with the organisation in turmoil, the chief executive officer being forced to reapply for his own job, and an aggressive cost-cutting program, standards are going down and community consultation is becoming less and less important.

I can only assume that the very aggressive tree cutting that has caused residents so much distress is designed to prevent the need for contractors to return annually and to save costs. By cutting trees right back, Ausgrid is attempting to save money by returning to the job every two or three years. Either this, or costs have been cut by using a cheaper and possibly a less competent qualified contractor. And when residents turn to their newly amalgamated council for help, what do they find? A closed-door meeting between the unelected administrator and the acting chief executive officer of Ausgrid that concludes that "everything necessary is being done." In fact, we have seen no meaningful action by council, despite its producing evidence that demonstrates that Ausgrid contractors have failed to comply not only with their own standard but also with Australian standards for managing street trees. It seems the amalgamated council does not care at all about the people who did not elect it.

We have a State Government to whom residents turned when tree cutting continued unabated. The letter in response to our concerns, which we received from the Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy last week, was simply a cut and paste of information from Ausgrid's stock standard public messages and the council's minutes. The council also made a commitment that its arborist would monitor the work of the new contractor, but residents are yet to see any evidence of that. The State Government is clearly anticipating the apparent windfall

from Ausgrid's sale and does not seem willing to intervene directly to maintain standards of work, and call Ausgrid to account for its new policy—a policy that we understand is based on bushfire risks and other factors. However, bushfires in the inner west are not prevalent and it seems to the residents and the community of the inner west that not only the Government but also the council has failed to hold Ausgrid to account.

I join with many residents of my electorate in fearing what further profit-driven cost cutting will do to our streetscapes and to our all-important urban tree canopy in the inner city. I urge the Minister to address this issue urgently and to hold Ausgrid to account to ensure that this important issue that affects not only my electorate but also many electorates across Sydney is dealt with. Council must monitor Ausgrid's role effectively to ensure that Ausgrid stops its current cutting and returns to the policy it has held for many years, which saw trees trimmed efficiently, but not so as to brutalise the residential amenity of the local community. I urge the Minister to act to ensure that Ausgrid stops these actions.

SILVER BEACH, KURNELL, PROJECT

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Heritage, and Assistant Minister for Planning) (12:47): Last week I joined the Sutherland Shire Mayor, Councillor Carmelo Pesce, to announce an exciting new project for Silver Beach at Kurnell. The \$750,000 jointly funded project will deliver a new shared pathway for pedestrians and cyclists, improved beach access tracks, landscaping works, new seating and signage. Silver Beach is roughly two kilometres in length, extending from Kamay Botany Bay National Park in the east to Bonna Point Reserve in the west. The Kurnell peninsula headland is a national heritage listed site and includes important cultural heritage sites such as Captain Cook's landing place. Silver Beach also marks the northern starting point of the Cronulla coastal walkway.

In the past couple of years, Bonna Point has become an increasingly popular regional destination for water-based recreation activities such as boating, fishing, and kite surfing. This is due in no small part to the significant upgrade of facilities supported through the New South Wales Government's Better Boating Program. The 2014 car park upgrade, which was the second stage of Bonna Point's face lift, included 76 angled car spaces and 40 car-trailer spaces. It is no surprise then that these terrific new facilities have helped make this spot an even more attractive location for boaters. There is already a shared path of some 250 metres at the western end of Silver Beach, as well as another 250-metre shared path at the eastern end.

This new project is set to be delivered in two stages. It is concerned with the 1.5 kilometre middle section of the beach, which currently consists of dune areas, open spaces and seating, informal access tracks, viewing platforms and swimming areas. The Government, in partnership with Sutherland Shire Council, is delivering the missing link that will connect the two paths at either end offering greater opportunity for walking and cycling and enabling the local and wider community to make the most of this historically and culturally significant site. Stage one will involve construction of a shared path along the northern edge of Prince Charles Parade, roughly between Dampier and Balboa streets. Silver Beach is a natural treasure for our local community and I am pleased the Government is looking after the natural environment and improving public access and amenities. This project is another example of the Government supporting recreational cycling in the Sutherland shire.

Earlier this year the local community had its say on the review of environmental factors for the proposed Sutherland to Cronulla Active Transport Link [SCATL]. The SCATL route will extend a further 10.6 kilometres and connect Sutherland, Kirrawee, Gymea, Miranda, Caringbah, Woolooware and Cronulla train stations. The review of environmental factors proposes that approximately 3.1 kilometres of the route will be within the rail corridor. An expert team of engineers, planners and designers has developed the details of the proposed route that best connects cyclists and pedestrians with shops, schools, public transport and the beach.

Progress is being made on another local cycling infrastructure project, the Woolooware Bay shared pathway. Roads and Maritime Services has recently finalised remediation works on the site. The 2016-17 budget has matched Sutherland Shire Council funding with \$1.8 million of grant funding for stage six of the project. This financial year the Government has committed \$80 million towards cycling infrastructure across the State. Over the next year the progress of these two important local projects, SCATL and the Woolooware Bay shared pathway, will continue to promote cycling for health and recreation in the shire.

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Cootamundra) (12:51:3): I congratulate the member for Cronulla on the announcement of the 1.5 kilometre shared pedestrian pathway around the Kurnell headland at Silver Beach. Funding through the Better Boating Program will link the existing paths and be of enormous benefit to the health and wellbeing of the residents of Cronulla and enhance tourism opportunities in the future. I look forward to visiting this very nice part of the world and trying out the new pathway.

COMMERCIAL FISHERIES BUSINESS ADJUSTMENT PROGRAM

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (12:52): In May this year the Minister for Primary Industries announced the start of the Commercial Fisheries Business Adjustment Program. The Minister called it a new era for commercial fishing and said the Government would, "Look after those fishers who want to stay in the industry and support those who wish to exit." On 28 July I met with 30 local commercial fishers concerned that the changes proposed by the Government will put many of them out of business. I acknowledge the efforts of Allan Reed, a long time fisherman of the Central Coast and son of a fisherman, for his efforts in representing his colleagues on this issue. Allan invited me onto one of his boats to see for myself the way local commercial fishers work in a low impact manner from small boats they operate to harvest local fish for local consumption.

The adjustment program is the continuation of a process begun by the Greiner Government when it introduced the Fisheries Management Act 1994. The Act allowed for the introduction of a share market in fishing entitlements. In 2007 fishers were granted an equal number of shares which gave them the simple right to harvest a particular type of fish in a particular way. The adjustment program seeks to replace this simple arrangement with a complex system of fishing entitlements linked to effort and quotas. As stated by the Minister, the adjustment program is "complex". I fear it will allow market insiders and large fishing businesses to grow while those who simply want to continue their small fishing business and work for themselves risk being forced out of an industry they love.

The source of the adjustment program is the final report of the New South Wales Commercial Fisheries Structural Adjustment Review Committee released on 30 September 2015 and accepted by the Government in May this year. The aim of the program is made clear on page 1, where the purpose of linking shares to fishing effort is explained as "managing the number of operators by reducing endorsement numbers through increased minimum shareholdings". Reduced endorsement numbers means reduced fishing businesses, which means reduced jobs. That is why fishers are concerned. On 13 August last year in response to a question the Minister referred to misinformation about the changes, saying:

One of the statements was that fishers would only be allowed to fish for 90 instead of 365 days per year.

He then said:

This demonstrates a complete lack of understanding of what is actually occurring.

But that is almost exactly what the adjustment program will mean for Estuary General–Meshing share class fishers in my region, which is region 4. The recommendation on page 41 of the final report that the Government has accepted means that from July next year a fisher currently working 365 days a year will be limited to 88 days only. If that fisher wants to work more than 88 days additional shares must be purchased. Fishers have said to me, "We are being asked to buy our jobs back." There is no guarantee there will be shares for them even if they have the money or are willing to take on more debt, including the concessional debt the Government is offering. The share trading software is not even ready yet.

What is the problem the Government is trying to fix? The Minister has said there are too many latent licence holders—that is, fishing businesses that do not work their full entitlement or do not work at all. To give an example, on the Hawkesbury River as at 30 April 2015 there were 52 endorsed fishing businesses, not all of them active, entitled to harvest the estuary prawn trawl trade. The final report recommends reducing that to 42. However, the report also says that there are only 41 active fishers—that is, fishers who have logged some sort of fishing effort between 2009 and 2013. To get rid of the so-called latent effort all active fishers currently working on the Hawkesbury will have to purchase 50 extra shares by July next year or they will not be allowed to fish. Why should active fishers have to buy more shares in order to force inactive fishers out? Surely there are easier ways to address this issue.

Currently fewer than 1,000 commercial active fishers are working New South Wales coastal waters. Most have no economic security outside of their ability to fish. There should be work enough for all of them and they should be allowed to do that work. This State imports more than 80 per cent of the fish it consumes. We should be growing our local fishing industry. I call on the Government to halt this program, guarantee that active fishers will be able to continue to work, and establish consultative arrangements on a regional level for fishers to work through the issues of sustainability and growing the industry into the future.

ASBESTOSIS AND MESOTHELIOMA ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (12:56): The Asbestosis and Mesothelioma Association of Australia [AMAA] is an important organisation that I have had some dealings with. The AMAA was initiated 10 years ago by a collective of like-minded patients, carers and friends who recognised that there was a severe lack of support and information services for people affected by asbestos in the Gold Coast, Tweed and Northern Rivers regions. The Asbestosis and Mesothelioma Support Group [AMSG] was established to fill that void. It has since grown in

strength and numbers, resulting in a name change in 2014 to the Asbestosis and Mesothelioma Association of Australia. The association helps the community through offering telephone support, home and hospital visits, information and resources, and guidance on up-to-date research. It also holds community forums and runs information stands. I recently had the pleasure of bumping into local coordinators Nick Boss and Tilly Ryan at a seniors event. I am impressed by what they are trying to establish in our area.

The AMAA has formed the Asbestos Community Outreach Centre [ACOC], which is designed to assist people who are affected by asbestos-related diseases and their carers. The ACOC operates from the Seagulls Complex, which is great licensed club at Gollan Drive, Tweed Heads. That gives the AMAA access to the club's 16,000 members. The AMAA encourages members to visit the centre as required. It also hosts gatherings for members to attend. As well as being available for Gold Coast and Northern Rivers residents, the ACOC is also open to people from the broader community who have any questions or concerns about asbestos. The group, which now has about 30 active members, asked for my assistance in establishing a memorial to people who are suffering with the disease and those who have passed away as a result.

I am pleased that I was able to attend the event. After my approach to the Premier's office the group was awarded \$5,000 to progress the memorial project. The AMAA believes it is vital that the community be educated about the devastating legacy of the use of asbestos in the region. It is also important to the victim's family and friends that there be a place for private reflection and commemoration. The AMAA hosts an annual memorial service for its members and the broader community, and about 100 people attend each year. I attended this year's wonderful service on Friday 8 June. We advised the Premier that there was no memorial or monument to honour the victims of asbestos-related diseases in the region. The annual memorial service, which will be held at the garden, will include the lowering of the flag to half-mast as a mark of respect. The event will be funded partly by the New South Wales Government and partly by many generous donations.

A number of key speakers at the 8 June service who are suffering from asbestos-related diseases spoke about how they are coping. Carers and friends also told the gathering about the devastating impact of this dreadful affliction. I was interested to note that the group is raising money for people in Third World countries suffering from asbestos-related diseases. Believe it or not, asbestos is still used in many Third World countries, and we often import asbestos-contaminated products. Industry has in the past ignored the terrible impact asbestos has had on workers. Members have spoken in this Chamber about the effects of asbestos and have campaigned against its use and for the rights of affected workers who inadvertently put their lives at risk and who died as a result. I am 100 per cent committed to the establishment of the memorial gardens in the Tweed.

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Cootamundra) (13:01): I compliment the member for Tweed on his efforts to ensure that the Tweed has a lasting memorial to people who have succumbed to asbestosis and mesothelioma on the Gold Coast and in the Northern Rivers district. I also congratulate him on publicising this very important community group, the Asbestosis and Mesothelioma Association of Australia [AMAA]. The work he has done to secure special funding from the Premier shows the influence he has as a strong and determined member of Parliament, and his 100 per cent commitment to the Tweed. I wish the AMAA all the best in its endeavours and thank it for the work it does for the community in assisting people suffering from mesothelioma.

INDIA INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATIONS

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (13:02): Monday 15 August marks the seventieth anniversary of Indian independence, which occurred on 15 August 1947. This is an important day not only for Australian Indians but also for Indians around the world. Many events will be held throughout New South Wales in the coming weeks, and I am pleased that I will be able to attend a number of them. The celebrations will be officially launched by B. Vanlalvawna, Consul-General of India in Sydney. They will include an official flag-raising ceremony and the reading of a speech from the President of India, Pranab Mukherjee. Of course, other events will be celebrated by the Indian community. I am looking forward to attending the Council of Indian Australians' 2016 India Day Dinner. The council is a non-profit community organisation which was established six years ago and which has been successful in engaging with the community at many festivals and national events every year. Its primary objective is promoting Indian cultural heritage, friendship and integration within multicultural Australia.

The Council of Indian Australians is headed by Mr Praful Desai, president; Mr Mohit Kumar, vice president; Mr Nitin Shukla, secretary; Mr Keyur Desai, joint secretary; Dr Balu Vijay, treasurer; Mr Amit Tripathi, joint treasurer; and Mr Sanjay Deshwal, Mr Ashish Desai and Mrs Jaspreet Chopra, executive committee members. The India Independence Day dinner is the perfect platform to unite the Indian-Australian community and to celebrate our cultural values, progress and heritage. It will showcase Indian cultural diversity and sumptuous Indian food. This year the Council of Indian Australians has partnered with the Indian Support Center to help raise funds and to support its campaign in helping new migrants in their search for jobs and temporary accommodation, and also with domestic issues. I recognise President Subba Rao Varigonda and the Indian Support Center for their work in addressing the issues faced by newly arrived Indians to New South Wales,

including providing support to seniors, helping with language issues and, most importantly, offering a familiar point of contact.

India's Independence Day celebrations will also be held at Old Kings School in Parramatta. On Sunday 14 August 2016 the Federation of Indian Associations of NSW, supported by the City of Parramatta Council, will be hosting a fair at the parade ground at the wonderful Old King's School. This very popular event is expected to attract up to 15,000 people. The Federation of Indian Associations of NSW is an umbrella organisation of multiple Indian associations in Sydney. I recognise Dr Yadu Singh, who many will know is an outspoken advocate for this community.

On Sunday 28 August 2016 I will be delighted to join the Hindi Divas celebrations. I recognise the hard work and dedication of Mrs Mala Mehta, OAM, honorary founder of the IABBV Hindi School and the Australian Hindi Committee for organising this event, which provides an opportunity for Australian Hindi community members to celebrate their culture and values. People from all over India and from schools, government and non-government organisations celebrate this day with a tribute to the second most spoken language in the world—it was adopted as the official language in 1949. Each year the Hindi Divas celebration falls on 14 September and school students, teachers and parents take great pride in celebrating it.

Finally, with the member for Strathfield and others I was delighted to attend the media launch of "Confluence—Festival of India in Australia". I note that the member for Strathfield is in the Chamber and I take this opportunity to congratulate her on her support for the Indian community. The festival was hosted by Mr Navdeep Suri, High Commissioner of India to Australia. The festival, which was originally announced in November 2014 during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Australia, will take place over 10 weeks, from September to November 2016, in six cities. I commend the High Commission of India for bringing it to Australia.

HOUSES TO HOMES

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON (Blacktown) (13:08): Today I speak about an issue of great concern for young women and babies in Blacktown and, indeed, everyone in this State—namely, Houses to Homes, formerly known as Catherine Villa, at Quakers Hill. This service assists young pregnant women and young mothers who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, with a particular emphasis on clients whose babies may be at risk. Before the last round of funding cuts by this Government, this service offered 24-hour supported accommodation for homeless young women, 25 years and under, who are pregnant or have children. It provided medium- to long-term accommodation with a living and parenting skills program. That support also extended to former residents of the program. It also had an exit house where young mums and bubs could transition to independent living and where family support workers facilitated a young parent's support group and a supported playgroup. Because of these funding cuts it has now been reduced to a transitional accommodation service, which provides prevention and early intervention, and crisis and transitional accommodation with support.

The reduced service aims to transition clients out of homelessness and break the cycle of homelessness. The service has a strong focus on responses for Aboriginal women and is also accessible to women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. These are among the most vulnerable in our society. To leave them behind is completely unacceptable. Whilst front-line services such as these are constantly trying to provide the best possible care for the community, they are being hamstrung by widespread funding cuts by the Government. This means that the services they would like to provide and the services they are able to provide are vastly different.

When Mike Baird became Premier he said that he would not value efficiency over caring for the most vulnerable in our society. It is now clear that they were just hollow words from someone whose actions speak volumes about his values and priorities. Mothers who struggle to access housing are among the most at risk in our society. Failure to provide for them is failure to provide for a whole family. Services such as Houses to Homes should be able to provide long-term benefits to the public. They should be able to assist young mothers with parenting skills, living skills and accommodation without the constant fear of funding cuts. Minister Goward should know the consequences of cutting early intervention services. Being in government is about priorities. This Government has demonstrated time and again that its priorities are all wrong. The better equipped services are to deal with problems as they arise rather than after the fact, the more positive the results are for the individuals who require those programs.

I express my thanks to the workers and all those who continue to strive to provide the best possible care and assistance in centres such as Houses to Homes across the State, despite increasing pressure from government funding cuts. I ask on behalf of all of them: Will the Government commit to properly funding those vital programs and when will the Government reinstate the funds necessary to allow services to continue to support some of the most vulnerable in our community? My electorate of Blacktown is one of those areas that needs these sorts of support services and programs. Young mums who have been literally thrown out of their homes by their families

and disowned, and who have nowhere to go, rely on these services. The cuts that have taken place have seen programs like Houses to 2Homes go from providing assistance to more than 120 young mums and bubs in a year to now being able to service a mere four at any given time. That is a real tragedy. That is the human cost and the human impact on our community of decisions taken by governments when they make a choice to cut funding to these vital services.

SOUTH COAST SHARK LISTENING STATIONS

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (13:12): On Tuesday 26 July 2016 I was very pleased to welcome my colleague and friend the Hon. Niall Blair, MLC, Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water, to my electorate for a major announcement in relation to shark listening stations. We were joined by 23-year-old shark attack survivor and local Kiama Downs resident Brett Connellan. The South Coast will be receiving five VR4G listening stations as part of the New South Wales Government's \$16 million Shark Management Strategy to better detect and deter sharks. Listening stations will be installed at Kiama, Sussex Inlet, Mollymook, Batemans Bay and Merimbula. This is state-of-the-art technology and it is terrific to see that so many South Coast beaches will benefit from this funding announcement.

When it comes to preventing shark attacks we need to give beachgoers better information. The fact that listening stations provide real-time information about shark movements means people can make informed decisions before getting into the water. Listening stations will be located up and down the State's coastline and are just one of the emerging technologies we are using to better detect and deter sharks along our coastline. The installation of the listening stations at these very popular beaches and tourist destinations is a big win for these communities and will give beachgoers that extra bit of confidence before hitting the water. The purpose-built listening stations work by registering a tagged shark that swims within approximately 500 metres of the station. An alert is then sent to Twitter @NSWSharkSmart and the New South Wales Government's SharkSmart app. All listening stations will be in the water this summer. Exact coordinates will be subject to coastal engineering and in consultation with local surf life saving clubs.

To date, 29 sharks and 88 bull sharks have been tagged in a collaborative effort between New South Wales Department of Primary Industries [DPI] shark biologists and the CSIRO. I was especially pleased to be joined at this announcement by Brett Connellan, who is a brave and inspirational shark attack survivor. I am also pleased that Brett supports our announcement and I hope that the important research we undertake gives us a greater understanding of sharks so that we can improve the way we manage our interaction and co-existence with these magnificent creatures. Like many young people in my electorate, Brett is an avid surfer and a popular Jones Beach Boardriders member. In late March 2016 Brett was attacked by a shark at Bombo Beach about 100 metres offshore. The shark took so much of his leg that 15 centimetres of his femur was left exposed. He lost 70 per cent of his upper leg, was bleeding heavily and, according to doctors, would have died had it not been for the quick work of friends who dragged him to shore and used a leg rope to stop the bleeding. His left hand was also bitten in the attack.

Another local surfer, Joel Trist, and his girlfriend, Agie Kwowka, helped save Brett's life by providing first aid. Brett was then taken by helicopter to St George Hospital and underwent a marathon nine-hour surgery—all of this on his twenty-third birthday—to address his severe leg injuries. A fundraising event, Surfers for Bretto, was held on 25 June at the Shellharbour Workers Club and was attended by one of Australia's most decorated surfers, Tom Carroll. Thirroul surf shop DP Surfboards, where Brett works as a manager, also raised significant funds to help his recovery, which continues in very positive leaps and bounds. The fundraising cause also received a boost from one of Brett's biggest fans, none other than Thor himself, Australian actor Chris Hemsworth, who shared the young surfer's fundraising event with his 3.8 million followers.

I acknowledge Brett's parents, Malcolm and Gail, and his sister, Michelle. They are a close, loving family who rallied behind Brett during his time in St George Hospital and lengthy recovery period, which is ongoing. Having caught up and spent some time with Brett recently, I know he is keen to one day get back on his surfboard and into the water. Brett's courage and determination are extraordinary, as is the truly magnificent sense of community in Kiama where locals rallied to support Brett in every way they could.

I am pleased to see that the New South Wales Government is investing in a number of different technologies to better manage our interactions with sharks. Along with listening stations, sonar technology is a rapidly advancing surveillance technology that is potentially able to detect swimming objects underwater and relay information to shore. Clever Buoy has recently completed a trial of the technology at Bondi Beach to determine whether this new sonar technology, coupled with tailored software, can detect shark-size objects. Unmanned aerial vehicles, often known as drones, offer emerging technology that provides aerial surveillance of coastal waters and real-time vision of the area. I congratulate Brett Kiteley of Albion Park-based business Touchdown Helicopters on his work in assisting the DPI with shark surveillance and monitoring on the South Coast.

The DPI is currently trialling the use of unmanned aerial vehicles and tethered aerial surveillance platforms in several locations as a form of shark spotting. Shark Management Alert in Real Time—or SMART—drum lines differ greatly from traditional drum lines as they are not designed to kill sharks. The state-of-the-art technology alerts a response team when a shark is captured. The team then responds immediately to tag and potentially relocate the shark. These are great leaps forward in technology. I commend the Government for its work and for taking an environmental approach that I believe the community can support. I commend this private member's statement to the House.

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Cootamundra) (13:17): I congratulate the wonderful member for Kiama on raising what is a most important and significant issue in his electorate. As a landlubber I always exercise extreme caution when going anywhere near the water, but I recognise that those who live on the coast love to go for a good old surf. The sorts of shark listening programs that the member for Kiama outlined today in great places such as Kiama, Sussex Inlet, Batemans Bay, Mollymook and Merimbula—all wonderful tourism destinations—will give greater confidence to people from inland areas, in particular, who love to flock to the coast for their summer holidays or just to visit and shop. The Minister for Primary Industries has introduced great, innovative programs such as the Clever Buoy and other surveillance methods. Coupled with the wonderful bravery of people such as Brett Connellan—a shark attack survivor—and with sponsorship from businesses such as Thirroul surf shop DP Surfboards, these programs will be a wonderful addition for the coast going forward.

PRISON TEACHERS

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (13:19): Today I speak on an issue that is important to people in my electorate and to the people of New South Wales, which is the provision of teachers in correctional facilities in this State. The Minister for Corrective Services announced recently that 150 teachers, which represents three-quarters of teachers, will be sacked. I raise this issue as a private member's statement because I was approached recently by a constituent in my electorate, Sister Audette Mansour, who has spent a decade dedicating herself to educating prisoners in some of the toughest prisons in Australia. She is a realist and recognises that there are some bad inmates in prisons in New South Wales. However, she believes educating prisoners can play a major role in helping to reduce recidivism. The Minister for Corrective Services has said that while teachers will be sacked from teaching roles within the department, new assessment and planning officers and education service coordinators will be employed in their place. Members may note the lack of the word "teacher" in the new advertised positions, which is the point. The department is not proposing to employ people with education qualifications in their place.

The Minister for Corrective Services has said that after a report into the provision of education it was determined that inmates were not meeting literacy and numeracy benchmarks and nor was the program proving to be cost effective. The Minister went on to say that the Government is committed to increasing vocational training by 20 per cent and to doubling the number of inmates completing literacy and numeracy programs. The full report was not released. Surely it is incumbent on the Government to make the report public and, in the process, explain its plans to radically cut the education budget within the Department of Corrective Services while committing to major improvements in education, literacy and numeracy results. The question is acute because recidivism rates in New South Wales are too high at 74 per cent for non-Indigenous inmates and 86 per cent for Indigenous inmates.

I had the privilege of working with Ron Woodham when he was Corrective Services Commissioner. In my opinion, he is one of the finest public servants in this State. Despite the gruff exterior that Commissioner Woodham presented to the public, he had a real commitment to tackling literacy issues, especially among Indigenous inmates. The approach taken by Commissioner Woodham whereby professionals were recruited to deal with deep-seated, complicated problems such as attaining an education should be the model for tackling recidivism in this State. The Department of Corrective Services should release the criteria by which it will recruit members of the public to teach inmates. Any suggestion of recruiting people who do not have educational qualifications should be rejected. Teaching is not a vocation that can be picked up on the job. It takes years of dedication and study. It should be noted that while teaching standards are being strengthened in the school sector by this Government, this proposal will see those standards watered down in the Department of Corrective Services.

The Rand Corporation found recently that prison inmates who receive a general education and vocational training are significantly less likely to return to prison after release and are more likely to find employment than their peers who do not receive such opportunities. Teaching is a difficult vocation and teaching inmates is one of the hardest jobs imaginable. I am full of admiration for people in my electorate and elsewhere in this State who devote their professional lives to entering prisons to teach inmates how to read and write. In many cases they are risking their personal safety by doing so. They have been treated poorly by the Government and the Minister should at least release the report that led to this decision.

LIVERPOOL LOCAL BUSINESS AWARDS

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (13:23): I congratulate all participants who were recognised in the Liverpool Local Business Awards. The Local Business Awards aim to pay tribute to and reward the local community's best businesses. The awards also aim to develop and strengthen the bonds between businesses and community, thereby improving the standards of local businesses. They give local businesses the opportunity to promote their business and its strengths, display their range of products and services, and provide in-store displays of their local business success. The awards bring together businesses, the local community and award sponsors to celebrate excellence and quality.

The Holsworthy electorate was proudly represented during the awards with many different businesses winning in their respective categories. The winners included Bakers Delight at Casula Mall, in the bakery and cake shop category; Cream and Co of Chipping Norton, the cafe category; Dance Quarter of Moorebank, the dance studio category; Planet Fitness at Casula, the fitness services category; Nursing Group at Casula, the health improvement services category; Snooze at Casula, the home furniture and furnishings category; Chen's Pharmacy at Wattle Grove, which I have mentioned in this place many times, won the pharmacy category; Wattle Grove Air at Pleasure Point won the service and trade category; and Specsavers at Casula won the specialised retail business category.

These are monumental achievements by these businesses in the Holsworthy electorate and they should be highly and warmly congratulated. I congratulate also Dr Surinder Uppal for winning the 2016 Business Person of the Year Award in this award ceremony. Dr Uppal has dedicated his life to making sure the residents of south-west Sydney are healthy. He has worked in Casula in my electorate for the past 40 years and his practice has been in Casula Mall for 30 of these years. When asked what his best assets as a doctor were, Dr Uppal said that he is a good listener—a trait that is very important and allows him not just to treat his patients but also to understand and to connect with them. Casula Mall Medical Centre, which Dr Uppal runs, was a previous winner of the Health Services category in 2013 and 2014. Dr Uppal and all of his staff at the Casula Mall Medical Centre should be thanked for their dedication in assisting to improve the health of the people of south-west Sydney.

I acknowledge also Adam Anderson whose business, Minuteman Press Liverpool, won the New Business category. Adam is also a director of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce and is a proud supporter of the Liverpool Police Citizens Youth Club and the Ingham's Institute in Liverpool. As a strong advocate for business in Liverpool I am happy to see that Adam has been recognised not only for his hard work and dedication in growing his business but also for his charitable endeavours. Yesterday I accompanied the Treasurer of New South Wales, the Hon. Gladys Berejiklian, to tour the Country Comfort Hunts Hotel in Casula and to meet with the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce.

During the tour the operator of the hotel, Harry Hunt, OAM, talked us through how he had seen an increase in tourism in the Liverpool area and now approximately 1,000 international tourists base themselves at his hotel each week. This has allowed him to hire additional staff—from cooks to cleaning personnel—with the vast majority of these staff being from the local area. During conversations with the chamber of commerce the Treasurer pointed out that south-west Sydney has seen the second best jobs growth across metropolitan Sydney, something which our area should be very proud of. There were an impressive 17,800 new jobs created in Sydney's south-west over the last year, a rise of 11.2 per cent. Small businesses in our area have been, and will continue to be, at the heart of the State's economic success story. Once again, I congratulate the winners of the Liverpool Local Business Awards and thank the Treasurer for coming to Liverpool and for her visit to the great south-west.

NORTHERN BEACHES HOSPITAL

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Social Housing) (13:27): Today I thank the community of the northern beaches for its support for our new Northern Beaches Hospital and report to the community that the construction of the hospital is well on track. Of course, for many years residents on the northern beaches have had the benefit of amazing nursing and medical staff at Manly Hospital and Mona Vale Hospital and it has been only through their goodwill and great efforts that the level of health care expected on the northern beaches has been delivered. We certainly cannot thank the physical state of the hospitals for the amazing work that has been done by those professionals.

Of course, Manly Hospital was built decades ago and has suffered as a result of its age. I thank Premier Baird, former Premier Barry O'Farrell and Minister Jillian Skinner for driving the opportunity for the northern beaches to have a new Northern Beaches Hospital. The model that has been adopted is a very innovative public and private health facilities structure. This means that residents on the northern beaches will have the very best of what both sectors can contribute to their health.

The company which is currently undertaking the work for the hospital, and which will continue to conduct the work, is Healthscope. I thank Healthscope for its great capacity to reach out to residents and to listen to their concerns. I particularly wish to recognise the ability of Healthscope to listen to the nursing and medical staff of Manly and Mona Vale hospitals and to hear their views about the structure of the new hospital. The community can now see many aspects of the Northern Beaches Hospital; the construction is well underway. There are a couple of very substantial cranes on the site, which local schoolchildren have named Flo and Doc.

The cranes are helping the workers on the site to make sure that the building rises on the area that has been set aside at the corner of Wakehurst Parkway and Warringah Road. The concrete pours for the basement, and the first and second floors are now complete. The pour for the third floor is underway and the fourth floor will begin very shortly. As residents drive past the site they may not realise that so much has been completed but if they take a close look they will see that the construction of our new hospital is certainly underway and that it is starting to take shape. Residents can see that the promise that the Liberal-Nationals State Government made to deliver the new Northern Beaches Hospital is being fulfilled and its completion is indeed imminent.

Now that the basement concrete pour is finished the internal fit-out of key services like electrics and plumbing is underway, and the fit-out of internal walls has also commenced. Each of these were major milestones in the development of the new hospital. The final concrete pour on the nine-storey building, which includes the construction of the roof—an operation known as "topping out"—is well on track and is due to be finished by the end of this year. That is an amazing milestone for the people of the Northern Beaches, who have waited decades for a new hospital. The internal fit-out of each floor will continue on track through to 2017, and we expect that the hospital will be completed on time in 2018. This is going to be a level five, state-of-the-art hospital with 488 hospital beds, a 50-space emergency department and a helipad.

I was particularly impressed that the structures of the hospital have been well thought through. For example, there is a completely separate entry for people who are suffering mental illness. They will enter the hospital through a dedicated entry, which will address some of the issues faced by other public and private hospitals around the State. Again I thank the local residents, who have been watching the development. I want to assure them that I have spoken to the Department of Planning and Environment and Warringah Council to tell them that we need to look at the rezoning of the land around the hospital in order to get a complete community structure. Hopefully, that will be complete in the near future.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch): I will now leave the chair and the House will resume at 2.15 p.m.

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I welcome our guests and visitors in the gallery for question time. I specifically welcome 18 students and their teachers from the Chatswood High School's Intensive English Centre, who are guests of the Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations, and member for Willoughby. I also welcome students from the Sutherland Shire Christian School, who are guests of the member for Holsworthy. I also welcome and acknowledge Nadia Taylor and Michael Green, who are guests of the member for Coogee.

Commemorations

CENTENARY OF FIRST WORLD WAR

The SPEAKER (14:19): One hundred years ago this week, the people of Australia were coming to terms with the nature of modern warfare. Between 19 July and 7 August 1916, Australian troops had been engaged in two pyrrhic battles: Fromelles and Pozieres. The Battle of Fromelles was the first time the Australians were engaged in a major battle on the Western Front. They suffered 5,533 casualties in a single night, which included 2,000 deceased. This was the worst 24 hours in Australian history. The toll was equivalent to the combined total of Australian casualties in the Boer War, Korean War and Vietnam War. At Pozieres three Australian divisions suffered 16,200 wounded and 6,800 fatalities. Over a matter of weeks, the public's perception of the First World War changed dramatically. While the casualties at Gallipoli had been high, the nature of the battle itself had been regarded as heroic—perhaps for the last time. The conflict in France was mechanised warfare where long-range artillery, tanks and gas escalated the sheer horror of the trench conflict. The scale of the tragedy and slaughter was shocking—almost incomprehensible. Lest we forget.

*Question Time***MINISTER FOR HEALTH CHINA VISIT**

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:23): My question is directed to the Minister for Health. In light of the chemotherapy underdosing scandal that emerged in February, why did the Minister, in early April, embark on an 11-night tour of China, a trip that cost the New South Wales taxpayers \$84,480.57?

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER (North Shore—Minister for Health) (14:24): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. The trip I made to China in April was leading 27 senior health personnel from New South Wales, including nearly all of our university vice-chancellors or their representatives, our major health research institutes, the private sector, the public sector, and people working in research across the board. The outcomes have been phenomenal in terms of return on that investment. There have been business arrangements made going forward where we are training Chinese doctors with reimbursement to our system, where clinical trials have been established in partnerships between China and New South Wales.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members may not like the answer, but they will listen to it in silence.

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: At least one medical device company—one that was granted a prize under our Medical Devices Fund and came with us on that trip—has since then signed up a partnership worth millions of dollars. If those opposite want to ask about the value for the Australian taxpayer and people in our system relying upon the wonderful health care that will flow from this kind of investment in clinical trials research, new treatments, new medical devices, training of our doctors and nurses here and overseas then I do not know what our priorities should be.

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

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: You are way off the mark, mate.

SOUTH-WESTERN SYDNEY EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (14:26): My question is addressed to the Premier. How is the Government ensuring that children in Sydney's south-west are taught in world-class educational facilities?

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) (14:26): I thank the member for Camden for his question and acknowledge him as an outstanding supporter of public education on so many fronts. I do not think there has ever been a more exceptional member for Camden. Before I answer the question, I note the Leader of the Opposition asked about health. I assume he understands that New South Wales has a services economy and that one of the growing parts of our economy is health services. I know that China has the largest economy in the Asia-Pacific, and connecting growing health services in the largest economy makes just a little bit of sense, I would have thought.

Mr Guy Zangari: Point of order: My point of order refers to Standing Order 129. The question was about education, but the Premier is talking about health.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Fairfield will resume his seat. Introductory comments are quite acceptable. Government members will cease interjecting.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: It is very difficult to work out what the Opposition stands for, because they will stand for something one day and go for something else the next day. We know that they do not like public transport—cannot stand public transport or any project—

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: I have already said that introductory comments are not unprecedented. I warn the member for Swansea that if her point of order is relevance, I will not accept it.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Why? We are entitled to raise points of order.

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

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Is this a vexatious point of order?

Ms Jenny Aitchison: No, it definitely is not vexatious.

The SPEAKER: Nobody has been insulted, and I have ruled that the Premier is being relevant at the moment.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: My point of order refers to Standing Order 73. Everyone on this side of the Chamber is in favour of public transport and I am sick of hearing such statements.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maitland will resume her seat. The Premier has the call.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I will give those opposite the benefit of the doubt; I think they are for education, but I would not know. The shadow Minister for Education certainly is for education. When I was in south-western Sydney yesterday with the member for Camden, I thought it was an exciting time to be in south-western Sydney. Everywhere you turn you can see things happening—roads are being built, public transport is being built, hospitals are being built, houses are being built, and there are cranes. It is all happening in south-western Sydney.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: There are many great members for electorates in the south-west, led by the member for Camden and the member for Wollondilly.

Ms Jodie Harrison: Try answering the question!

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Many members are doing great things in their electorates. I was proud to open the newest primary school in this State, Spring Farm Public School.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Londonderry to order for the second time. Members will cease interjecting.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The community was there to see the official opening. The brilliant member for Camden was there.

The SPEAKER: If Opposition members are not interested in an answer concerning educational facilities they can leave the Chamber.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The school will seat close to 100 students. It is a \$15.5 million school. The Government has delivered infrastructure with the capacity for growth of up to 500 students. That is a great day for the community.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: This Government continues to deliver across the State. Every Government member talks to their community.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Maitland to order for the second time. I warn members that following a third call to order they will be removed from the Chamber.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I note the member for Campbelltown has taken a new approach when talking to constituents. There is a photo on the member's Facebook page—very nice.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order: My point of order is props and Standing Order 73, questioning the motives of a member.

The SPEAKER: The Premier has not made any comment about the member for Campbelltown.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: The Premier is using a prop.

The SPEAKER: I am dealing with the first point of order. The member will resume her seat. I remind the Premier about the standing orders dealing with the use of props.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The member was out and about in Bradbury and called it #Campbelltownstyle #mobile office. [*Extension of time*]

I assume the member is talking about schools.

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

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The member for Maitland is being difficult. I will stop the clock while I hear the point of order from the member. Is the member taking offence to the reference to a "mobile office"?

Ms Jenny Aitchison: No, I am not, Madam Speaker. My point of order is under Standing Order 129. How the hardworking member for Campbelltown conducts consultations with the community is not relevant to the leave of the question.

The SPEAKER: The member is unaware of what the Premier is about to say about the mobile office. He may make reference to the hard work of the member for Campbelltown. The Premier has the call.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: A constituent commented about the mobile office and stated, "standing against a tree and talking to no-one while everyone is at work." That is one way to represent your electorate. I am sure it was a good initiative. If the member had the opportunity to engage with someone passing by he would have spoken to them about what the Government has done for education in the State. The member for Campbelltown would have said the Government has done great work for public education. Those opposite stood against the Government when it made tough budgetary decisions to fund the Gonski education model. This Government and its Minister for Education made the decision to invest in education. The important part of that needs-based funding is that every student deserves and receives the same level of funding regardless of their postcode. That is what the Government believes in. The member for Campbelltown would have told his constituents that. The Government is proud to deliver new schools, such as the one opened yesterday in Camden.

The SPEAKER: The member for Swansea and the member for Maitland will cease interjecting.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Using the Gonski model together with record levels of funding will ensure that every student in New South Wales has the same opportunity.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: This Government understands that making tough budgetary decisions is what enables it to deliver on a daily basis for the people of New South Wales.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Lakemba to order for the second time. Last week there was too much disorderly conduct in the Chamber. The level of audible conversation and interjections was unacceptable. I warn members that I will not tolerate that behaviour this week. I will not give members repeated warnings. Once a member is on three calls to order the next interjection will result in the member being ejected from the Chamber under Standing Order 249, not 249A.

MINISTER FOR HEALTH CHINA VISIT

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (14:34): My question is directed to the Minister for Health. Will the Minister explain to the House how she justifies spending more than \$13,900 on hotel accommodation for herself and her chief of staff during the tour of China when a chemotherapy scandal was unfolding within her portfolio that required her attention?

The SPEAKER: There is an imputation in that question, but I will allow it. I remind Opposition members that questions containing imputations are not permitted under the standing orders.

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER (North Shore—Minister for Health) (14:35): The member clearly was not listening to my previous reply. The money spent on that trip to China leading 27 self-paying health officials was returned many times over by the investment that China will make in health care in New South Wales.

REGIONAL MOBILE PHONE INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (14:35): My question is addressed to the Minister for Regional Development.

The SPEAKER: I remind Opposition members that under Standing Order 73 it is disorderly to interject.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: How is the Government making it easier for family and businesses to connect in regional New South Wales?

The SPEAKER: I remind members that following three calls to order they will be ejected from the Chamber.

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (14:36): I thank the member for Tamworth for his question concerning the importance of regional infrastructure in New South Wales. It makes a difference. I have often spoken in the House about the Government's investment of \$24 million in the mobile phone black spot program. It is leveraging Federal and telco funding of \$92 million to invest in new towers across regional New South Wales. That is a fantastic program. For those lost during the busy budget period the Government announced an additional \$15 million for

round two of the Federal Government's mobile black spot program to build on the 144 towers in 795 black spots across regional New South Wales.

The important figure is the change it has meant to 14,659 homes and businesses in regional New South Wales. This investment will bring fairness, equity and opportunity to people who live in regional New South Wales. Those fantastic businesses and communities deserve their fair share of investment. Across regional New South Wales my ministerial colleagues are building hospitals, roads, rail, and schools and are investing in community amenities that make a difference.

The SPEAKER: I remind the member for Maitland that she is on three calls to order.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I congratulate those Ministers and the Baird Government on the investment in regional New South Wales, which is leading to job creation. The economy is strong and growing in regional New South Wales. In the past 12 months more than 58,000 jobs have been created. The Government has invested in regional airport upgrades to increase connectivity. That is important to the success and growth of regional New South Wales. The Government continues to represent the many communities in regional New South Wales. The 15 new towers are located in towns such as Wentworth and Deniliquin in the electorate of Murray, Colo Heights and Kurrajong in the electorate of Hawkesbury, and Drake and Clunes in the electorate of Lismore. In the Northern Tablelands electorate the villages of Hillgrove and White Rock Mountain now have mobile phone coverage. The community has welcomed this connectivity.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I have often spoken of the Government leveraging tax dollars and the telcos to invest in mobile phone connectivity. But what does that mean? In the electorate of Cootamundra it means that people have reception. Gus Hickman is a farmer and captain of the Cootamundra Darby's Falls Bush Fire Brigade. He states that the removal of the black spot, "Will be very beneficial for our village and great for safety on the road if there's a motor vehicle accident. It's a busy road." Further, "As captain of our local bush fire brigade I'll be able to more easily call for extra people when we need reinforcements." This is about safety in regional communities. It is also about greater certainty and increasing opportunities to run a business. Annette Turner, the President of the Country Women's Association, who is from White Cliffs, which is in the electorate of Barwon and which is about 255 kilometres north-east of Broken Hill and 93 kilometres north of Wilcannia, also stated:

It's brilliant to see new places coming online. No longer will people in these areas have to run outside, stand on a chair, and point the phone in a certain direction.

It's been difficult to run a business, dependent on technology, when you live and work in a mobile blackspot. And so, to have this phone coverage now is terrific, as well as being reassuring for safety reasons.

Of course, tourism underpins our regional economies, and mobile phone coverage helps tourists to access our region. Phillip Berkhout wrote on Facebook:

Great news. We were in Araluen—

in the great electorate of Monaro—

last weekend, driving through from Braidwood to Moruya—

The SPEAKER: Do some members have a problem with mobile phone towers? They are continuing to interject quietly when they should be silent.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: He said that he could not check Wikicamps to find camping locations.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: We know how important it is for tourists to be able to get directions. I can advise Mr Berkhout that the Araluen tower is being switched on as I speak. That mobile tower will come online shortly and it will support tourism in the region. Of course, it will also support locals to access emergency health services. Everyone knows Jackie French, AM, the 2015 Senior Australian of the Year, and author of the much-loved *Diary of a Wombat*, which is not a story about the Leader of the Opposition. Ms French wrote to me recently.

The SPEAKER: The Minister is indulging in a little bit of humour. Opposition members should not take it so personally on behalf of the Leader of the Opposition. Did the member for Lakemba take it personally?

Mr Jihad Dib: No, I didn't.

The SPEAKER: Good. It was simply a spark of humour. Members of the Opposition should try it from time to time. The Minister has the call, no-one else.

[*Extension of time*]

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I apologise to the wombats. Ms French stated:

To us, after so many years of no reception for an hour's drive, and even then, it might be uncertain, it is sheer magic...

When I had a heart attack I had to drive myself to hospital, as the land line was down and I couldn't call an ambulance...

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Swansea and the member for Londonderry will come to order. They will stop cackling. The member interjecting will be removed from Chamber very shortly if she continues to argue. I call the member for Swansea to order for the third time.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Ms French continued:

Guests had to drive daily to get their mobile messages...

Now, miraculously and thanks to very serious work and lobbying from John Barilaro—

the great member for Monaro—

we have what we never expected to be technically nor politically possible.

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Londonderry that she is on three calls to order. One more whimper from her and she will be removed from the Chamber for the rest of the day. She will be joined by her mate the member for Maitland.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: These are examples of real people benefiting from this Government's investment in regional New South Wales. We know connectivity is important and that the digital platform will open up more opportunities for businesses. We also know that technology means that small businesses can tap into an additional \$50 million. This is about delivering equity and fairness to regional communities. It will enhance their safety and improve business and tourism outcomes. Members on this side of the Chamber put regional and rural New South Wales front and centre of this Government's policies.

HOSPITAL CHEMOTHERAPY TREATMENT

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (14:41): I direct my question to the Minister for Health. Why is Dr Grygiel yet to be interviewed as part of the investigation into chemotherapy underdosing in the Central West?

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER (North Shore—Minister for Health) (14:41): As the House has been informed, Professor David Currow, the Chief Cancer Officer and Chief Executive Officer of the New South Wales Cancer Institute, is conducting those inquiries. It is a matter for him to decide when he interviews Dr Grygiel. The member should direct any questions she has about that process to Dr Currow. I assure the member that that investigation is ongoing. The final report in relation to the St Vincent's Hospital has been accepted by everyone, and all of the recommendations have been agreed to and implemented. I have great confidence that Dr Grygiel will be interviewed by Professor Currow. He has also been referred to the Health Care Complaints Commission, which will conduct its own investigation. I understand that the Medical Council of New South Wales has placed conditions on Dr Grygiel's treatments.

PRISON INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (14:42): I address my question to the Minister for Corrections. How is the Government's prison infrastructure program boosting investment and employment in regional areas?

The SPEAKER: Order! Interjections will cease. The Minister has not started answering the question.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Corrections, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) (14:42): I thank the hardworking member for Clarence for his passionate championing of major infrastructure projects in his community. The Government is reforming our prison system to lift standards, to reduce reoffending and to make our community safer. This is supported by a \$3.8 billion infrastructure program that will deliver more than 7,000 prisoner beds and thousands of additional jobs, most of which will drive regional economies. The Government is delivering a \$135 million rapid-build prison—Australia's first—in Wellington in the State's Central West.

This will provide a boost to the local economy while quickly and flexibly adapting to the prison population. The rapid-build prison is based on an innovative design which meets maximum security standards and which allows correctional officers to have optimal observation of inmates at all times. The Government will be rolling out this new design to another three locations, including Cessnock, in the Hunter. In the Hunter alone, the expansion of the centre will result in 370 new jobs, not to mention the benefits to the local community during

construction. I went to Wellington on Friday with the Deputy Premier and Commissioner Severin to turn the first sod to mark the start of work.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms will remove the member for Maitland from the Chamber for the rest of the day under Standing Order 249.

[The member for Maitland left the Chamber accompanied by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms.]

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: The project will create an extra 220 jobs, more than doubling the number of staff roles at the prison. The prison is already the largest employer in Wellington. Inmates will be engaged in activities, including programs designed to reduce reoffending, and education and industry programs for up to 12 hours a day, compared to six hours a day offered at similar security facilities. The centres will include a library and computer rooms to assist inmates in the development of literacy and numeracy skills. We want our inmates rehabilitated and armed with the skills they need to obtain employment post-release and to get their lives back on track.

Officers will have access to thermal imaging cameras to help stop contraband items entering the facility, and a 24/7 immediate action team will be able to respond to incidents. This Government is committed to reducing reoffending by 5 per cent by 2019. Since I became Minister, the Government has announced that a new prison will be built in Grafton and that Parklea Correctional Centre will be expanded. We know that in order to get best value for money and the best outcomes for those who are incarcerated, our prisons need to go beyond simply locking up prisoners. We need to harness the opportunity for them to positively contribute to society—

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

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: —as well as to reintegrate into the community when they are eventually released.

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

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: The Grafton prison has been an important part of the State's corrections system for more than 100 years, which is why I am delighted that the member for Clarence is so interested in my portfolio. The new prison will bring more jobs and investment to the Clarence Valley region. The member for Clarence has fought tirelessly to secure a strong New South Wales Government commitment to corrections in Grafton, and I thank him for that. The Government's decision to deliver this new prison in partnership with the private sector was intentional because it wants the prison to be at the forefront of best practice service delivery. We are not wasting a cent of taxpayers' money; we will ensure that investments are effectively and efficiently managed because we owe that to taxpayers who have entrusted their money to us.

In targeting reoffending, the Government is protecting victims of crime, reducing the cost of imprisoning offenders, and reducing the burden on the police, courts, health and welfare sectors. The Baird-Grant Government is determined that this new facility will be an asset to the local Grafton area and that it will be embraced by the northern New South Wales region. It will foster community involvement and provide local as well as jobs for Indigenous people. It will also provide quality health care and mental health services for inmates while mindfully preparing them for reintegration into society.

It will also provide specialised support services to inmates from other nearby correctional centres, saving the cost and impact of transporting inmates further afield. Overall the New South Wales Government is delivering a record investment in the correctional system to implement an infrastructure strategy to meet the needs of the rising prison population. The people of New South Wales should rightly expect the Opposition, in particular, its leader, to put forward an alternative plan for our correctional system. My advice to the people of New South Wales is that they should not hold their breath.

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn all members who are on three calls to order that they will be out of the Chamber very shortly if they continue with their disorderly behaviour.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: The chance of the Opposition coming up with a single corrections policy idea is about as likely as the member for Prospect finding all those medals that he claims to have. The Opposition can continue to do the bidding of the unions and beg for media attention.

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Lakemba that he is on three calls to order.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: We will get on with the job of investing in local economies, particularly in regional areas. This Government is delivering—

[Interruption]

The SPEAKER: The member for Lakemba does not stop interjecting for long enough to hear that he is on three calls to order.

Mr Jihad Dib: Sorry, Madam Speaker.

The SPEAKER: If the member for Lakemba stops interjecting he will hear how many calls to order he is on. I keep reminding him. He is on three calls to order and he has had his final warning.

[Extension of time]

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: As I said before I was interrupted, the chance of the Opposition coming up with a single corrections policy idea is about the same as the member for Prospect finding all those medals that he claims to have. The Opposition can continue to do the bidding of the unions and beg for media attention. We are getting on with the job of investing in local economies, in particular, in regional areas, which will flourish with multimillion-dollar projects. This Government is delivering 7,000 additional prison beds across the State. This Government is expanding Parklea Correctional Centre, building a new prison at Grafton and is about to reopen Berrima Correctional Centre.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call Government members to order.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: This Government has already reopened Kirkconnell and it is building the first high-security, rapid-built prison in Cessnock and Wellington. All these infrastructure programs come with additional jobs and greater access to rehabilitation and services and, ultimately, will ensure that our community continues to be well protected.

HOSPITAL CHEMOTHERAPY TREATMENT

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:51): My question is directed to the Minister for Health. How many cancer patients have been treated by Dr Grygiel in the Central West?

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER (North Shore—Minister for Health) (14:51): That is a matter for investigation by Professor Currow. The difficulty is that—

Ms Jodi McKay: You have got no idea, have you?

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Strathfield to order for the second time. If the member for Strathfield behaves like that again she will be on three calls to order. Members should take a point of order rather than interjecting.

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: It is pretty offensive, but the member for Strathfield is not really interested. The reality is Dr Grygiel was acting as an honorarium and the patient files are with him. They are being investigated by Professor Currow. That inquiry will run its course and be reporting in September. I take this opportunity to add to the answer—

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order. The Minister might like to take the time to get the information and bring it back to the House.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The member for Maroubra will resume his seat and listen to what the Minister has to say.

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: I will not be pre-empting the thorough investigation that is well underway, but I will take this opportunity to provide further information relating to a question I was asked earlier about my trip to China. One of the great outcomes of that trip was three memorandums of understanding that have been signed, including one—

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order. The Minister is entitled to provide an explanation after question time as a supplementary answer—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is providing relevant additional information.

Ms Jodi McKay: This has nothing to do with her China trip.

The SPEAKER: Order! I get to make the rulings. There is no point of order. The member for Strathfield will resume her seat.

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: As I understand the rules of the Parliament, I have five minutes to answer the question. I have used the first few minutes to provide the answer. I am now using the remaining time to provide further information. The last memorandum of understanding I signed was with the Vice-Governor of Shandong Province who came to Australia after my visit and signed a memorandum of understanding to do with providing training for doctors, nurses and others.

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The Minister has been replying to the question for two minutes and is now referring to a completely different topic.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister remains relevant and has answered the question. There is no point of order.

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: The truth of the matter is that those opposite are worried about the Stasi. When Bob Carr was Premier he used the Stasi to produce documents. He would say, "The Stasi got it for me." The Stasi is now in the upper House—it is Walt Secord. He does not produce any worthwhile information but I can tell members who does. My Stasi tells me that in its last year in office the Labor Government spent more than \$800,000 on overseas trips. Can members believe that? In its last year in office the Labor Government spent \$1.5 million. The difference is that this Government got something for its investment; those opposite got nothing. Those opposite came last in economic performance; this Government is the best. Furthermore, my Stasi provides me—

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order.

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: Do Opposition members want more? I will give them more. My Stasi tells me that in 2009 Minister Joe Tripodi did a bit of travelling which cost taxpayers \$290,000.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Minister, have you concluded your answer?

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: Yes.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order.

CBD AND SOUTH EAST LIGHT RAIL PROJECT

Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH (Coogee) (14:55): My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. What progress has been made in delivering the Government's light rail projects?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (14:56): I thank the member for Coogee for his question. I know he is passionate about light rail and, in particular, trees. I can advise him that—

Mr Michael Daley: Oh, yeah.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: During the election campaign the member for Maroubra was busy running around putting silly signs on trees which we are not touching. There he was on Anzac Parade putting signs up on every bloody tree and guess what? We are not touching them.

Mr Guy Zangari: Point of order: The Minister should direct his comments through the Chair.

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the Minister to direct his comments through the Chair.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: To help the member for Maroubra, we will be planting 1,800 trees as a result of building the light rail project. I will rename the member for Coogee "Tarzan" as he will be swinging from branch to branch all the way down Anzac Parade and all the way up Alison Road. It will be an incredible project. The important point is that through our work we have also—

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. I would like to hear what the Minister is saying.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: We have saved 120 trees through replanting and we left in place the current arrangements. Today I was pleased to release the first draft of the light rail project through Moore Park. I can assure Opposition members that there is plenty of greenery. During the Federal election campaign Opposition members ran around telling everyone in Sydney lies. They said that every tree was going to go.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: My old mate from Auburn and his Green activist mates told everyone that we were clear-felling the park, which is not true. Anyone who glimpses the first draft on the news tonight will see that that is not true. Today we made it clear to the business community in Sydney that we discovered an additional 400 utilities under George Street, which shows just how complex this project is. But, pleasingly, I can confirm that the project is still on time and on budget. We worked through each of the 31 construction zones to ensure that we were able to deliver the project. The point I made earlier today—it is important to note it now in the House—is that when we were dealing with utilities under George Street there were significant challenges, particularly from an occupational health and safety point of view. Those opposite do not want to hear about light

rail and they do not like public transport. They hate public transport; they want to cancel this project and they are not interested in it.

The SPEAKER: Order! There are too many audible conversations in the Chamber.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Pleasingly, I can confirm that the project is still on track. We are working through some challenges when it comes to particular zones on George Street, given those unexpected utilities. The member for Newcastle will be interested to know that today we announced Downer EDI to be the contract manager of the design for light rail in Newcastle. We have also undertaken the necessary public submission process for the review of environmental factors and we will soon release the summary report. A number of important changes were made as a result of recommendations from the community. I am keen to ensure that when the Novocastrian community speaks about the project, the Government will respond.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: It has been an important process for that community. We have announced a number of changes today. For instance, the rail track in Hunter Street will be flush with the ground; we have been able to make improvements for pedestrians and cyclists alike through the corridor at Worth Place; and an additional track will be put across Stewart Avenue, which will allow the project to be viable in the future when the network is expanded for the people of Newcastle. The project has created an enormous uplift in Newcastle. We have seen significant development. It is ironic that those opposite find it funny. Tell that to the construction workers who now have work in Newcastle. Tell that to the people of Newcastle who put up with Labor failing to make decisions about their city year in and year out. We have seen a great outcome. Downer EDI will do a great job designing the project and I look forward to seeing the results soon.

HOSPITAL CHEMOTHERAPY TREATMENT

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (15:01): My question is directed to the Minister for Health. Given that Dr Grygiel has treated up to 300 Central West cancer patients a year since 1989, will the Minister now adopt Andrew Gee's call and support Labor's demand for a special commission of inquiry?

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order.

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER (North Shore—Minister for Health) (15:01): The review of St Vincent's patients went back to 2006 when the treatment protocols changed. It may well be 300 if we go back to the years before Labor, but I do not know whether it is that many. Regarding the inquiry, I have said that I have great confidence in Dr Grygiel.

Mr Luke Foley: It does not matter how many there are.

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: The Leader of the Opposition is quite right: It does not matter how many there are.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will cease interjecting. The Leader of the Opposition will cease shouting at the Minister.

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: The important thing is to make sure anyone who was treated inappropriately is investigated and that the public are reassured about the safety of cancer treatments going forward. That is why we have appointed Professor David Currow to investigate. The result of his investigation into St Vincent's has been accepted by all. No questions have been asked about the veracity or quality of the investigation. I would expect the same from his inquiries into other hospitals. As the Premier has indicated, if we are not satisfied with that we will consider another option, but at the moment I am well and truly satisfied. While I am on my feet, I have some more Stasi information about money that was spent on overseas trips. Carl Scully went on a trip—

Mr Guy Zangari: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. This has nothing to do with former Labor Ministers.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister remains relevant to the question she was asked. The member for Fairfield will resume his seat.

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: Carl Scully went on a trip that cost \$106,000; Eric Roozendaal did two trips in 2010 at a cost of \$71,000 and \$59,000. I will save Jodi McKay's trips for later.

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister remains relevant to the question she was asked. The member for Port Stephens will resume her seat.

Ms Kate Washington: The Minister is crowing about other matters when we are talking about the health of residents.

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

GREATER MACARTHUR REGION INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (15:03): My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning. How is the New South Wales Government delivering homes in south-west Sydney?

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

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning) (15:04): Hello, everyone. Madam Speaker, I am a little disappointed today.

The SPEAKER: You are disappointed? I am disappointed every day in this Chamber.

Mr ROB STOKES: Mrs Stokes was in the Chamber earlier and she was appalled by the rowdiness of those opposite. She has always been sceptical about what I do for a job. I was going to bowl her over with my rhetorical brilliance, but that is not to be. On a more positive note, this is a time that comes around only once every few years. Despite our differences, we come together as a community and as a nation. We stay up late and, together, we break some records and we make history. Tonight is census night. It will be exciting because the population of Sydney is reaching five million and in coming years we will top the eight million mark in New South Wales. Sydney alone is home to 1,600 new residents each week. Many of those new residents will settle in Western Sydney. It is important that when we plan for jobs and homes, we link the two to ensure that when Sydney gets bigger, it gets better.

Town planning was the subject of Olympic medals between 1928 and 1948. Olympic medals were given for town planning, which would have made for thrilling television. One project that would be nominated today is our plans for the Greater Macarthur region. Over the next generation Greater Macarthur will be the site of 50,000 or more new homes as a result of the Glenfield to Macarthur priority growth area and the Greater Macarthur growth area. We are getting on with providing infrastructure—schools, roads, and the public transport network to facilitate the growing new communities all the way from Glenfield in the north to the new town of Wilton Junction in the south. It will be the backdrop to the next iteration of the great Australian dream.

We are getting on with the work of providing the infrastructure that is needed and we have already announced funding for Appin Road and Springway Parkway, which has been matched and exceeded by the Federal Government. It will also be exceeded by contributions made by the development community. Through those collaborations we will provide the infrastructure that is necessary to ensure that connections are made between homes and jobs before the homes start to spring out of the ground. The Premier has already spoken about a new school at Camden. We will see more schools developed over time as new homes are built. Those areas have been slated for development ever since the Sydney region outline plan in 1968. It is historic that this Government has provided the legal framework to get on with the detailed precinct planning, which will see homes developed at Mount Gilead within the next couple of years and progressively from that point in historic towns through Greater Macarthur from Wilton, Appin, Menangle, Menangle Park, and Mount Gilead.

I was in Minto yesterday and had the opportunity to meet with Karen Endicott, the principal of Sarah Redfern High School. She spoke about the need to connect different government agencies with the community, home owners and residents. The fabric of great communities is made through great planning. Minto has a train station on the Glenfield to Macarthur corridor that gives it the capacity to develop as a full service town centre that will be connected from the new Minto marketplace development through the high school over to the train station. That is just one of the great new communities that will be developed along this corridor. It is terrific to be able to plan with the communities there and with the great support of local members like the member for Wollondilly. *[Extension of time]*

Growing Sydney is all about providing new homes and new jobs, and great connections between them. That is what we are getting on with in the Greater Macarthur area.

Announcements

HIGH-PERFORMING STAFF WORKSHOPS

The SPEAKER: I take this opportunity to remind members that tomorrow they are encouraged to attend workshops on high-performing staff being run by organisational psychologist Sharon Bent. There is information on the workshops in the Speaker's square.

*Documents***WATERFALL ACCIDENT****Reports**

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I table the report of the Independent Transport Safety Regulator, entitled "Implementation of the New South Wales Government's response to the Final Report of the Special Commission Inquiring into the Waterfall Rail Accident Reporting period: April 2015-March 2015".

*Committees***LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE****Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 22/56**

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN: As Chair: I table the report of the Legislation Review Committee entitled "Legislation Review Digest No. 22/56", dated 9 August 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. 21/56", dated 2 August 2016.

*Petitions***PETITIONS RECEIVED**

The SPEAKER: I announce that the following petition signed by more than 10,000 persons has been lodged for presentation:

Coalmining and Exploration

Petition requesting legislation to halt and exclude coal exploration and extraction on and below the land surface near Berrima and in the Southern Highlands, and a moratorium on current or proposed mining or extraction activity in the area, received from **Ms Pru Goward**.

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

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**.

Route 389 Bus Services

Petition requesting more reliable 389 bus services, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Social Housing

Petition requesting that the Sirius building be retained and its social housing function be continued, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

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**.

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

Route 328 Bus Services

Petition requesting the extension of the 328 bus route into Martin Place and Double Bay, received from **Ms Gabrielle Upton**.

*Motions Accorded Priority***HOUSING SUPPLY****Consideration**

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill) (15:12): In their lives families make no bigger investment than the investment in a home. Home ownership remains, to this day, the great Australian dream. At least three-quarters of our population seek to purchase a home. This Government—those on this side of the House—sees that as a major priority.

Mr John Robertson: You and your real estate mates would, so that you can stack some branches with that real estate money.

The SPEAKER: There should be no interjections and no points of order during these three-minute addresses. That was a bipartisan decision.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: Our role is to provide those homes for families. I am very proud to announce today that, as a result of the work of this Government, including our Minister for Planning, we have achieved the delivery of almost 70,000 homes in 2015-16. It is a record. More important than its being a record is the fact that it is a 92 per cent increase—

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Blacktown to order for the first time.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: It is not a 92 per cent increase in the size of the mouth of the member for Blacktown; it is a 92 per cent increase in the number of homes that were delivered in 2011.

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

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: There could never be a 92 per cent increase in the size of mouth of the member for Blacktown. I can guarantee that. That 70,000 figure delivered in the last financial year was a 92 per cent increase on the number of homes delivered in 2011.

Mr John Robertson: He is inciting me, Madam Speaker.

The SPEAKER: No, he is not. The member for Blacktown is inciting me, and that is worse. I remind the member for Londonderry that she is on three calls to order.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: We remember the failed policies of our predecessors, the Labor Government, which gave us the worst housing figures, virtually, in the history of this nation. If a small number of houses are delivered demand will increase against supply and prices will be overinflated. Housing prices are very high now but one way we can suppress them is by ensuring that we keep up an ample supply of houses. That is what this Government has done, through the planning policy implemented by our Minister. I am pleased to say that he is so excited that his wife has visited this Chamber to celebrate with him.

The Minister and his wife have popped the cork on a bottle of champagne to celebrate the fact that this Government is delivering record numbers of houses in this State. Already we are seeing the results of the delivery of that number of houses. I have been speaking to real estate agents in the north-west, in my area of my electorate. The north-west is a great area; we have great investors in homes in the north-west. Those real estate agents are saying that there has been a levelling of prices. So the policies of this Government are producing more homes. That is why this motion deserves priority.

TAFE NSW**Consideration**

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (15:15): My motion deserves to be accorded priority because last week in this Chamber the Government tried to tell the people of New South Wales that it cared about the future of our great TAFE institutions. Surprise, surprise, they even invoked the Malcolm Turnbull defence by talking about a scare campaign about TAFE. How predictable. It is not a scare campaign; it is simply the truth. There have been 126,000 fewer enrolments since 2012 and 5,200 teachers and support staff have been sacked during that time. There have been threats to recycle TAFE assets and to move away from bricks and mortar. That is bureaucratic speak for selling off TAFE campuses.

Worst of all is the way that these cuts play out at TAFE colleges and in the communities that need them. Governments cannot preside over falling enrolments and job cuts of this magnitude without its being felt at campuses across the State. Support workers to help deaf students get through life-changing courses have been threatened with redundancy. Learning consultants who enable people with disabilities to access opportunities are anxious about their future. Campuses—Chullora, Murwillumbah, Scone and Singleton; the list goes on and on—are on the chopping block and the Government refuses to confirm whether they are in or out. Carpentry, plumbing and painting teachers are being shown the door amid what everyone agrees is a nationwide shortage of apprentices.

Teachers who are located geographically in the centre of Sydney's building boom that the member for Castle Hill was talking about are affected. What is the common factor here and everywhere? The common factor is that Liberal Party and Nationals members of this place have failed to stand up to this Minister and this Premier against this attack. Liberal and Nationals members of this place talk a big game in this Chamber but they deny the impact of the cuts in their own communities. We ask those members to debate us in their electorates about what they are doing to the future of training in this State. We ask those members to defend their destruction of TAFE as we struggle through a skill shortage and while so many regional communities across the State grapple with youth unemployment that is at crisis level. The facts on this issue could not be clearer, and they are the Government's own facts. It is time this Government was held to account on this before it is too late.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the motion of the member for Castle Hill be accorded priority.

The House divided.

Ayes49

Noes32

Majority..... 17

AYES

Anderson, Mr K
Baird, Mr M
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
Constance, Mr A
Dominello, Mr V
George, Mr T
Grant, Mr T
Henskens, Mr A
Kean, Mr M
Marshall, Mr A
Patterson, Mr C (teller)
Petinos, Ms E
Roberts, Mr A
Skinner, Ms J
Taylor, Mr M
Upton, Ms G
Williams, Ms L

Aplin, Mr G
Barilaro, Mr J
Brookes, Mr G
Coure, Mr M
Elliott, Mr D
Gibbons, Ms M
Gulaptis, Mr C
Humphries, Mr K
Lee, Dr G
Notley-Smith, Mr B
Pavey, Ms M
Piccoli, Mr A
Rowell, Mr J
Speakman, Mr M
Toole, Mr P
Ward, Mr G

Ayres, Mr S
Berejiklian, Ms G
Conolly, Mr K
Crouch, Mr A
Evans, Mr L
Goward, Ms P
Hazzard, Mr B
Johnsen, Mr M
Maguire, Mr D
O'Dea, Mr J
Perrottet, Mr D
Provest, Mr G
Sidoti, Mr J
Stokes, Mr R
Tudehope, Mr D
Williams, Mr R

NOES

Atalla, Mr E
Chanthivong, Mr A
Dib, Mr J
Foley, Mr L
Harrison, Ms J
Hornery, Ms S
Lynch, Mr P
Mehan, Mr D
Park, Mr R
Robertson, Mr J
Watson, Ms A

Car, Ms P
Crakanthorp, Mr T
Doyle, Ms T
Greenwich, Mr A
Haylen, Ms J
Kamper, Mr S
McDermott, Dr H
Mihailuk, Ms T
Parker, Mr J
Warren, Mr G (teller)
Zangari, Mr G

Catley, Ms Y
Daley, Mr M
Finn, Ms J
Harris, Mr D
Hoenig, Mr R
Lalich, Mr N (teller)
McKay, Ms J
Minns, Mr C
Piper, Mr G
Washington, Ms K

PAIRS

Davies, Ms T
Hancock, Ms S
Hodgkinson, Ms K

Barr, Mr C
Hay, Ms N
Smith, Ms K

Motion agreed to.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Londonderry and the member for Lakemba that they are on three calls to order.

HOUSING SUPPLY**Priority**

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill) (15:24): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that home approvals in New South Wales continue to reach record-breaking levels with more than 70,000 houses approved in 2015-16.
- (2) Supports the Government's policies to boost supply and give the people of New South Wales every opportunity to enter the housing market.

The New South Wales Government has increased housing approvals in this State by more than its target of 50,000 new homes. In doing so, it has helped to deliver the highest number of completed new homes in more than a decade, which is absolutely phenomenal. As I said when debating priority and establishing that this motion deserved priority, the one true way to assist people in life is to create an opportunity for them to achieve the great Australian dream. This is happening when there are record house prices across the State and throughout the nation. By providing more product to the market, house prices will be kept as low as possible.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! If the member for The Entrance wishes to know something, he should contact a real estate agent. The member for Castle Hill has the call.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: I am more than happy to advise the big-mouth member for Blacktown and the big-mouth member for The Entrance that house prices are stabilising.

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

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: It is no secret that I am very fond of property; so, too, are Australian communities. The great Australian dream is alive and well. This Government is ensuring that it supports everybody to achieve the great Australian dream by providing them with an opportunity to obtain a house. The Government has not followed the example of its predecessors by shrugging its shoulders and putting housing into the too-hard basket. To the contrary, the Government has delivered record housing at the same time as providing appropriate infrastructure, such as public transport, roads and perhaps a hospital or two—something that is conveniently forgotten by members of the Labor Party. As I have said previously in this House, in each of the two great and growing areas of north-western Sydney, which I represent, and south-western Sydney, the Government is providing a new hospital.

It is good news across the entire State when there is strong housing activity because it indicates a strong economy. This State has benefited from a total record investment of \$74.8 billion in infrastructure during the tenure of the Government. While this Government delivers more housing, it is simultaneously ensuring that economic growth occurs in the right locations. As I have said, prosperity is not just about providing housing; it is about building communities. For that reason I endorse the approach adopted by our planning Minister, who is very much in tune with the appropriate planning principles underlying great communities, even in areas neighbouring the north-western and south-western regions. The Minister has referred to the greenfield precinct that will be established.

When we see record prices, as we are at the moment—in the north-western areas, where I live, prices are higher than they are on the North Shore—that says something. People are moving to Western Sydney not because they need to—to escape some members in the Rockdale area—but by choice. We are creating great places to live with great housing developments and we are providing great communities along with them. On every level it is of the utmost important that we continue to roll out housing product and that in that product we provide choice. Another key mark of our very good planning Minister is that we are providing choice—whether it be detached housing or apartment dwellings or everything in between such as three-storey walk-ups or townhouse developments. We are seeing the complete mix right across the board, and I am very happy to say that in my

backyard we even provide some acreage lots. We are seeing the entire spectrum of housing developed and delivered by the New South Wales Government.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (15:30): The only thing that is evident from the previous contribution is that somebody in the Premier's office is not very happy with the member for Castle Hill. He has been sent down here with a motion that is easily dismantled by statistics, and that means that someone in the Premier's office is not happy with the member for Castle Hill. It is strange that those opposite would select to discuss, of all subject matters available, housing affordability. The best that can be said on housing affordability in this State is that this Government has been missing in action and at worst there has been downright neglect. To advance the proposition, as those opposite have done, that land release alone will help the housing affordability problem in Sydney is downright amazing. If those opposite look at the statistics—and there are plenty available—it is incontrovertible that the average price of a house in Sydney over the last four years has increased by about 60 per cent. Yes, those opposite might want to cite statistics that say 70,000 lots have been released in the last year. But that release is not having an effect on house prices; things are getting much, much worse.

I note that in the last five years of this Government the great Australian dream that the member for Castle Hill refers to has become a great Australian nightmare. He said, "No greater investment can be made than that in the family home. It does remain the great Australian dream." That is true for fewer and fewer people, because the proportion of first home buyers in the market now under this Government is down to an incredible 6 per cent. Only 6 per cent of purchasers who struggle through auctions on the weekends are first home buyers. Those opposite should not come in here and say that the great Australian dream is alive and well, because it has been shattered under their Government.

The historical position of this Government over the last five years has been to slash benefits for first home buyers, and it has been an incredibly successful policy. Those opposite cannot get first home buyers down to a paltry 6 per cent just by rolling over their arm. They wanted to do it and they have done it with aplomb. I congratulate those opposite for that. The policy response for the future, even though first home buyers are experiencing a disaster every weekend, is to do nothing. Inclusionary zoning is 15 per cent in South Australia, 30 per cent in London and nothing in Sydney. No wonder former Premier Nick Greiner has called for action in an opinion piece in the *Sydney Morning Herald*. In other jurisdictions there are rules laid down for developers to dedicate a proportion of their units to affordable housing, but not in New South Wales.

That is on developers' land. On government-owned land, where there should be a real dedication to making a dent in affordable housing, we are seeing disasters unfold like that in the member for Heffron's electorate, in suburbs like Waterloo. In Waterloo, 3,000 social housing dwellings are being knocked down to make way for a development by UrbanGrowth. With all of that government land available for affordable housing, how many social housing dwellings will be put back in place of the 3,000 that will be bulldozed? Three thousand; not a single additional dwelling. Shame on those opposite; not one. We keep hearing about land release and something called the Housing Acceleration Fund, a billion-dollar fund. That is a good start, a great promise for the election. It is a billion-dollar fund to accelerate housing affordability in New South Wales. What was the first thing the Government did with that \$1 billion fund? It raided it.

In November last year, the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, Duncan Gay, and the Minister for Planning announced that \$142 million would be dedicated to the Carter Street precinct with adjuncts to WestConnex and it would be funded from the budget for WestConnex. In a sneaky sleight of hand, about two months ago the Treasurer announced that the Government would be raiding the Housing Acceleration Fund and taking \$142 million out of that fund to prop up WestConnex, not applying it to making housing more affordable in the growth centres of Western Sydney and south-western Sydney. The cost of that project is now well in excess of \$17 billion. The fact is that this Government has done nothing except make houses less affordable in Sydney over the last five years. Government members love to talk the talk, but every weekend all we see in auctions right across Sydney is first home buyers getting poleaxed by investors while this Government watches the statistics get worse and worse.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (15:35): It was interesting to hear the creative contribution from the member for Maroubra. He acknowledged the billion-dollar Housing Acceleration Fund. What has happened as a result of establishing that? I will give an example in my own area. Those opposite when in government rezoned land with big fanfare back in 2010 in a couple of precincts of what was the north-west growth centre, but nothing could happen. Not a single house could be built because there were no services, particularly sewerage services. No houses could be built in the Riverstone precinct even though the landowners had heard the announcement. Why was that? It was because Sydney Water was not due to deliver sewerage infrastructure until 2018. That sewer is being completed as I speak and houses are popping up all over the Riverstone and Alex Avenue precincts as a result. We did that under the Housing Acceleration Fund.

This Government is making sure that houses can be delivered for the people who need them in New South Wales. These houses are being delivered right across the spectrum—not just in the north-west, not just in the south-west, not just in the Sydney metropolitan area. These houses are being built today because the Housing Acceleration Fund has unlocked the constraints and overcome the hurdles that were preventing housing from being delivered. We have people moving into homes who would not have been able to do so if those opposite were still in government pursuing the failed policies that they had. We would still be waiting for Sydney Water to deliver sewerage to the north-west and the rollout for future precincts would have been years further behind because those opposite could not handle the money. They could not manage money and provide what the people of New South Wales needed.

Now we see record numbers of homes being approved—in fact, 70,000 homes have been approved or are in the pipeline in a 12 month period. When we were elected in the 2010-11 financial year New South Wales produced fewer homes than in not just Queensland or Victoria but in South Australia. There is no comparison between the size of New South Wales and South Australia—the economies, populations and so on—and yet in that year we produced fewer homes for our people than did South Australia, the booming, megalopolis economy of South Australia. We inherited an appalling situation. There was a huge backlog of unmet demand. That is what we have addressed. That is what this Government's policies are overcoming in providing for the people of New South Wales.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (15:39): Mr Assistant Speaker—

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I remind the member for Rockdale that if he is seeking the call he should seek the attention of the Chair.

Mr David Elliott: He did not seek the call. Sit him down.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I do not require any help from the Minister. The member did not seek the call; however, I will give him the call on this occasion.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I apologise, Mr Assistant Speaker. It is my privilege to speak to this motion. I do not know what planet the members for Riverstone or Hawkesbury are from, but praising the Government's housing policies suggests they are not from this planet. The median house price in Sydney is \$1 million. The median value of a unit in Sydney is \$675,000. The Government is patting itself on the back for pricing our youth out of the marketplace. Why? The Government is not supplying housing. The Government may have had a result in the past six or 12 months, but it has done nothing for the previous five years. The Government should look at the numbers and see the reality.

Last year there was a 16 per cent increase and there was a 6 per cent increase this year. The Government is saying that is fantastic for first home buyers. The Government is promoting greenfield sites hours away from the central business district, but there is no development on the North Shore. My electorate has been waiting for 18 months for the high-density precinct, but the Department of Planning is sitting on its hands. We need greater supply to keep the price of housing down. That is what is going on. Another issue to complicate matters for young people seeking to buy their first home is council amalgamations. Half of the councils have no political representation and they are paralysed. There will be another 12-month delay. Nothing is happening.

Mr John Barilaro: That is not true.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That is absolutely true. The administrators are doing nothing but sitting there. It is important that we understand that the Government is implementing policies that are not producing the results required for society. Housing must be kept affordable for young people and first home buyers. I am serious and looking members in the face. I have children and grandchildren and I want them to be able to enter the property market. The million dollar prices may be good news for an escalated real estate agent's commission, but it is not good for society or our youth.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill) (15:42): In reply: I appreciate the contributions by members and the crocodile tears from Labor Party members who, for 16 long dark years, subjected this State to the worst housing figures ever delivered. That is on the record. It is a fact. The latest Australian Bureau of Statistics housing approval figures show that the building boom across New South Wales is continuing at unprecedented levels. Almost 70,000 home sites have been approved in the past 12 months and that will continue into the foreseeable future. In planning terms it has been recognised for the past five years that by 2031 there will be one million additional people in Western Sydney. That is 14-odd years away.

Six hundred thousand homes will need to be provided for the people moving to Western Sydney, and they are being provided through the delivery of 70,000 homes in the past year. That demand will be met through infill and greenfield development. Public housing stock is being removed and replenished, and that money is being

poured back into housing stock. The Sirius building will not be heritage listed; it will be removed, replaced and replenished and its site, next to Sydney Harbour, will be embellished. The Government will embellish new housing stock on behalf of social housing. This Government will provide a spectrum of housing.

These day when people are buying a new home, it is not a two-bedroom fibro home, it is a high-quality residence with accompanying features at an inflated price. The Government will ensure that the housing stock it delivers will cover the spectrum from detached homes to high-quality one- and two-bedroom apartments. These great living spaces and precincts will provide open space and vital connectivity to public transport and roads. That will be accompanied by education and health precincts to produce great communities and housing developments across the spectrum. The only way to do that is by application to the outcome. I am proud to be part of a Government that is delivering record housing development for the people of New South Wales.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that the motion be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes48
Noes30
Majority.....18

AYES

Anderson, Mr K
Barilaro, Mr J
Conolly, Mr K
Crouch, Mr A
Evans, Mr L
Goward, Ms P
Hazzard, Mr B
Johnsen, Mr M
Maguire, Mr D
O'Dea, Mr J
Perrottet, Mr D
Piper, Mr G
Rowell, Mr J
Speakman, Mr M
Toole, Mr P
Ward, Mr G

Aplin, Mr G
Berejiklian, Ms G
Constance, Mr A
Dominello, Mr V
George, Mr T
Greenwich, Mr A
Henskens, Mr A
Kean, Mr M
Marshall, Mr A
Patterson, Mr C (teller)
Petinos, Ms E
Provest, Mr G
Sidoti, Mr J
Stokes, Mr R
Tudehope, Mr D
Williams, Mr R

Ayres, Mr S
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
Coure, Mr M
Elliott, Mr D
Gibbons, Ms M
Gulaptis, Mr C
Humphries, Mr K
Lee, Dr G
Notley-Smith, Mr B
Pavey, Ms M
Piccoli, Mr A
Roberts, Mr A
Skinner, Ms J
Taylor, Mr M
Upton, Ms G
Williams, Ms L

NOES

Atalla, Mr E
Chanthivong, Mr A
Dib, Mr J
Foley, Mr L
Haylen, Ms J
Kamper, Mr S
McDermott, Dr H
Mihailuk, Ms T
Parker, Mr J
Washington, Ms K

Car, Ms P
Crakanthorp, Mr T
Doyle, Ms T
Harris, Mr D
Hoenig, Mr R
Lalich, Mr N (teller)
McKay, Ms J
Minns, Mr C
Robertson, Mr J
Watson, Ms A

Catley, Ms Y
Daley, Mr M
Finn, Ms J
Harrison, Ms J
Hornery, Ms S
Lynch, Mr P
Mehan, Mr D
Park, Mr R
Warren, Mr G (teller)
Zangari, Mr G

PAIRS

Baird, Mr M
Davies, Ms T
Hodgkinson, Ms K

Barr, Mr C
Smith, Ms K
Hay, Ms N

Motion agreed to.

*Bills***ADOPTION AMENDMENT (INSTITUTE OF OPEN ADOPTION STUDIES) BILL 2016****Second Reading****Debate resumed from 22 June 2016.**

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (15:52): I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Adoption Amendment (Institute of Open Adoption Studies) Bill 2016. The Opposition does not oppose this bill, which amends the Adoption Act 2000 and the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act to make provision for the disclosure of information relating to persons involved in adoption and out-of-home care to a prescribed research organisation. It also amends the Adoption Regulation 2015 to prescribe the Institute of Open Adoption Studies at the University of Sydney as such an organisation. Furthermore, the bill amends the Adoption Act to allow a qualified individual nominated by an approved organisation to make an expert report to the courts in relation to the adoption of a child. The institute is tasked with providing an evidentiary base in favour of open adoption.

While the Opposition does not oppose this bill, the handling of sensitive personal health and adoption information, and the privacy concerns that that may entail, must be dealt with appropriately. It is of the utmost importance that information disclosed by the secretary under the bill be treated with great care. Information relating to adoption, out-of-home care orders, and individuals' health information is of unparalleled sensitivity. The Legislation Review Committee's assessment of the bill similarly acknowledges the Labor Party's concerns that the disclosure of this information may have an adverse impact on the affected individuals' privacy. I turn now to the provisions in this bill that address the need for sensitivity and security in handling this private, personal information. The language and provisions of these privacy clauses are partially consistent with legislation enacted by the Carr Government; namely, the Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002, the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998, and the Adoption Act 2000.

However, it is important that the phrase "as far as is reasonably practicable" in schedule 1 [4], section 175A (2) (c) and (d), and schedule 2 [1], section 254A (2) (c) and (d) do not inadvertently permit a privacy breach. These provisions include the requirement for the secretary not to enter into disclosure arrangements unless he or she is satisfied those arrangements will ensure that reasonable steps are taken to de-identify the information, that the information will be treated as confidential by the organisation, that as far as is reasonably practicable no publication that uses or is based on the information will enable the identity of an affected person to be ascertained, and that as far as is reasonably practicable any personal information disclosed under the arrangements will be used or dealt with in accordance with certain information protection principles set out in the Privacy and Personal Information Act 1998.

The Carr Government is to be commended for its work in enshrining these key privacy principles in legislation. I note that the Legislative Review Committee is satisfied that the privacy principles enshrined in the Carr Government legislation, and replicated in this bill, are sufficient to mitigate the risks associated with the disclosure of this information. Schedule 1 [4] will amend section 175A (1) of the Adoption Act to enable the Secretary of the Department of Family and Community Services to enter into an arrangement with a research organisation for the purpose of disclosing personal and health information held by the department or an accredited service provider concerning an affected person. A similar amendment will be made to section 254A of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act in schedule 2 [1].

The handling of sensitive personal health and adoption information, and the privacy concerns that that may entail, must always be done in a manner that does not jeopardise its confidentiality. It is of utmost importance that the information disclosed by the secretary under this legislation be treated with great care and confidentiality, and that the information relating to adoption, out-of-home care orders, and individuals' health information be protected. In his second reading speech the Minister referred to privacy conventions, such as the Privacy Commissioner advising the Minister of the day that the commission supports the specific provisions in the bill protecting privacy. The Opposition has not seen that advice and would appreciate the Minister tabling it in this place.

The institute is expected to conduct research and to produce reports designed to increase the number of adoptions that occur in this State. The Government requires all the assistance it can get in this regard, given its previous statements on this issue. I note the Auditor-General's remarks in his 2015 performance audit report into out-of-home care transfers. The Auditor-General made reference to the number of adoptions, or the lack thereof, occurring in New South Wales. He stated:

The number of adoptions and restorations remains low... the number of adoptions has remained relatively unchanged over the last three years at around 80 per year...

...there has been an overall decline in the number of children returned to their birth family since the transfers began in 2012.

That statement suggests that the Government's approach to supporting adoption should be revisited. Of course, doing so would involve examining the resources that are provided and programs that are implemented. Permanency in planning and the security of children are key priorities in the child protection system. The Opposition will not oppose any measures that may increase permanency and security in child protection, given that these two elements are important factors in delivering increased wellbeing outcomes.

It is in this area of improved outcomes that the Government continues to fall short, as the Auditor-General found in the 2015 report into out-of-home care transfers. Key indicators of wellbeing such as health, educational attainment and general welfare are not being adequately identified by this Government and progress in this area has stalled. The general lack of resources in child protection is sending outcomes backwards. There is much work to be done by the Government to ensure that vulnerable children are being thoroughly cared for by the State. I repeat: If it is possible, I would not mind if the Minister tabled the information provided by the Privacy Commissioner.

As always, those of us on this side of the Chamber want to assist the Government, particularly when we believe there might be some merit. Setting up a particular institute that will conduct research and analyse best practice in the field of adoption and look at all the qualitative and quantitative information that is out there is worthy of a university working in partnership with an organisation such as Barnardos and with the financial support of the Government. I understand the Government is providing \$2.85 million over the course of three years to ensure that the institute can begin to collect the relevant information from the past 50 years, protect that information and provide assistance to the courts where necessary.

I turn to the issue of providing expert advice and assistance to the courts, because that in itself means the institute will need to be appropriately resourced into the future, well beyond the three years. I hope the Government will continue to commit to providing funding beyond the three-year period, given that from time to time courts will rely on particular expert advice from the institute, and that comes at an expense. In closing, I wish the institute well. I hope its research bears good results for the vulnerable children in our State. The care and protection of vulnerable children is too important to get this wrong.

Debate adjourned.

RURAL FIRES AMENDMENT (FIRE TRAILS) BILL 2016

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by the Hon. David Elliott, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Corrections, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) (16:02): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

At the last election the New South Wales Liberal and Nationals Government committed to providing New South Wales with an enhanced fire trail network. We made that commitment to assist the dedicated members of the NSW Rural Fire Service [RFS] in their hazard reduction and firefighting duties. An enhanced, more functional and better maintained fire trail network will give the RFS and other firefighting authorities better access to areas where bushfires are or may be occurring, as well as improved access to undertake hazard reduction works. More timely access to a fire front will mitigate the loss of life and property damage that bushfires can cause.

This bill amends the Rural Fires Act 1997 to provide the legislative basis for the establishment and maintenance of the enhanced fire trail network. It integrates fire trail management into the bushfire management planning process in New South Wales. I turn to the specific provisions of the bill. The bill amends section 51 to require bush fire management committees [BFMCs] to prepare draft fire access and fire trail plans and report on their implementation to the Bush Fire Co-ordinating Committee [BFCC]. The BFCC, which is already established under section 48 of the Rural Fires Act 1997, has carriage of planning for bushfire prevention and coordinated bushfire fighting across the State.

A key responsibility of the BFCC is the establishment of BFMCs, which are also already provided for under section 50 of the Rural Fires Act. BFMCs are forums for cooperative and coordinated bushfire management within their area of responsibility. Membership of BFMCs is derived from relevant agencies with local knowledge, including the NSW Rural Fire Service, Fire and Rescue NSW, the NSW Police Force, the Office of Environment and Heritage, the Forestry Corporation of NSW, the Department of Industry—Lands, the NSW Farmers Association, the Nature Conservation Council, local Aboriginal land councils and local councils. Existing key

functions of BFMCs include the preparation of a draft bushfire risk management plan and a draft plan of operations for the coordinated response to a bushfire for their area of responsibility.

The bill creates new functions for BFMCs with respect to fire trails. Amendments to section 52 require each BFMC to prepare a draft fire access and fire trail plan for its respective area. The BFMC must submit the initial plan to the BFCC within three years of the commencement of the bill. Thereafter, a plan must be submitted within every successive five-year period. New section 54A provides for the content of draft fire access and fire trail plans, which must address appropriate means of accessing land to prevent, fight, manage or contain bushfires and may do so by identifying or providing for the identification of suitable existing or proposed fire trails.

The NSW RFS Commissioner may direct a BFMC to amend its fire access and fire trail plans. Fire access and fire trail plans must conform to the Fire Trail Standards made by the NSW RFS Commissioner under new section 62K. New section 59A requires BFMCs to submit their draft fire access and fire trail plans to the BFCC for review and approval. The BFCC may either approve the plans and revoke or vary other existing plans that relate to the area the plans cover. The BFCC may also amend the plans submitted by the BFMC.

New part 3B sets out how the new fire trail and access plans will operate. New section 62I sets out the purpose of the new part 3B, which is to provide for the establishment, maintenance, protection, certification and registration of fire trails. Both new and existing fire trails may be registered. New section 62J defines public land as managed land, unoccupied Crown land, or land owned or occupied by a public authority. Private land is defined as any land that is not public land. An "occupier" may include a public authority that is responsible for any particular land.

New section 62K sets out the requirements for Fire Trail Standards. The section provides that the NSW Rural Fire Service Commissioner may make Fire Trail Standards, and may vary or replace the standards from time to time. The NSW RFS must publish the Fire Trail Standards in the gazette and on its website. The standards are, as far as practicable, to provide for a practical network of fire trails across the State; may relate to the structure and form of fire access and fire trail plans; may relate to the classification, length, width, gradient, signage, construction standards and maintenance of fire trails; and will require fire access and fire trail plans to include a treatment register for fire trails that is approved by the NSW Rural Fire Service Commissioner from time to time.

New section 62L permits the NSW Rural Fire Service Commissioner to give a written direction that a fire trail be established and maintained on public land. The direction must provide particulars of the fire trail, including its location, and may apply to a new fire trail or an existing fire trail or a combination of both. Once a direction is given, the fire trail is established as a designated fire trail. A fire trail ceases to be a designated fire trail once it is registered or its designation is revoked prior to registration. New section 62ZQ provides that both designation and registration of a fire trail run with the land. Neither designation nor registration is affected by a change of ownership or occupation of land, regardless of whether the fire trail is on public or private land. Furthermore, a fire trail is also not affected if public land on which the trail is situated becomes private land or vice versa. New section 62M permits the NSW Rural Fire Service Commissioner to enter into negotiations and agreements with the owners of private land to establish written agreements for the establishment of fire trails.

The agreements must provide particulars of the fire trail, including its location; may apply to a new fire trail or an existing fire trail, or a combination of both; must be in a form approved by the New South Wales RFS Commissioner; state that the agreement is made pursuant to the purposes of the new part 3B; and acknowledge the consent of the owner to the designation and registration of the fire trail. Once an agreement is made, the fire trail becomes a designated fire trail. The fire trail will cease to be a designated fire trail once it becomes registered or the New South Wales RFS Commissioner or the owner of the land agrees to withdraw from the agreement before the fire trail is registered. When the owner of land is not the occupier of the land, an agreement may only be entered into when the occupier has given written consent to enter into the agreement.

New section 62N permits the commissioner to certify fire trails on public land subject to a direction; fire trails on private land subject to an agreement; existing fire trails on public land that are referred to in a fire access and fire trail plan; or existing fire trails on private land that are referred to in a fire access and fire trail plan, provided that the fire trail is the subject of an agreement to establish the fire trail that was entered into prior to the commencement of the bill. A fire trail may only be certified if it complies with the fire trail standards. A fire trail becomes registered when it is placed on the register. The New South Wales RFS Commissioner must keep a register of certified fire trails, which is to be published on the New South Wales RFS website. Land managers will also have the ability to access the register through the guardian system. This will enable them to have visibility of the fire trails for which they have responsibility.

Owners and occupiers of land adjacent to or in the vicinity of land on which a registered fire trail is situated may make a fire trail complaint to the RFS Commissioner if the registered fire trail does not conform

with the fire trail standards in any material respect. The complaint provisions in the bill are based on the existing Rural Fires Act complaints framework. Complaints must be in writing and must identify the complainant and the grounds for the complaint. The owner or occupier of the land to which the complaint relates must be given written notice of the complaint and its grounds as soon as practicable after the complaint is made.

New section 62S requires the New South Wales RFS Commissioner to investigate a fire trail complaint as soon as practicable after it is received. However, the New South Wales RFS Commissioner does not need to investigate the complaint if the New South Wales RFS Commissioner considers it is vexatious, misconceived, frivolous or lacking in substance. New section 62ZP permits the New South Wales RFS Commissioner, or an RFS member authorised by the commissioner, to enter and inspect land other than a dwelling house to determine whether it complies with the standards. Where a fire trail is not in compliance with the standards, the New South Wales RFS Commissioner may undertake construction, maintenance and rectification work to bring it into compliance with the standards. The RFS Commissioner must also notify the complainant of any action taken in response to the complaint as soon as practicable.

New section 62W creates a duty on the owner or occupier of land on which a fire trail is situated to construct and maintain the fire trail in accordance with the fire trail standards. The owner or occupier is also liable for all costs incurred by it in performing that duty. However, the duty does not apply to an occupier of public land who is not a public authority. New section 62X permits the New South Wales RFS Commissioner to authorise persons to carry out fire trail rectification work on unoccupied Crown land or managed land. The bill provides for the issue of fire trail rectification notices to ensure that owners and occupiers construct and maintain fire trails in compliance with the standards. Fire trail rectification work includes construction or completing the construction of a fire trail to bring it into compliance with the fire trail standards.

New section 62Y permits a fire trail management officer to issue written fire trail rectification notices. These notices will require the owner or occupier of land to carry out fire trail rectification work within a time period specified in the notice. However, the notice must provide a minimum of 28 days for the work to be carried out. An owner or occupier who does not comply with a fire trail rectification notice is liable to a maximum penalty of 20 penalty units or imprisonment for two years, or if the owner or occupier is a corporation or public authority, a maximum penalty of 220 penalty units.

New section 62Z permits a person to object to a fire trail rectification notice. Once an objection is lodged, a fire trail manager must, within 28 days, either confirm, vary, or withdraw the notice. New section 62ZA permits a person to appeal in writing against a decision on an objection to a notice. The New South Wales RFS Commissioner must consider and deal with the appeal within a reasonable time by confirming, varying or cancelling the notice. New section 62ZC allows the New South Wales RFS Commissioner to carry out fire trail rectification work if the person to whom a fire trail rectification notice is given does not complete the required work. The New South Wales RFS Commissioner may also recover costs incurred in undertaking the work from the relevant person.

New section 62ZD creates a defence to prosecution under section 62Y or an action to recover costs under section 62ZC. An owner of land may use the defence where the owner is not the occupier and the court is satisfied that the owner had no legal right as between the owner and the occupier to enter the land to comply with the notice. New section 62ZE provides that any damage to land caused in good faith by fire trail rectification work is considered to be fire damage within the meaning of any fire insurance policy covering the damaged property, unless the damage was caused pursuant to an entry on to the land authorised by section 62ZP.

New section 62ZG provides that a fire trail is considered closed if it is wholly or partly removed or destroyed; it is obstructed so that it is not available for use as a fire trail; a sign has been placed indicating it is not available for use as a fire trail; or the trail is otherwise not available for proper use as a fire trail. New section 62ZH allows the New South Wales RFS Commissioner to carry out all work reasonably necessary to remedy an unauthorised closure of a fire trail. Any costs incurred in doing so may be recovered from the owner or occupier of the land. These powers are necessary to ensure that access is maintained for firefighting and hazard reductions across the strategic network of fire trails, particularly during critical bushfire weather.

New section 62ZI creates an offence of closing a designated or registered fire trail without reasonable cause, or inciting or encouraging another person to do so. The offence carries a maximum of 20 penalty units or imprisonment for two years, or a maximum penalty of 220 penalty units in relation to a corporation or public authority. Under new section 62ZJ the RFS Commissioner may terminate the registration of a fire trail, or part of a fire trail, either on their own initiative or on application. New section 62ZK permits an owner or public authority to apply in writing to the New South Wales RFS Commissioner to terminate the registration of a fire trail.

A fire trail management officer will consider the application and make a recommendation to the New South Wales RFS Commissioner on whether to grant or refuse the application. When an application is

refused, a fire trail management officer must serve a notice of refusal on the person who made the application. The person on whom the refusal notice is served may lodge an objection to the notice with the fire trail management officer within 28 days of service of the notice. The fire trail management officer must confirm or vary the notice within 28 days and give the applicant a notice of decision regarding the objection. If confirmed, the person on whom the notice of decision was served may appeal the notice in writing to the New South Wales RFS Commissioner within 28 days of the notice being served.

The New South Wales RFS Commissioner must consider the appeal within a reasonable time and may confirm, vary or reject the recommendation. The New South Wales RFS Commissioner must terminate the registration to the extent provided for in the confirmed, varied or rejected recommendation. To put it another way, an appeal might be only partially supported. When that is the case, the registration of the relevant fire trail will be terminated to the extent that the appeal is supported. The New South Wales RFS Commissioner must also give the applicant notice of the decision. The bill provides a comprehensive framework for the establishment of an enhanced fire trail network across New South Wales. It increases fire safety for the residents of New South Wales and reduces the likelihood of bushfire-related death, injury and property damage. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

ADOPTION AMENDMENT (INSTITUTE OF OPEN ADOPTION STUDIES) BILL 2016

Second Reading

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (16:18): I am pleased to speak in support of the Adoption Amendment (Institute of Open Adoption Studies) Bill 2016. I note at the outset that I welcome the information that the Opposition is not opposing the bill. It is a sensible step forward in trying to create good policy for vulnerable people in New South Wales. The bill amends the Adoption Act 2000 and the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998. It allows the sharing of information about current and past adoptions with the Institute of Open Adoption Studies for the purpose of building an information base about best practice in adoption to support New South Wales Government efforts to give permanency and security to more children living in out-of-home care. The Institute of Open Adoption Studies will operate through a partnership between Barnardos and the University of Sydney Faculty of Education and Social Work, which were the successful tenderers earlier this year.

The need is great. In New South Wales about 20,000 children and young people are in out-of-home care—a number that should concern us all. In 2014-15 there were 87 open adoptions of children and young people in out-of-home care in New South Wales. The equivalent number in 2010-11 was just 45. In 2013-14 all open adoptions in New South Wales totalled 141, of which 82 involved children in out-of-home care. Around the nation in the same year there were 48 adoptions in Victoria, 34 in Queensland and 12 in Tasmania. Clearly, these numbers are small when compared with the number of children and young people in out-of-home care.

Adoption is obviously not the right answer in every situation, as the reasons and circumstances of each young person's case differ and the hope is that the birth parents' circumstances will improve thus enabling the children to be returned to them. Nevertheless, many children in out-of-home care are not likely to have any long-term security if there is no increase in the number of adoptions. If we are to pursue with confidence this goal of promoting the best interests of each child or young person we must have solid evidence about what makes adoption the best answer and in what circumstances. What processes best support successful adoptions, what factors need to be considered and what can be learnt from past adoptions?

Even the concept of the best interests of the child needs to be fully understood in the light of real life experience. The bill refers to open adoption. In this context open adoption means that the children have regular and ongoing contact with their birth families. The frequency of this contact depends on the age of the children and their relationship with their birth family. However, for many a contact order may prescribe the number of visits each year. Other forms of contact including letters, photographs and cards may also be used.

Open adoption will provide these children with a secure future by meeting their attachment needs and giving them an opportunity to understand their past. This is essential to their development and their ongoing construction of identity as a member of an adoptive family. Sadly, Australia has built a dysfunctional foster care system, under which too many children never find a lasting home. They move from one placement to another, in some cases with ever-increasing regularity. Too many foster children end up in juvenile justice institutions, prisons or mental health facilities. It is a sad pathway that everybody hopes to avoid.

While adoption can provide one pathway to greater stability and security, this Government is keen to make the most of that opportunity. Protecting and promoting the welfare and wellbeing of our children is a

fundamental responsibility of our society. This bill brings to fruition the Baird Government's 2015 election commitment to establish the Institute of Open Adoption Studies to independently research adoption policy and practice in New South Wales. To facilitate this research the bill permits the institute to access qualitative and quantitative data from all past, present and future adoptions, applications and orders and permanent care applications for children in out-of-home care that are held by government departments and non-government organisations in New South Wales. The institute's comprehensive research will help determine the value of open adoption for children in out-of-home care, the circumstances under which open adoption is likely to be in the best interests of a child or young person, the elements of best practice for retaining open adoption, and the types of post-adoption support that might be required to achieve the optimal circumstances for an adopted child.

The institute's ability to access large amounts of private information contained in individual adoption and permanent placement cases requires amendment under the bill as otherwise such access would be prohibited under current legislation. I am pleased that this bill puts in place a series of stringent protections to prevent identifying information about individuals involved in adoption or permanent placement from being made public. For instance, I note that the institute will be responsible for handling personal information in accordance with the New South Wales Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 and the New South Wales Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002. This includes safeguards to protect against loss, unauthorised access and use, modification, disclosure and misuse of information.

The institute's unique access to large amounts of data on past and present adoptions and permanent placements will provide policymakers with measurable evidence to influence the future direction of decision-making in open adoption. As this State is a leader in open adoption, it is critical that the Government, the courts and those agencies working in out-of-home care have access to reliable research that is responsive to the needs of children in New South Wales who cannot live with their birth parents.

The institute's synthesised data will also ensure that the community is more aware of what constitutes best adoption practice today and in the future. This should encourage greater knowledge and acceptance of open adoption as a permanent placement option for children in out-of-home care who cannot remain with their birth parents. The bill will also allow the institute to become a leading independent expert in adoption matters, and give it the ability to provide expert reports to the Supreme Court. I fully support the steps taken in this bill and the broader intention of the New South Wales Government to make long-term security, safety and stability available to children whose families are unable to provide them. I commend the Minister on introducing the bill.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoynes) (16:26): I am pleased to speak in support of the Adoption Amendment (Institute of Open Adoption Studies) Bill 2016 introduced by the Minister for Family and Community Services. This bill creates a new independent and dedicated body called the Institute of Open Adoption Studies. The institute will collect, analyse and integrate large amounts of previously scattered data on past and present adoptions and permanent placements for children in out-of-home care. The collected information will be both qualitative and quantitative in nature. The institute's access to such a large repository of adoption information will help to establish it as a leader in adoption research.

The operation of the institute was awarded, after a competitive tender, to a joint collaboration between the University of Sydney and Barnardos Australia. Why is such research needed now? Why is the New South Wales Government willing to invest \$2.85 million of seed funding to germinate this new institute? To understand the purpose of the Institute of Open Adoption Studies a preliminary understanding of the two major social and legal changes to adoption policy and practice in the past 50 years and how they interact with each other is required. These two changes can be simply described as "open adoption" meets "Safe Home for Life".

The first major shift was from the policy of closed adoption to the policy of open adoption. Since the 1990s, adoption law, policy and practice have moved progressively away from maintaining secrecy about an adopted child's past to actively encouraging disclosure of information about, and contact between, an adopted child and his or her family of origin. Open adoption incorporates ongoing contact between adopted children, their birth parents and their adoptive parents. It is now firmly established as adoption best practice. The second major shift is the policy known as Safe Home for Life. The Safe Home for Life policy actively considers adoption as a permanent placement option for non-Indigenous children in out-of-home care who cannot live, and will never be able to live, with their birth families.

The policy has come to prominence since the 2014 Safe Home for Life legislative amendments. It aims to break the cycle of children in out-of-home care experiencing placement breakdowns and being churned through multiple placements throughout their childhood and adolescence. A blending of those two policy shifts is now considered optimal practice for many children and young people who can never live with their birth parents. Open adoption can provide children in out-of-home care with a permanent family to belong to—a stable, safe and nurturing home for life—while still maintaining contact with their family of origin.

The Safe Home for Life policy shift has resulted in an increasing number of adoptions of children who were formerly in out-of-home care in New South Wales. New South Wales now has the highest numbers of children and young people adopted from care in Australia. The Institute for Open Adoption Studies will be created in the wake of those two major policy shifts in the way in which adoption is practised in New South Wales. A core aim of the institute's evidence-based research will be to assist best practice and policy for the growing numbers of children in out-of-home care who, under the recent Safe Home for Life policies, are being considered for open adoption.

The institute's comprehensive research will assist the development of best practice in the long-term placement of children who cannot return to their family of origin. In particular, the institute's research will assist in resolving the value of open adoption for children in out-of-home care; the circumstances in which open adoption is likely to be in the best interests of a child or young person; the elements of best practice for attaining open adoption; and the types of post-adoption support that promote the most favourable environment for an adopted child.

Clearly, with the institute having access to such sensitive and personal information, rigorous privacy and ethics controls over its use and dissemination will be provided by this bill. The quest is to balance the institute's efficient and effective use of research information without compromising the protection of an individual's personal information. The amendments proposed by this bill are designed to get this balance right. With so much careful planning and thought, I am sure the Institute of Open Adoption Studies will be a leader in the field of adoption and permanent placement research. I support the Minister wholeheartedly in bringing forward this bill and look forward to its enactment and implementation. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (16:32): I support the Adoption Amendment (Institute of Open Adoption Studies) Bill 2016. The bill will amend the Adoption Act 2000 and the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 to enhance information-sharing provisions relating to certain persons who are involved in adoption and out-of-home care. The bill prescribes the establishment of the Institute of Open Adoption Studies, University of Sydney as a research organisation and will enable suitably qualified people to provide the Children's Court with reports in relation to the adoption of a child. Already during debate we have heard that this bill also delivers on the Government's 2015 election commitment to establish the Institute of Open Adoption Studies to independently research adoption policy and practice in New South Wales.

The Institute of Open Adoption Studies is an integral part of the Government's commitment towards ensuring safe and stable homes for children and young people in care, who cannot safely be restored to living with their families. New South Wales leads the way in open adoption. This bill will position our State as a forerunner in adoption research right across this country. The research conducted by the institute will enable the Government, the courts and agencies working in out-of-home care to have access to reliable research that is responsive to the issues within our State and this important sector. The institute's research also will inform New South Wales Government policy, professional development and best practice in the field.

The enactment of this bill will provide the institute with access to "relevant information pertaining to a person involved in adoption as a birth parent, adoptive parent or adoptive child". The institute will only hold information that is directly relevant to the performance of its functions. The research conducted by the institute will help to determine the value of open adoption for children in out-of-home care; the circumstances in which open adoption is likely to be in the best interests of a child or a young person; the elements of best practice for attaining open adoption; and the types of post-adoption support that might be required to achieve the optimal circumstances for an adopted child. This is an absolute win for permanency planning.

Like all members of this House, over the years I have met with both children and parents who have been involved in out-of-home care and who have been able to successfully adopt. The move to establish the institute will be broadly welcomed and will offer improved permanency planning for the adoption sector throughout the State. The institute will hold the most significant repository of adoption information in New South Wales and, I have no doubt, will emerge as an authority in evidence-based practice and procedures.

The introduction of this bill is an emphatic step towards improving the outcomes for a large cohort of children requiring permanency placements. I offer my huge support for this bill. I thank the Minister for introducing the bill. I think this is an important piece of legislation. I acknowledge that this is an historic step that this Parliament, hopefully, is about to take in establishing the Institute of Open Adoption Studies, which will make a valuable contribution to improving the outcomes for our most vulnerable children and giving them the best chance of achieving the security and permanency they surely need and most certainly deserve. For those reasons and many others, I am pleased to commend the bill to the House.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (16:36): I am pleased to support the Adoption Amendment (Institute of Open Adoption Studies) Bill 2016 introduced by the Minister for Family and Community Services.

I believe this bill offers a unique opportunity to build upon the Safe Home for Life reforms introduced by the Government in 2014. The bill reflects a clear strategy by Government to augment the cornerstone of the reforms—the permanent placement principles.

The bill will prescribe the Institute of Open Adoption Studies as a research organisation; permit the Department of Family and Community Services, accredited adoption service providers and designated out-of-home care agencies to disclose adoption and out-of-home care information for research purposes; implement a range of safeguards to protect personal information obtained for the above purpose by requiring personal information to be de-identified and treated as confidential and in accordance with the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998; amend the wording in the Adoption Act 2000 to make clear that a child can be placed with an authorised carer in the period between when consent to adoption is given and an adoption order is made; and allow approved organisations to provide expert reports to the court before an adoption order is made.

Where the Children's Court has determined that children or young people who have been removed from their family cannot be returned to live with their family, evidence establishes that the optimal outcome for those children is to be placed in a lifelong stable and nurturing home. The Safe Home for Life reforms were intended to support lifelong stable homes for children. To assist children find their forever family, adoption was elevated as a permanency option. Despite those significant child protection reforms and the existence of clear evidence in support of long-term stable placements for children, the number of adoptions in New South Wales is still low in comparison with international jurisdictions.

New South Wales is, however, leading the way domestically. One of the driving purposes of the institute is the promotion of open adoptions as the permanent placement option for those children and young people in out-of-home care for whom the Children's Court has established that there are no reasonable prospects for their restoration to the care of their birth parents. The institute's role will enhance existing legislative provisions aimed at achieving better permanent placement outcomes for children. The amendments to be enacted by this bill will enable the institute to carry out its mandate and function effectively. The amendments will allow the institute to access all past, current and future adoption applications and orders made in New South Wales and data on out of-home care applications, where the child is not to be returned home, but the permanency is not to adopt.

Enabling the institute to have access to information on applications made under the Adoption Act and those children in out-of-home care will assist with the identification of children requiring permanent placements. The amendments to the bill will enable the institute to readily identify those seeking to adopt and track the adoption process. This bill builds upon other reforms that have been introduced previously in this House. This Government has been and will continue to be committed to improving the safety and welfare of children, and I believe that this bill will assist in progressing this goal. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (16:40): I speak in support of the Adoption Amendment (Institute of Open Adoption Studies) Bill 2016. As has been said, the purpose of the bill is to amend the Adoption Act 2000 and the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 to enhance information-sharing provisions relating to certain persons involved in adoption and out-of-home care. The bill will prescribe as a research organisation the Institute of Open Adoption Studies of the University of Sydney and enable suitably qualified people to provide the Children's Court with reports in relation to the adoption of a child. I am pleased to say this bill has the support of all members of the House.

The amendments to the two Acts will ensure that children and young people in care in this State are looked after to the best possible standards. I commend the Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Social Housing for his work on bringing forward this bill. I also commend those on the other side of the House for their support of the bill. Everybody in this House is working towards ensuring that the State's most vulnerable young people are looked after properly. We have a responsibility to ensure that we do so to the best of our ability. These amendments fulfil an election commitment made by this Government. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Social Housing) (16:42): In reply: Getting adoption practices in New South Wales right and making adoption available for children who will benefit from being adopted, their biological parents, who for whatever reason decide to give up their children for adoption, and the adoptive parents is a noble task. We need to make sure that adoptive parents are well cared for and there are processes to achieve adoption and then support the affected parties. This bill has bipartisan support to ensure that we make a difference in the lives of adopted children and members of their broader family. The Government is committed to ensuring that processes are put in place to achieve the most positive outcomes for adopted children in New South Wales. We went to the last election indicating that we would make changes to ensure that open adoption had all the appropriate structures in place to support all those affected so that the process shows positive outcomes. I thank the Premier, Mike Baird, for his

strong commitment to this legislation that is aimed at ensuring that every aspect of open adoption is explored and all avenues that are found to benefit these children are put in place.

The Adoption Amendment (Institute of Open Adoption Studies) Bill 2016 is in effect facilitating legislation. It addresses changes to the Adoption Act 2000 and the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998. These changes are aimed at ensuring that we develop all the necessary processes for open adoption to work for adopted children and their families in New South Wales. I thank members who have taken part in the debate on this bill, particularly the member for Drummoyne, John Sidoti, the member for Northern Tablelands, Adam Marshall, the member for Riverstone, Kevin Conolly, the member for Holsworthy, Melanie Gibbons and the member for Bankstown, Tania Mihailuk.

Adoption is an issue that faces many people in a deeply personal way. It is clear that data about adoption and the child protection system must be used effectively to the benefit of policy and casework decision-makers. If we want to achieve better opportunities for children in a secure environment then we must ensure that data is used effectively in planning services and so everyone benefits from the use of that data. As members of this House will be aware, the amendments in the bill will enable a number of parties including the Department of Family and Community Services [FACS], adoption service providers and out-of-home care agencies to provide data for research purposes to the Institute of Open Adoption Studies. Making the data available to the institute is critical to the work of the institute, and if we do not get that aspect right then clearly the outcomes from the studies undertaken by the institute will not be as helpful as they might otherwise have been. The data will underpin good outcomes for the children that we seek to assist and for whom we seek to provide better lives.

This bill provides the foundations for the Institute of Open Adoption Studies to be a leader in the development of best practice research in the open adoption area in Australia. At meetings with Ministers of other States including Queensland and Victoria they have indicated a high level of interest in what New South Wales is doing in regard to open adoption. Those Ministers serve in Labor governments and they are interested in simply getting adoption right for children who cannot live with their biological parents. It has been evidenced in this House during the debate that it is a bipartisan issue. It is a bipartisan issue in this place and in the broader sphere.

When I deal with Ministers from different political complexions, such as Labor in Queensland and Victoria, there is the same level of interest to achieve the best possible outcomes. They are looking to what New South Wales is doing with regard to the establishment and workability of the Institute of Open Adoption Studies. I explained in the second reading speech that the bill amends the Adoption Act 2000 and the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 to enable the Department of Family and Community Services adoption and child protection service to provide de-identified information and data to the Institute of Open Adoption Studies for research purposes. Obviously it is critical that the information be de-identified. We are not interested in names and addresses. We are interested in how the particular evidence has affected individuals and cohorts of young people for whom the community wishes to provide a better life through a secure family environment.

Last year there was an adoption forum which 300 or 400 people attended. I recall a young person standing up and saying all he wanted for his life was a "forever family". That is something which so many children have, and this legislation is about ensuring there is a structure and an institute that will work towards giving some of our most disadvantaged children that forever family. I am sure that is why there is recognition on both sides of the Chamber that it is a noble aim by this Parliament and the reason it is being approached in a bipartisan manner.

There must be a balance between access to information for research purposes and data security. The institute's ability to access large amounts of adoption and permanent placement information for research purposes is balanced through this legislation by strict data and information security provisions. The bill puts in place a series of stringent protections to prevent identifying information about individuals involved in adoption or permanent placement from being made public. That aspect is critical. In order to build trust with a large cohort of people into the future that includes biological parents who can no longer look after their children, the children and young people who are going to be the beneficiaries of those forever families, and the people who are going to provide that structure and a secure forever family into the future, they need to know and feel confident that the information and data provided to the institute is on a strictly anonymous basis.

I will detail the data security safeguards: The institute will be responsible for handling personal information in accordance with the New South Wales Privacy and Personal Information Act 1998 and the Health Records and Information Privacy Protection Act 2002. Collectively that legislation and those protections include safeguards against loss, unauthorised access and use, modification, disclosure and misuse of information. The institute will only have access to information relevant to its functions and only data essential to the agreed research outcomes of the institute. It is only that data, strictly for that purpose, that can be used. All identifying information will be expunged from the institute's publications.

The institute will operate within the processes and procedures of a university, in this case the co-operator of the institute, the University of Sydney, and as such will be subject to its stringent ethics approval processes. I am sure that members of this House would know that research within the university context has to comply with extremely high ethical dimensions. There are structures through the academic process that ensure that everybody who is the subject of the research is safeguarded through very strong ethical boundaries. A number of months ago the Premier and I attended the University of Sydney campus and met with the senior staff. The excitement was palpable. They knew they had an opportunity to make a huge difference for young people who are looking for that forever family. They knew that they were the beneficiary of this proposal but also the benefactor to young people going forward. They will ensure that young people have a greater opportunity of security in their lives and to have the forever family they all seek.

A key feature of the bill is that it will allow an approved organisation to provide expert reports to the court. This is an important feature of the bill. The Department of Family and Communities Services is currently at capacity with external authorised persons being able to access these reports. The intention is that the Institute of Open Adoption Studies, and other suitable organisations, will be able to provide expert reports to the court before an adoption application is made. Accordingly, the bill takes a broad approach by making provision for not only the Institute of Open Adoption Studies but other suitable organisations approved by the secretary of the Department of Family and Community Services from time to time to provide the necessary expert reports to the court.

I am very pleased to advise that since the Baird Liberal-Nationals Government announced its support for development of the Institute of Open Adoption Studies there has been broad, strong and sustained support for the role of this institute. Adoption service providers and advocacy groups recognise the benefits of an institute that can efficiently access a broad range of adoption information for use in its applied research functions, but it will give a much greater degree of information to push forward with open adoption as a real and normal part of looking after young people who cannot live with their biological parents. Open adoption is very much twenty-first century thinking. The Government and Opposition understand that there is a high level of sensitivity with past adoption practices, particularly in relation to Aboriginal people.

Of course, Aboriginal people have suffered as a result of the policies of separation that were implemented for many years in this country. What happened to them and others who were adopted out and alienated from their biological parents, their aunts, their uncles, their cousins and their friends, clearly demonstrates that old-style adoption policies were not appropriate. Given the contributions of members opposite, it would appear that we are as one in saying that open adoption is the way forward. The question is how we make it work in the best interests of the children involved and how we ensure that we give them hope for the future. As I said when I introduced the bill, the Office of the Information and Privacy Commission has been consulted and it supports the bill. I again thank the members who contributed to debate on this bill, and the other members who did not contribute but who I know from private discussions strongly support it. I commend the bill to the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

Private Members' Statements

AUSGRID INNER WEST TREE CUTTING

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (17:01): More than 100 years ago, a revolutionary town planner named Richard Stanton took to the slopes beside Iron Cove and shaped the world's first garden suburb. Key to the appeal of the new suburb—named Haberfield in honour of Stanton's wife—were the beautiful gardens, stunning architecture and peaceful tree-lined streets that it promised. The streets were named after the fathers of federation, including Deakin, Barton and Kingston. For his suburb, Stanton did something new and extraordinary; he planted trees to provide shade in the summer and wildlife habitat, and to connect nature to the heart of the city. This was the "City Beautiful Movement" in action. It was a living example of the peaceful and equitable suburbs that would represent the new Australia of the twentieth century. The suburb has evolved for more than 100 years, always maintaining its charm while accommodating new-fangled technology such as electricity and cars.

For all that time, Haberfield's trees have stood strong and proud, a reminder of the ideals that make Haberfield unique. Fast forward to 2016, and Haberfield's trees are facing a dual threat. At one end, the historic

fig trees are being ripped up for WestConnex, and at the other end, in what locals are dubbing the "Haberfield Chainsaw Massacre", trees are being butchered by Ausgrid's pruning. This is not limited to Haberfield. As members know, this is a common problem across New South Wales. On streets from Ballina to Bermagui, from Moree to Merimbula, and in each and every suburb across Sydney, electricity providers are tearing holes in mature trees to make way for powerlines, often leaving a few branches on either side and not much more. The inner west has been hit hardest in the latest round of pruning—Annandale, Leichhardt and Haberfield have seen the most brutal pruning.

Like most New South Wales residents, I appreciate that trees planted under powerlines must be pruned periodically to ensure the provision of safe and dependable services to our businesses and homes. However, like most residents, I am often shocked and saddened by the extent of the pruning undertaken and the long-term damage being done. While we understand that pruning must be done, communities want to know that it is done appropriately and with care. We all know that some trees have significance to the wider community, whether it is because of their age, their connection to history, or, as in this case, because of the ideals that they represent. Haberfield is the garden suburb and we want it to be protected.

Each and every tree in Haberfield has historical significance. That is recognised by the community, but it is also recognised legally because the entire suburb is a heritage conservation area. Accordingly, the work undertaken by Ausgrid must be done according to Industry Safety Steering Committee guidelines, known as the ISSC-3 guidelines. These guidelines were painstakingly negotiated with biologists, heritage experts and engineers over many years but are now seemingly being ignored. Under these guidelines, Ausgrid is required to put in place a tree management plan in respect of significant trees. It is also required to consult with the local community and the local council, and to consider alternatives to lopping trees, such as wire bundling and undergrounding. None of that has occurred.

Haberfield looks as though it has been hit by a cyclone. According to local residents, the latest round of pruning is more brutal than any previous exercise. For those who doubt that, I have an image of one tree that has had its branches hacked almost to the trunk leaving it lopsided. Other trees, including one on private property, have had their branches removed arbitrarily. I have another image showing a tree standing beside an electrical pole and it is difficult to tell which is the tree and which is the pole. I also have an image of a tree that has been reduced to a trunk and a single branch, and for good measure it has also been cut in half.

Members will understand why residents are furious. One woman left her home one morning and when she returned she found that the beautiful mature tree at the front of her house had been destroyed by pruning. She was devastated, having lost one of the things she loved most about her neighbourhood. Some dismiss this as some kind of inner-city-only issue. It is not; it is happening in suburbs across our city. Trees are a vital part of livable cities because they reduce the effect of heat islands and they cool our streets. They also clean our air, combat greenhouse gases and provide wildlife habitats. While cities around the world are working to grow their urban canopies, New South Wales is decimating its heritage trees. We must act now to protect our trees, and we must respect our communities by ensuring that tree pruning is done in accordance with the guidelines designed to preserve them. That is the appropriate approach we should take to our environment. Haberfield residents and people across the inner west want the Minister to act now to stop this destruction by Ausgrid. He must do better to protect and respect our suburbs.

BREASTFEEDING

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Cootamundra) (17:09): Breastfeeding is an important issue for women across the electorate of Cootamundra, and it is pleasing that the Murrumbidgee Local Health District is actively promoting it. The World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action marked World Breastfeeding Week from 1 August to 7 August. The event encourages people to think about the importance of valuing our wellbeing from the beginning of life, how to respect each other, and how to care for the world we share. The Murrumbidgee Child and Family Health team invited businesses to support breastfeeding mothers by becoming a Breastfeeding Welcome Here venue. A number of local business responded, and on Monday when I got my cup of tea at Juicy Lucy's I noticed a Breastfeeding Welcome Here sticker on the door. That is what piqued my interest in this important movement. The criteria to be a Breastfeeding Welcome Here venue are simple. A business simply needs a welcoming attitude from staff and management, a smoke-free environment and room to move a pram.

Wendy Fisher, the clinical nurse specialist, child and family health, and lactation consultant at the Murrumbidgee Local Health District has been a great advocate for Breastfeeding Action Week, and we are lucky to have her in our area. Most Australians know that breastfeeding is important. It is certainly culturally normal to breastfeed babies in this country. There are many benefits to be gained from breastfeeding, including the fact that breast milk contains all the vitamins and nutrients that babies need in their first six months of life, and is packed with disease-fighting substances that help to protect them from illness. It also provides future protection. Studies conducted around the world confirm that stomach viruses, lower respiratory tract illnesses, ear infections

and meningitis occur less often in breastfed babies and are less severe when they do occur. In fact, some material that I have obtained indicates that exclusive breastfeeding for at least six months seems to offer the best protection.

A large study by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences showed that children who are breastfed have a 20 per cent lower risk of dying between the age of 28 days and one year than children who are not breastfed, with lower breastfeeding associated with lower risk. Obviously we recognise that not all women can breastfeed, but we encourage those who can to do so for that first six months at least to offer the best protection for babies. The most important part about encouraging businesses to come on board and be breastfeeding friendly is that it makes women feel more welcome in their communities. Having a baby is a wonderful thing and it is something that should be celebrated by the whole community.

Cafes, restaurants and shops around the electorate are welcoming breastfeeding mums. We congratulate all those mums out there with new babies and thank them for doing the wonderful work of raising their children. I congratulate those shops that have come on board in Young. I encourage the Murrumbidgee Local Health District to ensure that this continues to be promoted every year not only in Young but around the entire electorate of Cootamundra and the State of New South Wales. It is a very worthy aim. We want to make sure women who are breastfeeding have as much access to the social side of life in our country towns as they deserve.

INTREPID LANDCARE

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (17:10): One often hears people despair about the world we will leave for future generations, particularly in relation to loss of our natural areas and our native animals. With so much already gone and seemingly relentless pressure on our bushland, anyone would be a fool to dismiss such concerns. I, too, sometimes despair, but then I meet people who convince me that, while some people appear blithe to the risks to our environment, there are lots of people working hard to repair it and to save it from further degradation. They restore my faith in the future a little.

I was recently delighted to be a small part in a quiet revolution going on within the Landcare movement—a quiet generational shift that is engaging young people on environmental issues in a way not seen before. Landcare, as members of this House well know, has been regenerating our natural environment for decades, but it is benefiting from a youthful makeover from an organisation called Intrepid Landcare, which aims to connect young people, inspire change and involve young people in environmental initiatives that blend travel, adventure and environmental action.

Intrepid Landcare was launched in the Hunter region in June this year with a retreat at Glenrock Lagoon Scout Camp. It brought together 16 young people aged between 16 and 30 years for a leadership retreat that aimed to educate and empower them to lead other groups of young people into a new era of environmental action. I sponsored the initiative along with Lake Macquarie City Council and the Hunter region's Landcare groups because I was amazed at what was being done. Getting young people interested in these types of initiatives has always been difficult, but Intrepid Landcare is drawing them in with a modern twist on something that, with respect, had become the domain of older people with a bit of time on their hands for good community deeds—and what great work they have been doing.

Of those who attended the leadership retreat, two-thirds had never volunteered for a community initiative before. Almost half had never heard of Landcare before or were never aware of the opportunities it offered. This program has struck a real chord with young people. One of the retreat participants, Kara Agllias from Tighes Hill in nearby Newcastle, said the Intrepid Landcare program was appealing to the younger generation because it was all about adventure and the opportunity to see different places while getting involved in planting programs and other environmental projects. She said the traditional Landcare model of working on one single area of land had changed with Intrepid Landcare. Under the new program, groups will travel to different locations and undertake different activities combined with a bit of adventure.

During the weekend retreat the young leaders planted native trees and grasslands at Burwood Beach, abseiled within the Glenrock conservation area, discussed leadership roles with mentors, went on birdwatching walks, learned about the local history and socialised. They also identified four key projects to undertake within the next six months and started their own group on social media through which they can keep in touch and stay involved in the projects. Intrepid Landcare's co-founders, Megan Rowlett and Naomi Edwards, have been blown away by the enthusiasm for their little Landcare revolution not just in the Hunter but throughout the State, and so am I. This is the kind of generational change we need. I note the presence in the Chamber of the member for Keira. I am sure he is very pleased that Megan Rowlett is from the South Coast; she is doing a fabulous job in his electorate.

Landcare in Lake Macquarie generates millions of dollars worth of volunteer labour each year. Ecosystems receive enormous benefits including work to stabilise critical habitat and enhance wildlife corridors,

stormwater and riparian processes as well as dunes, foreshores, rainforests and wetlands. Landcare works by engaging people in environmental work and puts them on the ground where work is needed, achieving far more than could ever be paid for by governments or local councils. Lake Macquarie is a significant geographical region and the local Landcare network takes a lead role in caring for our urban forests and landscapes. It is therefore imperative that it finds ways of not only keeping people engaged and active but attracting more young people to its ranks of volunteers so it can continue to meet the growing demand on its resources. That is why the Intrepid Landcare program is so important to the future—not just Landcare's own future, but the future of our natural environment.

The Hunter group has not sat idle since that first weekend. It has been busy working on key projects and is in the process of seeking funds from the Environmental Trust to hold an Intrepid Landcare retreat for Indigenous youth in the Hunter region. I was overwhelmed by the enthusiasm of the young people I met during Intrepid Landcare's inaugural retreat at Glenrock. These young people were genuine in their desire to make a difference to the environment and to their local communities as well as far and beyond. I am pleased to be able to support them where I can and to bring knowledge of this great new movement to this House.

AUSTRALIAN KOOKABURRA KIDS FOUNDATION

AUTISM COMMUNITY NETWORK

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (17:15): Today I speak about two admirable local organisations dedicated to assisting children and families in need: the Australian Kookaburra Kids Foundation and the Autism Community Network. Both organisations support vulnerable children by providing them with life skills and opportunities for social development. The Australian Kookaburra Kids Foundation supports children living in families affected by mental illness. A 10-year-old girl attending a Kookaburra Kids camp was asked how she normally spends her weekend. She replied she usually prepares all of her meals for the week ahead and does the washing. It then dawned on the young girl that she would have to wear a dirty uniform to school on Monday due to the fact she was away that weekend. This is not something most 10-year-olds have to worry about, and yet for the children who attend these camps this story is quite common. These children are often the primary carers in their households, taking on adult responsibilities well beyond their years, such as cooking, cleaning, administering medication and caring for their ill parent.

The Kookaburra Kids camps allow these children some respite and the chance to meet other kids in similar situations. They provide age-appropriate mental health programs to help build resilience and coping skills, and reduce feelings of isolation and hopelessness. Most importantly the children are given a break from a life full of responsibility and a chance to simply be a kid. As well as running the camps, Kookaburra Kids runs activity days in the school holidays including trips to the beach, visits to the zoo and special career development days. Kookaburra Kids supports children across our State and is continuing to expand its services, although the shire will always be the foundation's home.

On 20 May I was delighted to present Kookaburra Kids chief executive officer, Pam Brown, with a \$10,000 discretionary grant, together with the Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Multiculturalism, the Hon. John Ajaka, MLC, and the member for Heathcote, Lee Evans, who I note has been a long-term supporter of Kookaburra Kids. It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the hard work of the board of directors and the large number of hardworking volunteers who are too many to name but who help with the camps and activity days. I am incredibly pleased that the New South Wales Government has provided this financial support, which will go towards the camps.

Whether it is kids living in families affected by mental illness or kids with disabilities, this Government cares about our children and their wellbeing. This leads me to the other organisation from the electorate of Miranda that also received funding recently: the Autism Community Network [ACN]. ACN provides support for people with autism, their parents and their carers. They help clients with social and life skills, which improves their development and quality of life. ACN was started in 2011 by Steve Drakoulis whose son was diagnosed with autism when he was two years old.

Steve relates a story of a young boy who suffered from selective mutism. Through his participation in ACN cooking classes he broke through his anxiety and isolation. Steve was thrilled when the young boy called him to make a suggestion about the next cooking class. The young boy has since learnt to trust more people and continues to thrive, and actively participates in conversations. This incredible result is why Steve is so dedicated to his work. ACN offers monthly support groups, online forums and one-to-one support in times of crises. The most popular programs ACN offers are its social skills activities through which people with autism can connect with one another in a safe environment. These activities, which include art, cooking, drama, fitness and music classes, are often not readily available for people with autism.

When ACN outgrew its Riverwood office it saw a need for services in the shire—given it has the highest percentage of ACN clients in the State—and relocated to Illawong. It was wonderful to help this organisation with assistance from Minister Ajaka. We provided \$6,760 to the organisation to completely fund its rent at the Illawong Community Centre for the next two years, which will enable it to grow and to continue to offer services to shire families. This Government cares about children who are living with and are affected by mental illness and disabilities. I am proud to assist local organisations in the Miranda electorate that strive to improve the lives of those children and their families. Again, I thank Minister Ajaka for his interest in my community.

BULLI PASS CLOSURE

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (17:20): I raise an important, but concerning, development that has taken place in my electorate in the past few weeks. The New South Wales Government, through Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] has announced that Bulli Pass will be closed for two months this year throughout October and November and for another two months next year. The closure is required so that fencing work can be carried out to protect road users from rock falls. Everyone understands and expects roadworks to be carried out, and everyone understands that road closures bring a level of inconvenience. However, what is unique about this road is that it is one of only two ways that residents of the northern suburbs can enter or leave Wollongong city. We are isolated by our beautiful escarpment to the west and our lovely waterway to the east. We are challenged when travelling up the escarpment at Mount Ousley, Bulli Pass and Stanwell Park.

I have asked detailed questions of the Minister, the Government and RMS to show what evidence is available to demonstrate that the work is necessary, to give urgent consideration as to whether full closure is needed 24/7 and whether the road can be partially open during peak periods. I want to know what alternatives the Government has to deal with this issue. I have also requested a construction plan. I am concerned this work will have a huge impact on the people in my community. I am more concerned that the Government, through the RMS, has not adequately looked at other options to allow for a single lane of traffic, particularly during the morning and afternoon peak periods. We are a large commuter community that relies heavily on access to the road network to travel to and from Sydney.

I call on the Government, through the Minister for Roads and Maritime Services, to go back to the drawing board and to investigate what options are available. I am concerned that the option of closing a major road 24/7 for two months has been based on cost and convenience to the Government and RMS, with little or no consideration being given to the impact it will have on commuters. Bulli Pass is located in my electorate and I am concerned that I was not briefed about its closure: The announcement came out of the blue. On the day of the announcement I requested a briefing and I have since received notice that I will be briefed. Hundreds of people have raised concerns with me through social media, via emails and letters to my office, seeking an explanation as to why a single lane cannot be opened during the morning and afternoon peak hours.

The Government is saying to the community that it needs to work on this road 24/7 for two months. We know that will not happen. Given there is a large area at the summit of Bulli Pass where plant and other equipment can be stored, the question is why this road cannot be open for some of the time, as has been done for the Pacific Highway, Macquarie Pass and other parts of the Princes Highway in the south and beyond. Bulli Pass is an important road link that services approximately 10,000 cars every day. I put the Government on notice and make it clear that it must do better. It must investigate other options and explain to the community what options were considered. Most importantly, I want the Government to explain why a single lane cannot be opened for a period of time to allow the large commuter traffic to travel up and down Bulli Pass efficiently and safely.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 17:25
until Wednesday 10 August 2016 at 10:00.**